



St. George Church School

Parent's Handbook

2018 – 2019



WELCOME!

OBJECTIVE OF SAINT GEORGE CHURCH SCHOOL

According to the Gospel of St. Luke, the twelve-year-old Jesus visited the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem and started a conversation with the elders of the religious community that He met there. The boy Jesus completely astounded the teachers with His understanding of Holy Scriptures. The Gospel relates that, guided by the Holy Spirit, Jesus went home with His parents, Joseph and Mary, and that He, *“increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God”*. (Luke 2:52). Here at St. George Church School, we call on this same Holy Spirit to guide and inspire our children, their parents and their teachers, enabling our children to, *“increase in wisdom and stature and in favor with God”*.

VISION

We anticipate that, by the end of the twelfth grade, each Church School student will possess a fundamental understanding of the Orthodox Christian Faith, her values, practices and traditions. We trust that with this knowledge will inspire our children to a lifetime of commitment and dedication, living a Christian life and actively participating in the life of the Church.

MISSION

The Church School Program utilizes a curriculum of study that will enhance each student’s knowledge of the Orthodox Christian Faith in core areas such as: the Holy Bible, Church history, Doctrine, Spirituality and Worship. We also stress the communal nature of the Faith and emphasize the importance of the local Christian community [our parish] by fostering the importance of strong bonds and relationships.

Our **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM BEGINS WITH WORSHIPING GOD**. Every Sunday, Church School begins with the **Divine Liturgy** at 10 a.m. **It is the responsibility of every Orthodox Christian parent to actively participate in their children's religious education and spiritual growth by bringing them to the Divine Liturgy every Sunday. Families should arrive at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy.** When you enter the Church, teach your children to light candles, offer prayers for themselves and others, kiss the Icons and quietly enter church together when the service begins. As we pray the Divine Liturgy, parents should encourage their children to participate by using the Liturgy Book or the Children's Liturgy book found in the pews and by joining in the reading and recitation of common prayers like the Creed and Our Father. *Parents should discourage their child's participation in programs or activities i.e. sports on Sunday morning, which would prevent their children from attending Church.*

The reception of the **EUCCHARIST** [*HOLY COMMUNION*] is at the center of the Divine Liturgy. 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 receiving Holy Communion is an important part of keeping the Church alive in our homes and families.

We avail ourselves of the **SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION** where we are truly sorry for our sins. We are blessed and absolved from sin by a priest as a sign of God's mercy and love for us. Confession prepares us to properly worship together and to receive Holy Communion. In Church School, our children are taught the necessity of Confession from an early age. As examples for their children, parents are encouraged to receive the Sacrament regularly, at the very least during the fast periods of Advent and Lent.

Our **FASTING** discipline is related to the Sacraments of Confession

and the Eucharist. The fasting tradition is that we do not eat meat or dairy products on Wednesday and Friday of each week, nor during certain periods of the year [ex. Advent and Lent]. We deny ourselves these foods as a discipline or reminder that we are focused on something other than gratifying our desire, in this case, we are reflecting on our unworthiness and praying and preparing to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist worthily. Every home should have an Orthodox Church calendar that parents and children can consult to determine 'fast days and periods' as well as Major Feasts and commemoration of Saints.

Parents who provide a good example to their children by Fasting, going to Confession, worshiping in the Divine Liturgy and receiving the Eucharist are the primary source of education for our children. Our Church School and its religious education program can only reinforce the good example that the parents have created in the home.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Following their reception of Holy Communion our children will proceed directly to their classroom to begin the day's lesson. On Sundays during the Church School terms our children and their teachers will be the first ones to receive Holy Communion. Classes should begin by 11:30 immediately after Holy Communion each Sunday and dismissal will be at 12:15. We anticipate offering our children a good forty minutes of quality religious education. A Church School calendar is included in this booklet, please note all special activities, events and free days.

