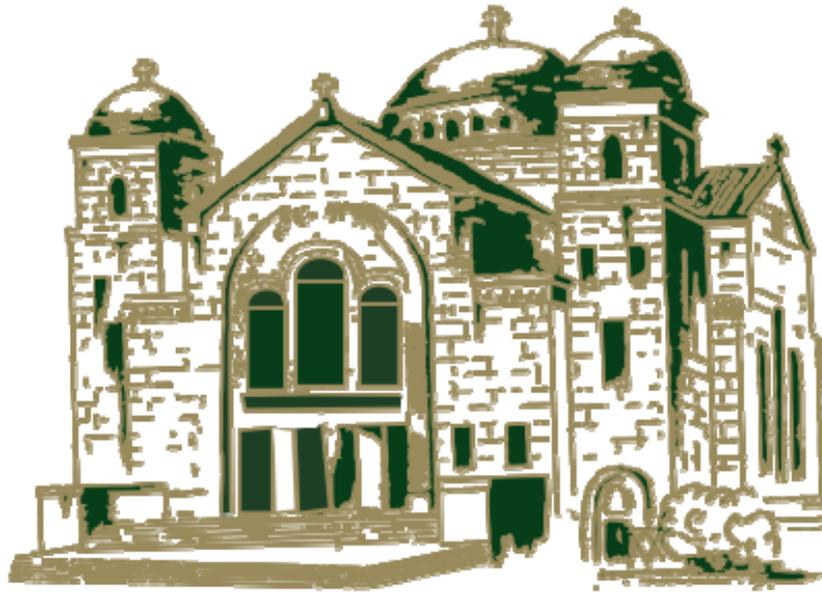


Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Sunday School Handbook



Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral

2815 36th Street and Massachusetts Ave NW Washington, DC 20007

www.saintsophiadc.com

202-333-4730

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS

The traditional education our children receive today is simply not enough.

In a world that is ever more technologically advanced, fast-paced and morally complex, our children urgently need a spiritual compass to help navigate their way. With busy schedules filled with homework, special projects, sports, clubs and interests, the precious hours available for spiritual fulfillment have become increasingly narrow, but we believe ever more critical. It is here, in our Sunday School program, that we hope our children will not only make new friends, but will learn the fundamentals of Orthodox Christianity that will guide them to what is right, and what is true, wherever they go and whatever they may do.

Our goal is simple. We wish to share with them the message of Christ's love and for them to live that message every day of their lives as they grow into the adults who will shape our world.

“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.”
(Proverbs 22.6)

Faith is best taught by faithful people, and our dedicated Sunday School teachers and staff are faithfully committed to lovingly impart the truth and love of Orthodoxy to our students. But we cannot do it alone. We need your help as parents to serve as active partners in developing this knowledge and these skills in your children. Learn more about our curriculum and lessons. Engage with your children as they apply their knowledge outside of the classroom. Help us grow our children in faith and fortitude as they grow up to become the future leaders of our community and our world.

Yours in Christ,

Reverend Dr. Steven Zorzos, *Presiding Priest*

Reverend Dimitrios Lee, *Assistant Priest*

Diane Cerniglia, *Academic Dean – Upper School*

Stracie Maniatis, *Academic Dean – Lower School*

Vivian Kambanis, *Administrator*



OVERVIEW

Class Structure

The Saint Sophia Sunday School is organized into a lower and upper school to craft individual learning experiences for our children. The lower school includes the nursery school class through 6th grade and the upper school includes the 7th grade through the 12th grade. Both schools incorporate dynamic learning tools and techniques to generate interest and a love of learning our faith.

Schedule

The Sunday School term runs from mid-September and extends through the Sunday of Mother's Day in May. Each Sunday the following schedule is in effect:

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. Sunday School children should arrive in church and sit in the reserved pews at the front left-hand side of the Cathedral to participate in the liturgy, listen to the epistle and Gospel readings, and worship. The priest will deliver a short sermon to the Sunday School children usually based on the day's Gospel reading and may include a question and answer dialogue.

10:30 – 11:50 a.m. Sunday School children are dismissed from church to go to their individual classrooms. Their teachers will present a weekly lesson based on their individual curriculum, and, on a rotating monthly basis, classes will attend the Divine Liturgy to receive communion.

11:50am Classes close and children are sent to the church auditorium to meet their parents for the fellowship coffee hour. For children in the nursery through 2nd grade, we kindly request parents pick up their children directly after liturgy from the 1st floor classrooms.

Contributions

A \$20.00 registration fee is requested per child at the beginning of the Sunday School year. Parents must be Saint Sophia Stewardship paying members in good standing for the year to qualify as a Saint Sophia steward in good standing, families must remit at least 75% of their current stewardship by registration time and 100% of their stewardship for all previous years.

Facilities

Saint Sophia proudly houses its Sunday School in the Frosene Education Center which offers state of the art classrooms for the education of your child. Each classroom is equipped with advanced audio/visual equipment so our teachers can use online, interactive teaching aids to bring their lessons to life. Classrooms are located on the first and second levels of the Frosene Center and are accessible via the parking lot or from the lower level of the Cathedral via the atrium.



CURRICULUM

The Cathedral's Sunday School curriculum is tailored to meet children's spiritual needs across various ages.

