

LIVING OUR ORTHODOX FAITH:

*A Brief Introduction to the Curriculum of the Saint Thomas Sunday School,
Developed by the Greek Orthodox Department of Religious Education*

Pre-School - 3: REACHING FOR JESUS

A pictorial introduction to Christ, with large drawings for coloring and easy text that reinforces prayer, the observance of the feast days and the love of Jesus.

Pre-School - 4: WHAT WE SEE AND DO IN CHURCH

An introduction suitable for young children to basic Church teachings, events in the liturgical calendar, Bible stories and hymns. Each lesson has a brief text and an illustration for coloring.

Kindergarten: HAPPY WITH GOD

Joy is the main theme of the Kindergarten program. God's love is the source of our joy. The Kindergartener experiences joy through family activities and through Church worship and life. Aspects of worship and stories from Scripture highlight specific examples of and reasons for joy centered on Christ. The Kindergartener learns to celebrate God's gift of joy and thus feels a sense of trust and well-being.

Grade 1: ME AND MY WORLD

The focus of Grade One is on creation as God's gift. God has made the world and everything in it as an example of His love and goodness. As the child discovers the world around him, the child understands that family, friends, church, school, and all things come from God. Through the daily experience of God's world, the child understands that God is real, loving, and caring. The child's faith in God is awakened and is expressed through prayer, worship and thanks.

Grade 2: LOVING GOD

Grade Two concentrates on the theme of loving God as the child's obedient response to God. Through the examples of men and women of the Old and New Testaments, as well as the examples of the Orthodox saints, the Second Grader begins to understand sin and forgiveness in the light of God's love. Through such examples, and through acts of worship and life, the child learns to respond to God with love and obedience – the foundations of morality.

Grade 3: SHARING GOD'S WORLD

In Grade Three the emphasis shifts to the theme of sharing based on the life of the Church. As the Third Grader becomes open to the outside world and peer group relationships, he or she learns about God's people and their relationships in the Old and New Testaments, as well as in the history of the Church. Through study of the life of the Church, the child experiences sharing, giving, dialogue, and dealing with relational difficulties in a positive manner.

Grade 4: GROWING WITH GOD

The theme of the Fourth Grade, Growing with God, explores a period of deeper moral and spiritual growth in the life of the child. By concentrating on the prayers and sacramental acts related to human growth (Pre-baptismal services, Baptism, Chrismation, Liturgy, and Confession), the students begin to gain a sacramental vision of life. They come to understand the world and their own growth in light of their faith, prayer and sacramental life.

Grade 5: RESPONDING TO GOD

The Fifth Grade theme, Responding to God, concentrates on the stories of the heroes of the faith in Scripture and Tradition as examples of faith, loyalty, self-sacrifice, obedience, love, justice and social responsibility. Through the study of these great figures the child learns to respond to God in terms of personal faith and the basics of Christian morality, the Ten Commandments and the teaching of Christ.

Grade 6: CHRISTIAN WAY OF LIFE

For this age group, which values friendships and responds to peer pressure, our Lord's way of life offers an alternative to what is promoted by popular culture and what is seen on television and movie screens. This curriculum reviews the pathway to Christian living through Scripture, Tradition, Doctrine, Church History, and Liturgical Life. It includes chapters on the Church Fathers, the Liturgy and other Services, and the first Christian Writers.

Jr. High: HEROES FOR TRUTH

A summarized history of Christianity till ninth century. The book speaks about St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Stephen, St. Athanasius, St. Antony the Great, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian, St John Chrysostom, Sts. Cyril & Methodius. It gives a glimpse on the Ecumenical Councils, Monasticism and the Filioque. It is very rich with information that can satisfy anyone who desires to have a chronicle and more information about the Orthodox Christian Faith.

Sr. High: REFLECTIONS ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

This thoughtful and spiritually edifying book is both beautiful and challenging. It offers a fresh perspective, verse by verse, on a timeless and life-changing prayer. Archbishop Demetrios writes of this book, "The Lord's Prayer is liturgical and theological because it teaches us how to pray, when to pray, why to pray, and to whom to pray... here we have the ultimate and absolute prayer articulated once and for all by Jesus Christ."

**Tot N' Me: MAKING GOD REAL IN THE
ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN HOME**

A tool box full of ideas for the Orthodox family, offering both simple discussion guides for parents as well as ideas for family activities to help children of different ages to better understand the faith.

(Note: This popular book is available for purchase from the Sunday School Office for \$16.00.)

Youth: Education and Service (YES)

We are very pleased to announce the creation of our newest ministry at St. Thomas - Youth: Education and Service (Y.E.S.) YES is enlisting members between the ages of 18 - 25. The 2 major components of the program will be continuing religious education and service, within our parish and in the community-at-large. Initially, Y.E.S. will meet on Sunday mornings beginning in September as an extension of the Sunday School. Service projects and other activities will be added to round out the program.

"TOT N' ME" REGISTRATION

2011-2012

FAMILY NAME: _____

FATHER'S NAME: _____

MOTHER'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

City State Zip

HOME PHONE # _____

CELL # _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

AGE: _____ DATE OF BIRTH: _____