Our religious education program depends on you to be an active partner in developing the skills and knowledge your child needs to be a practicing Orthodox Christian believer. Please take time to learn about our curriculum and look at your child's lessons. Talk with your child about what is being taught. Please make a commitment to bring your child to church every Sunday. As a parent, we depend on you to assist us as, together, we *"raise up children in the faith and knowledge"* of God.

May Almighty God Bless and Preserve You and Your Family,

Fr. Timothy

Matthew 19:13-14

Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

2 Timothy 3:15

And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 22:6

*Train up a child in the way he should go;
Even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

A Message to Parents

At your Orthodox Marriage we prayed that God would bless you and that you would be glad *“with the sight of sons and daughters”*. We also prayed that you would grow to see your *“children’s, children gathered around your table like a newly planted olive orchard”*. We asked God to grant you *“children for education in the faith”*. We prayed that God would *“make you worthy to obtain the blessings of the promise”* that you made to one another, to God and to the Holy Church.

Educating children in the faith and knowledge of God is now more crucial than it ever was; it’s also more difficult. Our society is a post-Christian techno-centric one and our culture is a secular and morally ambiguous one. Outside of the family and the Church there is no Christian point of view or reference to inform and guide children. They urgently need a spiritual compass to navigate the complexities of this world.

We realize that religious education is home based and that the family provides the basic structure for experiencing the presence of God and knowledge of the faith. Our Church School program is meant to complement and reinforce the religious training that you, as parents, begin in your family. St. George Church School is here to assist you live up to the promise you made at your marriage. All we can do is add a formal, structural dimension to the religious education your child experiences at home.

Here, your child will be with friends and learn the basic story of the Gospel, the core teachings of the Orthodox Church and the central message of Christ’s love for them. Our staff of talented and dedicated volunteers is committed to share the truth and wisdom of the Christian message with your child but we cannot teach alone, we need your cooperation and support.

Class rooms have been assigned according to class size and parents are asked to know where their child's classroom is and to meet their teachers.

CHURCH SCHOOL ETTIQUITE

We want our children to comprehend the lesson they study and to benefit fully from the instruction they receive in the class room. To help accomplish this we ask that;

Students arrive in class **ON TIME** – our time is limited and we need every minute, arriving late disrupts the class and interrupts the teaching.

Students **WALK** to class as orderly and respectfully as possible [no running in the hall or church school].

Students always be **RESPECTFUL** of their teachers and fellow classmates. They should listen and follow instructions without disrupting the class.

Students do not bring any food or candy to the classroom.

Students do not bring cell phones or electronic devices to the classroom.

At St. George Church School, we offer our religious education program to assist, support and reinforce Parents as they guide their children in the knowledge of God and the Orthodox Christian Faith.

2018 - 2019

St. George Church School Staff and Teachers

Director

Fr. Timothy Ferguson

Pastoral Assistant

Sarah Livick-Moses

Superintendent

Amal Hourani

Teachers

<i>Pre-Kindergarten</i>	Lara Lakis, Nancy Audy & Christiane Daaboul
<i>Kindergarten</i>	Diane Pelkey
<i>1st Grade</i>	Salwa Sateriale
<i>2nd Grade</i>	Gizelle Hourani & Zeina Fayad
<i>3rd Grade</i>	Danielle Maia
<i>4th Grade</i>	Michelle Hourani
<i>5th Grade</i>	Ousama Hanna & Kameel Rachmani
<i>6th Grade</i>	Linda Ayoub
<i>7th Grade</i>	Nabil Hourani
<i>8th Grade</i>	JT Livick-Moses
<i>9th & 10th Grade</i>	Michael Marge
<i>11th & 12th Grade</i>	Tony Bashir

Substitute Teachers

Sarah Livick-Moses, Amal Hourani, Zeina Kahhale,
Randah Rachmani, Faris Saba, Khalil Samara

“Helping people to know God and to be obedient to him is perhaps the greatest gift we can bestow. Understood in this way, Christian education can be one of the most compassionate ministries of the church.”

— Perry G. Downs, *Teaching for Spiritual Growth: An Introduction to Christian Education*