Lower School

For the younger children of the Sunday School, our curriculum builds the foundation of Orthodox Christianity, helping children understand who God is, what is involved in the Divine Liturgy, and to use hands on teaching aids that bring their faith to life.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Curriculum</u>
Nursery (3 Year Olds)	Overview of the Orthodox Church Church Etiquette
Pre-Kindergarten (4 Year Olds)	Introduction to the Concept of God and His Relationship with Us
Kindergarten (5 Year Olds)	Jesus Christ and His Love for Children
1 st Grade	New Testament Stories for Children
2 nd Grade	Excerpts from the Bible Major Feast Days & Sacraments Loving God and Living Our Orthodox Faith
3 rd Grade	From the Garden of Eden to the Promised Land The Fullness of Time and the Ten Commandments
4 th Grade	The Bible: Old & New Testament Sacraments and How They Affect Us in Everyday Life
5 th Grade	The First Christians The Parables
6 th Grade	The Old Testament



Upper School

For our older children, the curriculum covers the core fundamentals of Orthodox Christianity including the Creed, the sacraments, and the Divine Liturgy. The upper school also incorporates bioethics and morality topics that help children address the challenges and pressures in their everyday lives. From battling bullying to managing stress, the children learn to apply their Orthodox faith as a tool in their daily lives.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Curriculum</u>
7 th / 8 th Grade	The New Testament The Nicene Creed
9 th / 10 th Grade	The Divine Liturgy Interpretation of Gospel Readings
9 th Grade Altar Boy Program	The Divine Liturgy
11 th / 12 th Grade	Ethics, Morality and the Virtues The Orthodox Church – Our Faith An Active Prayer Life

My FaithBook

Upon joining our Sunday School program, all children receive a FaithBook composition notebook that will allow them to record what they learn in class and their own thoughts during discussions with their teachers. FaithBooks will move with each child from year to year and will reside in the classroom for use during Sunday School lessons. Upon graduation from Sunday School, all children will receive their FaithBooks as a keepsake of their time in the program.



Altar Boys

The 9th grade boys depart from the traditional Sunday School curriculum to partake in our altar boy program. Through active participation in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and holidays, the program instructs the boys on the meaning of the Divine Liturgy, other services, and the fundamental sacraments of the church.

Teen Talk

Teen Talk is a discussion group for the teenagers (7th grade – 12th grade), that provides them a firsthand opportunity to engage with the clergy on challenges in their everyday lives.

Faith Time

Faith Time is a discussion group for our younger students (2nd grade – 6th grade) and connects them with the clergy as they learn the basics of our faith and religious traditions.



TEACHING STAFF

The Saint Sophia Sunday School program is run by over 25 dedicated volunteer teachers and staff, who bring a variety of backgrounds to further enrich the Sunday School program.

Lower School

Stracie Maniatis, Academic Dean

Maria Spanos, Special Projects Director

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Classroom Location</u>	<u>Teaching Staff</u>
Nursery (3 Year Olds)	1 st Floor	Diane Stratakos, Alicia Clark
Pre-Kindergarten	1 st Floor	Lynne Courtney, Mary Ann Nasou
Kindergarten	1 st Floor	Mary Cranford
1 st Grade	1 st Floor	Carol Trigonoplos, Pam Glekas-Spring
2 nd Grade	1 st Floor	Stracie Maniatis, Pam Lewton
3 rd Grade	2 nd Floor	Kelly Tanzi
4 th Grade	2 nd Floor	Eugenia Ufholz
5 th Grade	2 nd Floor	Dina Kaldis
6 th Grade	2 nd Floor	Jim Polis

Upper School

Diane Cerniglia, Academic Dean

Amanda Lockhart, Special Projects Director

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Teaching Staff</u>
7 th / 8 th Grade	2 nd Floor	Joanne Kenny, Van Andros
9 th / 10 th Grade	2 nd Floor	Margo Anderson, Ted Theodorou
9 th Grade Altar Boys	Cathedral Altar	Peter Sbily
11 th / 12 th Grade	Frosene Library	Diane Cerniglia, Amanda Lockhart



FAQs

Can my child still participate in Sunday School even if he or she won't be able to attend every Sunday?

All children are welcome to attend our Sunday School classes and while we hope your child can attend every class, we understand this isn't always a possibility. Please try to attend as many as possible so your child's spiritual learning can continue uninterrupted.

What happens if my child requires medication during Sunday School?

Teachers and Saint Sophia employees cannot administer any medication. If a student needs to take medication during school hours, the parent is responsible for providing proper written documentation signed by the ordering physician and also signed by the parent. Parents are fully accountable for such medication and absolve the Sunday School and Saint Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral from any responsibility.

Why should my teenager participate in Sunday School? Aren't they old for that?

No, we believe learning is a lifelong occupation and it is no more critical than during high school when our children are confronted with very adult issues such as body image and self worth, stress management, and drug and alcohol abuse. Providing them with a template for decision-making and keeping in mind Christ's message of love can help them enter adulthood with confidence and kindness.

As a parent, how can I engage with the Sunday School program?

First and foremost, speak with your children about what they are learning in class and how they can apply it beyond the classroom. Introduce yourself to their Sunday School teacher and learn about the teaching materials we use – many have parental versions that can prove not only educational, but enjoyable as well. We also welcome talented individuals to join our teaching community or otherwise volunteer with us. Please do not hesitate to contact Father Steve or one of the academic deans if you would like to become more involved.

