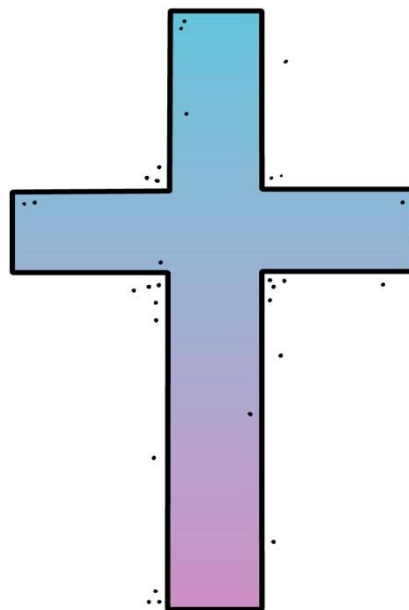


ST. SPYRIDON GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT
3655 Park Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92103

PARENT INFORMATIONAL HANDBOOK



MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. SPYRIDON GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH SUNDAY SCHOOL:

The mission of St. Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church Sunday School is to mold the lives of our students in the Orthodox Christian teachings through Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition and to develop each student spiritually to live a Christ-centered life.

PRIEST:
Rev. Father Andrew Scordalakis

DIRECTOR:
Diana Fowler

Dear Sunday School Parents and Friends,

Religious education is both a privilege and a necessity within the life of our Holy Orthodox Church. It is a privilege in that it involves instruction in the doctrines of our saving Orthodox Christian faith. It is a necessity because it helps develop a strong foundation so that our children are able to make the right choices in today's highly complex world.

As a church family, we realize that the gift of Orthodoxy is a way of life that we must preserve and impart to the young people of our parish. We are called to express our identity as Orthodox Christians by practicing a God-fearing and pious life. We must maintain our faith that offers 2000 years of worship, wisdom, experience and witness. This is the faith given to us by Christ our Savior, not one devised by man.

Our Sunday School program at St. Spyridon strives to keep this faith alive for our children. Our directors, Diana Fowler and Marina Karavokiris, have developed and organized a comprehensive program so that our children are educated in all aspects of our faith, from the time they enter Sunday School as three-year-olds until the time they graduate. The curriculum is multifaceted and encompasses *Scripture, Holy Tradition, Worship, Hymnology and Discipleship* to help students more fully participate in the Divine Liturgy, the Sacraments, and the life of the Church. To enhance the weekly lessons, we have many exciting Curriculum Enrichment Activities that will deepen the students' knowledge and will teach them to become active participants in our Holy Orthodox Church. Two examples include the Children's Liturgy and the Children's Choir/Music Program. These programs add depth and breadth to the curriculum and are explained in this handbook.

I am truly excited about the new Sunday School year, and I would personally like to thank our wonderful and dedicated teachers for their commitment and hard work in preparing meaningful lessons each week. Most of all, I would like to thank you for entrusting us with your precious children. The Sunday School staff is always open to your thoughts and ideas, and we welcome your involvement in the Sunday School Department. Together we must provide our children the opportunity for spiritual growth and development, which will help guide them throughout their lives.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Father Andrew Scordalakis

As this new Sunday School year begins...

We present this handbook for your information and understanding of our Sunday School program. Teaching is a very challenging task. It entails careful study of our faith so that this knowledge can be conveyed to our students. It involves planning lessons that will be relevant and interesting. It also requires dedication and commitment to ensure our children are properly educated and prepared for whatever life brings them. Those who volunteer to undertake such a difficult, time consuming task are to be commended for their stewardship. At St. Spyridon, we have been blessed with dedicated teachers. However, our program can only be successful if the home and school work together. Our goal is the same: to provide the best for each of the students because we care for them as children of God, and because today's children are tomorrow's church leaders. You, as parents, can help with your support and encouragement. You are vital to our success!

We ask for your support in the following important matters:

REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Have your child attend Sunday School regularly. Sporadic attendance brings limited understanding, often lack of understanding, and develops weaker bonds with classmates. Consider religious education as important as secular education.

VALUING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Each Sunday ask your child what he or she is learning in Sunday School. Often times the student will have little to say about the lesson. However, as you continue to keep an ongoing interest, you may begin to get more dialogue. Much is accomplished in each classroom each and every Sunday. Show your child by your interest and attitude how much you value religious education. Your enthusiasm or your indifference can be catching!!!

PARTICIPATING IN CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Participating in the Curriculum Enrichment Activities of the Sunday School helps enhance the learning experience for students and brings a sense of belonging and interaction with classmates. These activities are highlighted in this handbook.

KNOWING THE TEACHER

Meet your child's teacher. All teachers are very accessible and truly want to know the parents of their students. It is important that you and the teacher have a rapport so that you can work together in the best interest of the student.

BEING AWARE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL POLICIES

Become familiar with the policies of the Sunday School, which are outlined in this handbook. Realize that these policies are there for a reason and that they are based upon past experiences and upon what is best for all students.

BEING ON TIME FOR CLASS

Coming to class on time is extremely important. Please realize that it is disruptive to the teacher and students if classmates continue to come in after the lesson has begun. Please consider the short time we have with your children as a sacred time and space in their lives. Please allow us the full time that we need.

