

SUNDAY CATECHETICAL SCHOOL

2023-2024 Parent & Student Handbook All Grades

Students leave the Divine Liturgy immediately following the Prayer of Thanksgiving (p. 105) and go to their classrooms. All classes are held for 45 minutes.



The Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation

2500 Clairmont Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30329
Phone: 404.633.5870
Fax: 404.633.6018
www.atlgoc.org

Mission Statement

Our mission is to prepare the children of the Annunciation Cathedral to become Christ-centered adults.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of attending Church on Sunday is to worship God at the Divine Liturgy, which is celebrated in the Church's sanctuary. The purpose of the Sunday Catechetical School program is to teach children all aspects of Orthodox life, as well as to promote fellowship with their Orthodox peers and Orthodox community.

Goal

The goal of our Sunday Catechetical School program is to nurture in every child a love for God and Christ, as well as to foster an enduring personal communion with the Holy Trinity. Students will worship during liturgical services, study the Holy Scripture, practice the Holy Commandments, and honor the Church's Holy Traditions.

The Divine Liturgy is the heart of Sunday worship.

Sunday School is an extension of what we see, hear and do in church.

Table of Contents

Sunday Catechetical School Family Calendar.....	3-4
Sunday Catechetical School Class, Teachers, Staff, Themes& Textbooks	5-6
Registration, Enrollment for Pre-K Classes & Separation Anxiety.....	7
Instruction Time	8
Attire, Behavior, Cell Phones & Attendance Policy.....	9
Attendance Certificates and Awards & Note to Parents	10
Learning Objectives By Class.....	11-12
Sunday School Room Locations.....	13
Handbook Signature Page (Parent & Student).....	14

2023-2024 Annunciation Cathedral Sunday Catechetical School Family Calendar

First Semester

August 13th	<p>“Dedication Service” in the Cathedral for all Teachers & Staff <i>Teachers & Staff go to the Solea immediately following the Gospel reading.</i> “Meet & Greet” in Carlos Hall <i>Students and parents meet your teachers in Carlos Hall immediately following the Prayer of Thanksgiving.</i></p>
August 20th	<p>Regular class schedule ALL classes will be blessed with Agiasmo, in our classrooms, for our first full day.</p>
August 27th	Regular class schedule
August 27th	<p>Special Activity for 6th-12th Grades 11:50 am - 2:15 pm <i>Hellenic Center & Kartos Ballroom</i></p>
September 3rd	Labor Day Holiday – Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
September 10th	Regular class schedule
September 17th	Regular class schedule
September 24th	Atlanta Greek Festival Weekend – Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
October 1st	Regular class schedule
October 8th	Regular class schedule
October 15th	Regular class schedule
October 22nd	Regular class schedule
October 29th	Regular class schedule - <i>Group Picture in front of the Cathedral at the end of class</i>
November 5th	Regular class schedule
November 12th	Regular class schedule - Archangel Michael/Hierarchical Liturgy
November 19th	Regular class schedule
November 25th	<p>Special Activity for 6th-12th Grades (after making sandwiches for Soup Kitchen) <i>Hellenic Center & Kartos Ballroom</i></p>
November 26th	Thanksgiving Holiday - Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
December 3rd	Regular class schedule
December 9th	Nativity Pageant Rehearsal in the Cathedral 10:00-11:30 am
December 10th	<p>Nativity Pageant in the Cathedral, immediately following the Divine Liturgy Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)</p>
December 17th	Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
December 24th	Observance of the Nativity - Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
December 31st	Observance of the New Year - Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)

2023-2024 Annunciation Cathedral Sunday Catechetical School Family Calendar

Second Semester

January 7th	Regular class schedule
January 14th	Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held); HDF in Orlando, Florida
January 21st	Regular class schedule
January 28th	Regular class schedule
February 4th	Regular class schedule
February 11th	Godparents Sunday & Parent Open House - Regular class schedule Visit classrooms: 6 th -12 th <u>first 15</u> minutes of class; PreK-5 th <u>last 15</u> minutes of class
February 18th	Regular class schedule
February 25th	Sunday School Teacher Appreciation Sunday - Regular class schedule <i>PreKA, PreKB, PreKC, Kindergarten & 1st Grade presentations in Church</i>
March 3rd	Regular class schedule <i>2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Grade presentations in Church</i>
March 10th	Meatfare Sunday - Regular class schedule (<i>no presentations</i>)
March 17th	Cheesefare Sunday - Regular class schedule <i>6th, 7th & 8th Grade presentations in Church</i>
March 22nd	First Heretismi Service - Teachers & Students in PreK-2 nd grades
March 24th	Sunday of Orthodoxy Procession - ALL classes participate with Parish; 30 minute classes <u>after</u> procession
March 29th	Second Heretismi Service - Teachers & Students in 3 rd – 5 th grades
March 31st	Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas - Regular class schedule <i>9th, 10th, 11th & 12th Grade presentations in Church</i> Parish Level St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival in the Cathedral, following Sunday School
March 31st	Sights & Sounds: “A Vision of Our Faith” <i>Student displays in Carlos Hall</i>
April 5th	Third Heretismi Service - Teachers & Students in 6 th – 8 th grades
April 7th	Sunday of the Holy Cross Procession - ALL classes participate with Parish; 30 minute classes <u>after</u> procession
April 7th	Special Activity for 6th-12th Grades 11:50 am - 2:15 pm <i>Hellenic Center & Kartos Ballroom</i>
April 12th	Fourth Heretismi Service - Teachers & Students in 9 th – 12 th grades
April 14th	Sunday of St. John Climacus - Regular class schedule Parish Level St. John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival in the Cathedral, following Sunday School
April 19th	Akathistos Hymn - Teachers & Students in ALL grades
April 21st	Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt - Regular class schedule
April 27th	Saturday of Lazarus - 9:00 am Divine Liturgy followed by breakfast & Making of Palm Crosses in Carlos Hall
April 28th	Palm Sunday - Remain in the Divine Liturgy Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
May 1st	Holy Wednesday - Services at 2:00 pm & 6:30 pm
May 3rd	Great & Holy Friday – Services at 2:00 pm & 6:30 pm
May 5th	Pascha - AGAPE Service 11:00 am Family Worship Sunday (classes are not held)
May 12th	Graduation & Attendance Recognition in Cathedral - 30 minute classes

Sunday Catechetical School Faculty and Staff

2023-2024 School Year

Rev. Father Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean
Rev. Father Christos P. Mars, Protopresbyter
Ms. Susan Marinos, Sunday School Coordinator

Preschool

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Teacher(s)</u>	<u>Room(s)</u>	<u>Themes/Textbooks</u>
PreK-A (2 yr olds)	Amanda Galifianakis	1 & 2 downstairs	The Wonder Of It All
PreK-B (3 yr olds)	Jennifer Welte Kat Pottinger	11 downstairs	God Loves Us: Living Our Orthodox Faith
PreK-C (4 yr olds)	Kiki Kendall Monique Nikolov	3 downstairs	God, My Friends, And Me

Lower Elementary

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Teacher(s)</u>	<u>Room(s)</u>	<u>Themes/Textbooks</u>
Kindergarten	Kiki Papadimitriou	9 & 10 downstairs	What We See And Do In Church
1 st Grade	Vickie Costopoulos Tina Watson	4 & 5 downstairs	What Does God Look Like?
2 nd Grade	Maria Starks Kristin Tiliakos Julie Zaharatos	6 & 7 downstairs	Loving God & Take A Walk Through The Orthodox Church

Upper Elementary

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Teacher(s)</u>	<u>Room(s)</u>	<u>Themes/Textbooks</u>
3 rd Grade	Michelle Torski	8 downstairs	Sharing God's World
4 th Grade	Christine Bower	12 & 13 upstairs	Growing With God
5 th Grade	Margaret Stewart	14 & 15 upstairs	God Calls Us

Sunday Catechetical School Faculty and Staff continued

2023-2024 School Year

Rev. Father Paul A. Kaplanis, Dean
Rev. Father Christos P. Mars, Presbyter
Ms. Susan Marinos, Sunday Catechetical School Coordinator

Middle School

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Teacher(s)</u>	<u>Room(s)</u>	<u>Themes/Textbooks</u>
6 th Grade	Charles Stewart	16 & 17 upstairs	Knowing Christ and Facing Up to Peer Pressure
7 th Grade	Brittany Thomas Constantine Katsoudas	18 & 19 upstairs	Sacraments & The Ten Commandments
8 th Grade	Brittany Thomas Constantine Katsoudas	18 & 19 upstairs	Worship: Living Our Faith

High School

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Teacher(s)</u>	<u>Room(s)</u>	<u>Themes/Textbooks</u>
9 th Grade	Scott Davenport	20 Lab upstairs	The Nicene Creed
10 th Grade	Scott Davenport	20 Lab upstairs	Saints & Stories
11 th Grade & 12 th Grade	Ryan Marinos Gregory Vourloumis	Kafeneion	Contemporary Moral Issues

Sunday School Office & Special Program Coordinators

Sunday School Office

Stacey Sapp
Carrie Pribas

Youth Choir Director

Susie Zaharatos

Nativity Pageant Coordinator

Margaret Stewart

Nativity Pageant Costumes

Kiki Papadimitriou

Oratorical Festival Chairman

Jerry Odenwelder

Great Lent & Holy Week Helpers

Heretismi Services

Kiki Papadimitriou
Margaret Stewart

Myrrhophores

Carolyn McBride

Kouvouklion Carriers

Ryan Marinos

Registration

All students must register with the Sunday Catechetical School in order to be assigned to a class.

Registration process includes updating your family's information with our database and a donation of **\$30 per family** for registration. Sunday Catechetical School registration also registers your child for H.O.P.E., J.O.Y. & G.O.Y.A.

Only the names of students who have registered will appear on the class rosters, attendance sheets, and mailing lists.

Enrollment for the PreK Classes

In the Pre-K classes, the primary goal for the children is to interact with other age-appropriate children in an Orthodox environment.

Placement in the Preschool classes is based on age. **No exceptions will be made.**

Students must also be potty trained.

- To be eligible for enrollment into the Pre-K-A class, the child must be 2 (two) years old by September 1st, 2023.
- To be eligible for enrollment into the Pre-K-B class, the child must be 3 (three) years old by September 1st, 2023.
- To be eligible for enrollment into the Pre-K-C class, the child must be 4 (four) years old by September 1st, 2023.

Parents of Pre-K Students Cannot Stay in the Room During Instruction Time

(see "*Separation Anxiety*" below)

We do encourage parents to notify the teacher(s) if you are available to assist them during class time on specific dates.

NOTE: Due to Archdiocese Youth Protection Policies, anyone who has not completed the online training...may not go into the classroom and interact with the children. However, if you would like to complete the training (takes about one hour), please contact the Sunday School Coordinator. Once you complete the training, the Archdiocese notifies us, and you will be able to remain in the classroom and assist the teacher(s).

Please do not send your children to class with toys. They can be a distraction to the learning environment.

Separation Anxiety

We know that some children are not ready to separate from you, especially at the beginning of the year. Our teachers are experienced and know how to handle this situation. Please follow any requests and directions that the teachers give you. Do not peek in the room (by peering through the glass or opening the door), as this upsets not only your child but the other children in the class as well.

Instruction Time

- Students are expected to attend the Divine Liturgy from the beginning with their parents. Divine Liturgy begins at 9:30 a.m.
- Students should leave the Divine Liturgy IMMEDIATELY following the Prayer of Thanksgiving which is found on page 105 of the Divine Liturgy Book. **Please do not send your child to class after Holy Communion.**
- ALL classes Pre-K-A through 12th Grades will be held for **45 minutes**.
 - A bell will ring when classes begin.
 - A dismissal bell will ring 45 minutes later.
- On special days, listed on the calendar, classes will be modified to **30 minutes**.
- Classes will begin with group prayer and announcements. Students should be in their rooms and ready to participate at the proper time.

Class Dismissal Times

- Dismissal times will be written on the hallway doors both upstairs and downstairs.
- A parent must come to the classroom door at dismissal to pick up students in grades Pre-K-A, Pre-K-B, Pre-K-C, Kindergarten and 1st Grades.
- If your child needs to leave class early, a parent or grandparent must go to the Sunday School Office to make this request. An Office Staff Member will go with you to get your child.

Please do not leave the church premises during instruction time. If your child needs you, we must be able to find you.

Important Information for Parents

- Absolutely **NO** interruptions during class instruction.
- Parents and other adults are to remain in the Cathedral during the Divine Liturgy following the dismissal of the students to their Sunday Catechetical School classrooms.
- Following the Divine Liturgy, adults should gather in Carlos Hall until time for dismissal.
- **Parents and other adults must not gather and socialize in the hallways during instruction time; this creates a major distraction for students.**
- Parents/organization leaders are NOT to go into classroom to make announcements. All announcements will be handled by the Sunday Catechetical School office staff.

Attire

Students must be appropriately dressed for both Sunday Catechetical School and the Divine Liturgy. It is suggested that:

- Boys wear a neat shirt tucked into pants, with appropriate shoes.
Avoid the following types of clothing:
 - T-shirts, tank tops, cut off shirts, or any clothing that exposes the midriff area of the body
 - Any clothing containing words and/or images referencing alcohol, drugs, or inappropriate language.
 - Flip flops or water shoes

- Girls wear a blouse with a skirt or pants, or a dress with appropriate shoes.
Avoid the following types of clothing:
 - Short skirts or dresses (skirts and dresses must come below the tip of fingers when holding arms straight down at your side)
 - Strapless shirts or dresses, spaghetti strap shirts or dresses, halter tops
*If straps are smaller than 2 inches wide, a sweater must be worn over them.
 - T-shirts, tank tops, cut off shirts, or any clothing that exposes the midriff area of the body
 - Any clothing containing words and/or images referencing alcohol, drugs, or inappropriate language.
 - Flip flops or water shoes

Behavior

Any behavior issues, including inappropriate or vulgar language, will be referred to the Sunday Catechetical School Office and parents will be contacted. A Behavior Plan may be implemented if necessary.

Cell Phones

Cell Phones **will not be used** during Sunday School class time. Any students who bring phones to class will have to give them to their teachers at the beginning of class and they will get them back when class is dismissed. Sunday School is a time to learn about our faith. Students should be able to focus and “unplug” from electronics during instruction. This also applies to any other electronic devices (iPads, games, etc.).

Attendance Policy

- All teachers take attendance. Teachers mark a “✓” or a “P” for present and an “A” for absent.
- Please do not bring sick children to class. **One** excused absence will be accepted for illness.
- If student has attended an Orthodox Sunday Catechetical School class at another Orthodox Church, the student must bring a note from that school’s director or priest in order to be marked present for that particular Sunday.
- If students attend another Orthodox Church with H.O.P.E., J.O.Y., G.O.Y.A. or the Dance Ministry, those students will receive credit for having attended Sunday Catechetical School that particular Sunday. Credit will be given based on list provided by those youth group advisors.

Attendance Certificates, Attendance Awards & Graduation Requirements

- Only the Sunday Catechetical School office will give official attendance awards to students.
- Teachers will hand out individual promotional certificates in classrooms on the last day.
- To receive a certificate at the close of the school year certifying satisfactory completion of a Sunday Catechetical School grade, a student must be in attendance at least 50% of the school year (16 Sundays) and complete all curriculum requirements for the grade level.

Attendance Awards will be presented for **Perfect Attendance**, in Church on the last day of classes, for students who have attended ALL Sunday Catechetical School classes.

Sunday School Seniors will be presented with a Graduation diploma, in Church on the last day of classes, for seniors who have attended Sunday School classes regularly both the first and second semester.

Note to All Parents

Sunday Catechetical School is important for our youth. Its purpose is to enrich the lives of our children. Sunday Catechetical School teachers reinforce what has already been taught at home. Many times our children have questions about our faith, our beliefs, and Orthodoxy as a whole. The answers to these questions should come from the parents first, yet they also come from our clergy and our teachers.

The role of an Orthodox parent is not only to teach your children at home, but also to bring them to Church regularly. Sunday Catechetical School is an integral part of coming to Church. By attending the Divine Liturgy as a family and participating in Sunday Catechetical School, we enable our children to learn how to live the Divine Liturgy in their daily lives.

Learning about our beliefs, in addition to our customs, is vital to the spiritual growth and balance of all Orthodox Christians. Please make every effort to bring your children regularly and on time.

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING THE POSSIBILITY OF VIRTUAL CLASSES

Currently, there is not an option for Face to Face Classes **and** Virtual Classes.

IF our Cathedral policies, as well as the Metropolis and the CDC policies, change and Sunday School classes need to be taught virtually, for a short or extended time, Sunday School families will be notified by email.

IF classes are taught virtually, some classes may be combined. These classes will still follow our current curriculum, but they will also be an opportunity for our students to see and talk to each other in the only social setting they have at the time...to keep us all connected. Keep in mind they are still academic classes.

Our goal will remain the same - to nurture in every child a love for God and Christ, as well as to foster an enduring personal communion with the Holy Trinity. Students will worship during liturgical services via livestream, and we will study the Holy Scripture, practice the Holy Commandments, and honor the Church's Holy Traditions through our lessons.

As Teachers and Parents, we will work together to nurture our children in our faith whether we are face to face or virtual.

Our Learning Objectives by Class

Preschool

Pre-K-A

Students build an awareness of the wonders of the world as a basis for a liturgical sense of wonder & awe and a foundation for prayer.

Pre-K-B

Students become aware that God's Family is My Family, God Made the World, and God Made the Seasons.

Pre-K-C

Students learn the importance of the relationships among friends, family and God in the home, at Church, and in Sunday School.

Elementary

Kindergarten

Students learn about things they see and do in Church, both with their families during the Divine Liturgy and in their Sunday School classroom.

1st Grade

The three most basic pillars of Our Orthodox piety are Faith, Hope and Love. Through the example of men and women in the Bible, and of our saints, students begin to understand right, wrong and forgiveness in the light of God's love. They also learn the importance of loving God unconditionally, respecting other people, taking care of the environment and doing good in His name.

2nd Grade

God is real, loving and caring. Family, friends, church and school all come from God. We see this throughout the Bible in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Students will learn about loving God through loving others.

3rd Grade

Students learn about sharing through examples of Jesus. They are inspired to observe these same examples in the Divine Liturgy, the Sacraments, and other services of the Church. These examples help students learn to become caring, sharing individuals.

4th Grade

Students learn how to use and appreciate the Bible. They also focus on living the sacramental life by attending services, fasting, praying, observing feast days, helping others, learning about the saints and the Church of Christ.

5th Grade

Students learn how to respond to God's call through examples of the heroes of the Faith who have responded to God's call. Students learn to respond to God in terms of personal faith and the basics of Christian morality. The examples include faith, loyalty, self-sacrifice, obedience, love, justice and social responsibility.

Our Learning Objectives by Class

Middle School

6th Grade

Knowing Christ: Students are able to know Christ through the teachings and parables described in the Bible. They understand that Christ's presence is with us always, and are able to relate to Christ's life as we live ours in today's society.

Facing Up to Peer Pressure: Peer pressure is not only a nagging challenge, it has a favorable side that is positive.

7th Grade

Students learn about each of the seven Sacraments of our faith, the Ten Commandments and how they all apply to our daily lives.

8th Grade

Students learn about Worship and focus on the Divine Liturgy. The focus of the class is to understand how we "Live Our Faith" in our daily lives.

High School

9th Grade

Students learn about the foundations of Christianity using the Nicene Creed as a guide. This understanding helps students learn how to guide their daily lives through our Faith.

10th Grade

Students will learn about the history of the Orthodox Church by understanding the lives of the saints. Saints were not only present thousands of years ago, but there are saints who live among us today. Saints, like us, are human beings.

11th/12th Grades

Students discuss contemporary issues to highlight how Orthodoxy informs the decisions they make in their lives.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM LOCATIONS

We have three levels of classrooms.

Upstairs Education Building: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th, 9th & 10th Grades

Downstairs Education Building: PreKA (2 yr), PreKB (3 yr), PreKC (4 yr), Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd Grades

2nd Level of the Hellenic Center - same level as Cathedral Offices: 11th & 12th

Upstairs: 4th-10th Grades		Downstairs: PreK-3rd Grades		2nd Level
Window		Door to Back Parking Lot		of Hellenic Center
6th Grade Rooms 16/17 (double room) Rooms 16/17 6th Grade	(stairwell)	3rd Grade Room 8	(stairwell)	*same floor as administrative offices
H	5th Grade Rooms 14/15 (double room) Rooms 14/15 5th Grade	H	2nd Grade Rooms 6/7 (double room) Rooms 6/7 2nd Grade	11th-12th Grades
A		A		
7th/8th Grades Rooms 18/19 (double room) Rooms 18/19 7th/8th Grades		Kindergarten Rooms 9/10 (double room) Rooms 9/10 Kindergarten	L	1st Grade Rooms 4/5 (double room) Rooms 4/5 1st Grade
L	4th Grade Rooms 13/14 (double room) Rooms 13/14 4th Grade	L		FOUNTAIN
L		L		
W		W		Church Office
9th/10th Grades Room 20/Lab (double room) Room 20/Lab 9th/10th Grades		PreK-B (3 yr) Room 11	A	
A	Media Center	A	PreK-C (4yr) Room 3 PreK-C (4 yr)	C
Y		Y		O
	Media Center	Storage Room Boiler Room	PreK-A (2 yr) Rooms 1/2 (double room) Rooms 1/2 PreK-A (2 yr)	U
Carlos Hall	Bridge to Hellenic Center			R
Girls' Restroom		Girls' Restroom		T
	Sunday School Office	Boys' Restroom		Y
Boys' Restroom				A
	Staircase- down		Staircase- up	R
Family Restroom				D
Hallway to Narthex		Javo Room ADS Office	Door out to the: Kafeneion- 11th/12th	
	Staircase- down		Staircase- up	11th/12th Kafeneion