

Catechesis Syllabus Fall 2024 & Winter 2025

Required elements of Catechesis

- Regular attendance at Divine Services - Vespers and Divine Liturgies and other services (Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, etc.)
- Attend Catechesis classes - attendance will be taken
- Develop a personal rule of life - rule of prayer and fasting which will be discussed and blessed by Fr. Daniel.
- Attend to the principles set out in Fr Thomas Hopko's "For Those Seeking Truth: 12 Things to do as part of your Rule of Life"
- Get to know parishioners of St. Peter and St. Paul - coffee hour, before and after services, etc.
- Meet with Fr Daniel at least twice to discuss your initiation.
 - First - general introduction / discussion. Also need to begin the process of locating your baptismal record if you have previously received Trinitarian baptism.
 - Second - more in-depth / discuss route of initiation, patron saint, sponsors
- Choose a patron saint and sponsor for initiation with the guidance of Fr. Daniel.

TIME: Classes are held after coffee hour on Sunday in the nave of the Church for 60 minutes. We will make every attempt to begin promptly at 12:30.

TEXTBOOK: Our main textbook will be the four volume series of Fr Thomas Hopko available in [print](#) or [online](#).

PODCAST: Classes will be recorded and uploaded in case someone misses a class.

Reception into the Church

Attending and participating in catechesis is a requirement to being received into the Church. But participation in the classes is paired with the discernment of the priest as to readiness for reception into the Church. Ultimately it is at the discretion of Fr. Daniel as to when one is ready to be received into the Church.

Patron Saint

The Christian name is the name of the person's patron saint and serves as one's first name. The catechumen is encouraged to propose to the priest a patron saint as soon as possible. It is recommended that if the catechumen already has a Christian name that this name be retained. Catechumens must obtain the blessing of the priest for their proposed patron saint.

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Sponsor

You will need to find a Godparent/Sponsor. You must discuss your choice with the Priest prior to asking the potential sponsor. The sponsor will need to be approved to be your sponsor by the Priest. Typically, the sponsor will act as a mentor in the faith. The sponsor usually provides a baptismal cross for the catechumen

Proposed Schedule

DATE	ASSIGNED READING
September 1 Session 1	Orientation / What is Catechesis? Handout: For Those Seeking Life: 12 Things to do as Part of Your Rule of Life
September 8 Session 2	Hopko Volume 2 - "Worship" Chapters 1 The Church Building & 2 The Sacraments Handout: Church Etiquette
September 15 Session 3	Hopko Volume 2 - "Worship" Chapters 3 Daily Cycles of Prayer & Volume 4 - "Spirituality" Chapter 5 Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving Handout: Suggested Prayer Rule for Catechumens & St Theophan the Recluse's Homilies on Prayer
September 22 Session 4	Hopko Volume 2 - "Worship" 4 The Church Year Handout: Fr. Georges Florovsky's " The Worshiping Church " & The Crown of the Year
October 6 Session 5	Hopko Volume 2 - "Worship" Chapter 5 The Divine Liturgy <i>Focus: Liturgy of the Word</i> Handout: Divine Liturgy Text & " Meeting Christ, Understanding, and Being Transformed " from Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs
October 20 Session 6	Hopko Volume 2 - "Worship" Chapter 5 The Divine Liturgy <i>Focus: Eucharistic Sacrifice</i> Handout: Anaphora of St. John Chrysostom & " The Anaphora " from Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs

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November 3 Session 7	Hopko Volume 1 - “Doctrine and Scripture” Chapter 1 <i>Sources of Christian Doctrine</i> - Icons & Hymnody as theology Handout: “Introduction to <i>The Lives of the Saints</i>” by St Justin Popovich
Nov 17 Session 8	Hopko Volume 1 - “Doctrine and Scripture” Chapter 4 <i>The Bible</i> Handout: “How to Read the Bible” by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware
December 1 Session 9	Hopko Volume 1 - “Doctrine and Scripture” start with Chapter 7 <i>Salvation History</i> and then read Chapter 5 <i>Old Testament</i> & Chapter 6 <i>New Testament</i>
December 15 Session 10	??
January 12 Session 11	Old Testament Survey
January 26 Session 12	Old Testament Themes
February 9 Session 13	Overview of Great Lent Handout: Fr Alexander Schmemmann’s <i>Great Lent</i> “Prayer of St Ephraim”
March 2 Session 14	Hopko Volume 1 - “Doctrine and Scripture” Chapter 2 <i>The Symbol of Faith</i> & Chapter 3 <i>The Holy Trinity</i>
March 16 Session 16	Hopko Volume 4 - “Spirituality” Chapter 1 <i>Orthodox Spirituality</i> & Chapter 2 <i>The Beatitudes</i>
March 23 Session 17	Hopko Volume 4 - “Spirituality” Chapter 8 <i>The Kingdom of Heaven</i> Handout: Guide to Orthodox Christian Funeral
March 30 Session 18	Lecture on Confession - Baptism, Chrismation, Communion Handout: Confession: The Mystery of Repentance Handout: Baptism Rite
April 6 Session 19	Hopko Volume 4 - “Spirituality” Chapter 6 <i>Sexuality, Marriage, and Family</i> Handout: Synodal Affirmations on Marriage, Family, Sexuality, and the Sanctity of Life

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Annotated Bibliography / Resources

You Tube Playlist

I suggest this playlist [Welcome to the Orthodox Church](#)

Podcasts / Audio Classes

Ancient Faith has a collection of introductory podcasts for those looking into Orthodoxy - they are curated [here](#).

Introductory Books

The Orthodox Faith by Fr. Thomas Hopko - available online at the OCA website [here](#) or you can purchase the books from St. Vladimir's Press [here](#).

[Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs](#) - "A cooperative effort of the Departments of the Orthodox Church in America, the groundbreaking work is an offering to the Church to assist clergy and parishes in their work of instructing inquirers and the faithful in the truths of the Orthodox Christian Faith."

<https://essentialbeliefs.org>

[Orthodox Dogmatic Theology](#) by Fr Michael Pomazansky - I recommend for those who would like a classic introduction to the dogmatic teachings of the Orthodox Church. It is also available online [here](#).

[Know the Faith](#) by Fr Michael Shanbour - I recommend this book for those coming from Protestant backgrounds as it is a more introductory book for those who are coming to some of these topics for the first time.

[Incarnate God](#) - 2 Volumes. This is a nice introduction to the Orthodox Church following the liturgical year.

[The Orthodox Church](#) by Metro. Kallistos Ware - this is a classic book and one of the first books available in English about Orthodoxy. It covers the history and touches on the theology of the Orthodox Church. You can always find older versions for cheaper online.

[The Orthodox Way by Metro. Kallistos Ware](#) - this is more focused on the theology of the Church and is a nice introduction into how Orthodoxy generally thinks about God, Man, Church, etc. You can always find older versions for cheaper online.

More Advanced

[Orthodox Christianity](#) (5 volumes) by Metro. Hilarion Alfeyev - This is a deeper and more extensive dive into the theology, history, liturgy, music, iconography, etc. of the Church. You can buy the whole set or just buy the volumes that interest you. I highly suggest the first two volumes, but especially the second.

[The Orthodox Faith, Worship, and Life](#) - by Hieromonk Gregorios. This book is full of quotes from the Fathers and operates more like a classic catechism. This will be for those already familiar with theology.