COMMUNICATING PROBLEMS

We encourage you to first communicate any problems to the teacher. After this, specific concerns should be addressed with any of the directors. Following this procedure will create a more successful learning experience.

DISCIPLINE

As a church school, we are committed to uphold the principles of a Christian, Orthodox way of life. It is expected that students follow the rules of courtesy and respect for the rights of others in the classroom. Misbehavior will not be tolerated, for misbehavior is not only disrespectful but also denies others in the classroom the right to learn.

CHANGING ADDRESS, PHONE OR EMAIL

Please notify us if your address, phone number or email address changes during the year. It is important that we be able to contact you if necessary.

STEWARDSHIP

Students are encouraged to bring an offering each Sunday. Again, it is good when students earn and contribute their own money. In this way, we encourage them that stewardship to the Church is ongoing, even into adulthood.

CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Our Curriculum Enrichment Activities are designed to enhance and enrich the weekly lessons. Please refer to the Sunday School calendar for dates and times.

St. Nicholas Holiday Food Drive

As Christians, we are called to serve others where there is truly hurt and a need. All students encounter a friendly "competition" during the Holiday Season all the while helping our own San Diego Food Bank. We are asked to bring non perishable food donations to our respective class rooms during this time. The class collecting the most items has a celebratory lunch with Father Andrew and a chance to "house" the St. Nicholas Holiday Food Drive Traveling Trophy in their classroom for the following year.

GODPARENT'(S) SUNDAY

Students are encouraged to attend the Liturgy with their Godparents, thus reaffirming the special bond that comes from the Sacrament of Baptism. Realizing that many Godparents live in other communities, we encourage students to come with a member of the Godparents' family or simply to come and give special prayers for their Godparents.

Out-Reach Sunday

One way our faith becomes active is when we put into words what God has done for us. Genuine hospitality directed toward our friends, relatives, and neighbors create the opportunity through which the Holy Spirit brings others into a relationship with Christ and His church. "Come and see" are operative words in the Gospels, the story of the early church, and in the tradition of the church over the centuries. Students are encouraged to bring a friend to church with them on Out-Reach Sunday where they can share a day of unity and fellowship.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Throughout the archdiocese, Orthodox students in Grades 7-12 participate in this annual event where they have the opportunity to write and make presentations on various religious topics. Winners of the local contest compete at the district level. The winners from the district level then continue the competition at the Metropolis level. The festival is an exceptional opportunity for youth to witness their faith.

LENTEN OFFERINGS FOR ORTHODOX MISSION PROGRAMS

During Lent each year, our students are asked to make a donation to help Orthodox missions throughout the world. Students are encouraged to earn, contribute, and support any OCMC fundraising project.

SATURDAY OF LAZURUS COMMUNION BREAKFAST AND PALM CROSS MAKING

Even though this is not a Sunday School Sponsored event, this is an opportunity for all students to partake of Holy Communion with the fellowship of their classmates. A breakfast for the students is held following the Divine Liturgy, and all those in attendance are taught how to make palm crosses for the following Palm Sunday.

Great and Holy Friday Retreat

A spiritual retreat is held for all Sunday School students. This is truly a time where our youth grow in their awareness of our Savior Jesus Christ in their lives. This consists of worship and hands on activities.

SUNDAY SCHOOL POLICIES

1. Divine Liturgy begins promptly at 10:00 a.m. Sunday School begins immediately following Communion and ends at approximately 12:10p.m. The Students will be brought into the Fellowship Hall at the conclusion of Sunday School.
2. Any student who will be three years of age on or before September 12th of the current year will be admitted to the Pre-School class. Other students should enroll in grades corresponding to their public or private school grades. We strongly recommend that a child be in the same grade in both Sunday School and their secular school so that they can graduate from both schools concurrently.
3. In order to participate in the Dance and Choral School at St. Spyridon, students must be faithful in the Sunday School attendance missing no more than one class per month unless arrangements are made with their teacher.
4. Students who have no absences throughout the Sunday School year will be awarded perfect attendance and will be acknowledged during the commencement program at the end of the year. Faithful attendance will be awarded to those students who have missed less than four classes. If your child attends Sunday School at another parish on a particular Sunday, please let your child's teacher know so that your child will be counted present.
5. To ensure a rich Sunday School experience, it is just as important to participate in the Curriculum Enrichment Activities, such as the Oratorical Festival, Communion Breakfast, etc., as Sunday School itself. Participation in these activities is strongly encouraged!
6. Misbehavior will not be tolerated. Sunday school is a sacred time and space in a child's life and should be respected as such. The first offense will be handled by the teacher. Upon the second offense, the child will be referred to the directors. For any offenses after that, the child will be referred to the priest and parents.
7. Starting with the fifth grade, boys are encouraged to serve as altar boys according to the bulletin schedule.
8. No one is permitted to interrupt classes or pass out flyers or information without the permission of the directors.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

All of our curriculum is purchased from the Archdiocese Religious Education Department and/or approved from the Various Metropolis Religious Education Departments throughout the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese.