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2026–27 COURSE SCHEDULE for Catechism, Part I

	DATE	TOPIC
1.	Sun, Sept 6, 12:30 PM	**What is a catechumen**
2.	Saturday, Oct. 17	**The True God**
a.	Sunday, Oct. 18	**On St. Seraphim**
3.	Saturday, Oct. 24	**The Human Being**
a.	Sunday, Oct. 25	**Setting up a prayer corner**
4.	Sunday, October 31	**On Sin**
a.	Sunday, Nov. 1	**Icons: Prayer and Theology**
5.	Saturday, Nov. 7	**Jesus Christ the Son of God**
a.	Sunday, Nov. 8	**Participation in the Liturgy**
6.	Saturday, Nov. 14	**Jesus Christ the Savior**
a.	Sunday, Nov. 15	**On Great Vespers**
7.	Saturday, Nov. 21	**Repentance and Faith**
a.	Sunday, Nov. 22	**On Proportional Giving**
8.	Saturday, Nov. 28	**The Holy Spirit**
a.	Sunday, Nov. 29	**Feast Days of the Church**
9.	Saturday, Dec. 5	**The Church**
a.	Sunday, Dec. 6	**Icons: Prayer and Theology. Pt. 2**
10.	Saturday, Dec. 12	??*NO CLASS TODAY due to SF Retreat??*
a.	Sunday, Dec. 13	**On the Saints**
11.	Saturday, Dec. 19	**The Virgin Mary**
a.	Sunday, Dec. 20	**Monasticism**

A. Classes meet Saturday afternoons from 3:30 until Vespers. Attendance at the Saturday classes is required for Baptism (if absent, listen to a recording of the class)

B. During Liturgy on Sunday, Catechumens are dismissed to attend a class in the Protection Church

C. **Reading during the first period of catechesis:** *Know the Faith* by Fr. Michael Shanbour; *Come, Let us Worship* by Fr. Patrick O'Grady; *Gospel of St. Matthew*

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COURSE SCHEDULE for Catechism, Part 2

	DATE	TOPIC
12.	Saturday, Feb. 27	**The Mystery of Holy Baptism**
a.	Sunday, Feb. 28	**About the first Week of Great Lent**
13.	Saturday, March 6	**The Mystery of Chrismation**
a.	Sunday, March 7	**About Lenten Services**
14.	Saturday, March 13	**The Holy Eucharist**
a.	Sunday, March 14	**About Lenten Services**
15.	Saturday, March 20	**The Mystery of Confession**
a.	Sunday, March 21	**On Preparing for Communion**
16.	Saturday, March 27	**The Mystery of the Priesthood**
a.	Sunday, March 28	**On Preparing for Confession**
17.	Saturday, April 3	*NO CLASS TODAY Retreat in SF at HTC??*
a.	Sunday, April 4	**Baptismal Sermon of St. John**
18.	Saturday, April 10	**The Mystery of Marriage**
a.	Sunday, April 11	**About Holy Week**
19.	Saturday, April 17	**Death and the Funeral**
a.	Sunday, April 18	**On the Paschal celebration**
20.	Fri., April 23, 6 PM	**Matins and Baptismal run-thru**
a.	Sat. April 24, 9 AM	*Baptisms/Chrismations* *Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion*

Texts To Read (required):

The Beginnings of a Life of Prayer by Father Irenei (Steenburg); *Great Lent* by Father Alexander Schmemann; *Gospel of St. Mark*

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Catechumen Personal Information Form

Please attach a personal photo to this form

Surname	First Name	Middle Name

Street / Apt #	City	State	Zip

Home Phone	Cell Phone

Email Address 1	Email Address 2

Date of Birth	Place of Birth

Marital Status (Mark X): ☐ Married ☐ Unmarried ☐ Divorced

Date(s) of Divorce(s): _____

Reasons for Divorce(s):

_____

_____

_____

Children: Please provide each child's full name, age and birthdate.

Name	Age	Birthdate

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Employment

Employer	Years Employed

Education

High School	Year	College / Major(s)	Graduate School / Degree

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Catechumen Personal Information Form

Name: _____

What month and year did you become a catechumen?

_____

Describe your Religious Background (Attach other sheet if needed):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Church / Denominational Affiliation prior to Orthodoxy:

Church / Denomination	**Years Affiliated**

If Christian, were you baptized in your previous confession? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please attach a copy of the baptismal certificate

Have you notified your previous confession to remove you from their membership rolls?

☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*

Do you have a criminal record? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please arrange to speak with the pastor in person concerning this.

Hobbies / Interests:

_____

Any other important information you would like the priest to know?

_____

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DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Catechumens are to participate in all the classes and Saturday evening Vespers. **If you cannot come to a class, please get the recording for that class. It is our policy to receive into the Church only those who have completed the course in its entirety.**
2. During Great Lent, catechumens are expected to attend the 6 PM Wednesday evening Liturgy of the Presanctified.
3. Catechumens tend the candle sand and candle stubs; at the beginning and end of each service, they should be sure that the candle areas are neat and tidy, and that the sand is clean and tidy. Catechumens manage the oil lamps in the Nave and Narthex.
4. Catechumens, if they have not already, meet with the priest to establish a rule of prayer, fasting, and the doing of acts of mercy.
5. Catechumens are to be listeners and not talkers. They should listen to instruction; they should ask their teachers (priest, deacon, lay catechists, sponsor) questions, but not opine with others or get into theological dialogues or disputes with others.
6. Catechumens may invite others to church with "Come and see," but should not instruct heterodox or non-Christians in dogmatic or spiritual matters.
7. Catechumens may not post theological opinions or enter into theological discussions or debates on social media, discussion groups, chat-sites, etc.
8. Catechumens may and ought to bear witness to "all the good that God is doing" in their lives, and when asked "tell me about the differences..." they should say: "others are more qualified for that. Come and see!" Or "Come and ask the priest."
9. Catechumens should develop a ministry of love with the older members of the congregation. Each Catechumen is asked to interview one of the parish seniors—using an "ice-breaker" list of questions, and send Fr Lawrence a synopsis of that conversation.
10. When a person is serious and wishes finally to be received into the Church, he or she commits to tithing, if he or she has not already: offering his/her first and best 10% to God, for "*where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*."

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Once a person becomes a Catechumen, he or she can typically expect to spend nine to twelve months preparing to be received. Baptisms/Chrismations may also take place any other time of the year; usually they will occur on the following days: Lazarus Saturday, Holy Saturday, Theophany, Pentecost, or on any designated Sunday.

Prior to Baptism, a Catechumen will prepare a "Lifetime Confession of Sins" and make the confession in the months, weeks and days prior to joining the Church. I recommend the book ***The Path to Confession****, a book for family reading presented to children* and ***Return*** as the best tools for preparing for the Holy Mystery of Confession.

Following Baptism, the newly-illumined will make a confession once a week for a period of a month and thereafter once per month.

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INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH LIFE

1. WORSHIP

The best "course of studies" for anyone in the Church begins and continues with the corporate prayer of the Church. **The following Services may be considered "obligatory" for the Orthodox Christian and the Catechumen preparing to be Orthodox:**

- the "base-line" minimum service of **Saturday evening Vespers** (the hymns focus on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and serve as a preparation for Communion)
- **Sunday morning Divine Liturgies.** Sunday is the Lord's Day, and we are to keep it holy.
- The Orthodox Christian strives to sanctify time and the calendar by celebrating the glorious Festal Vigils and Liturgies of the Church year—consult the monthly calendar.

The worship of the Holy Trinity—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—is the greatest gift of God to mankind, and we learn how to worship in the Liturgical practice of the Church.

Corporate prayer is not complete without ***personal & and daily prayer.*** We use the prayers in the Orthodox Prayer Book, the Jesus Prayer and our own personal prayers.

Part of the life of an Orthodox Christian, Catechumen or already received, are four further essential components: almsgiving, stewardship, fasting and forgiveness.

2. ALMSGIVING

Works of mercy is the giving of time, money or help—often in secret—to the poor, needy, hungry, destitute, or lonely. We are to be judged in this matter (See Matthew Chapt 25).

3. STEWARDSHIP and PARISH SERVICE

Stewardship is the giving of thanks to God, as directed by the Old Testament and Lord Jesus Christ and St Paul in the New Testament, by making a regular financial offering what God has prospered you. Scriptural passages in support of stewardship are too many to mention here. We are to give proportionally from what we earn.

4. FASTING

The Orthodox Christian fasts from meat and dairy products (animal products) on Wednesday and Friday. This is a "midnight to midnight" fast.

One also fasts prior to the Sunday Divine Liturgy, or the Divine Liturgy on any day, from all liquids, foods, cigarettes, etc. Medication and food with medication is of course allowed as needed. Speak to the priest in these situations.

5. FORGIVENESS & LOVE

Essential to the life of a parish, with all of the interaction and common work, is the active pursuit of loving and forgiving others. "Forgive us our debts (or trespasses) as we forgive our debtors." What more needs to be said?

These things listed above are just a small part of the change (the Greek word is *metania*) in the way of living and thinking that one attempts when becomes an Orthodox Christian. The Beatitudes (*Sermon on the Mount, St Matthew*) are guides to this change.

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Activities / Check List

In preparation for Baptism

☐ Reading Assignments for both semesters done?

- ○ *Know the Faith*, by Fr. Michael Shanbour
- ○ *Come, Let us Worship*—Fr. Patrick O'Grady
- ○ *Gospel of St. Matthew*
- ○ *The Beginnings of a Life of Prayer*—Father Irenei (Steenburg)
- ○ *Great Lent*—Father Alexander Schmemann
- ○ *Gospel of St. Mark*

☐ All Classes attended or listened to recordings

- ○ What is a catechumen
- ○ The True God
- ○ The Human Being
- ○ On Sin
- ○ Jesus Christ the Son of God
- ○ Jesus Christ the Savior of the World
- ○ Repentance and Faith
- ○ On the Holy Spirit
- ○ On the Church
- ○ On the Theotokos

- ○ On Holy Baptism
- ○ On Chrismation
- ○ On the Eucharist
- ○ On Confession
- ○ On the Priesthood
- ○ On Marriage
- ○ On Death and the Funeral

☐ Confirm Godparent(s). *Speak with Fr Lawrence before asking the potential Godparent.*

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- [ ] Visit at least two other Orthodox Churches during catechumenate
  - ○ _____
  - ○ _____

- [ ] Attend Liturgical Services—required attendance at:
  - ○ Wednesday Presanctified Liturgies during Great Lent
  - ○ Saturday evening Vespers or Vigils
  - ○ Sunday morning Divine Liturgies

- [ ] Prepare and make life confession ***at least two weeks*** prior to the baptism/chrismation.
- [ ] Establish regular confession practice (start with every week for a month, then no less than once a month, or more often if needed)
- [ ] Obtain a baptismal robe (see Fr. Lawrence)
- [ ] Review the Baptism/Chrismation Service 1x per week in Lent – see link below

https://www.oca.org/files/PDF/Music/Baptism/baptism-service.pdf

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Prayer Rule Form

Personal Prayer Rule, Scripture Reading, Confession,
Fasting and Alms Giving and Service

Personal Prayer Rule

> *"But as regards prayer, it is certainly our bounden duty to use it every day, morning and evening, before and after both dinner and supper, as far as possible, at the beginning and ending of every work" (Q&A #551 The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox Church – by Metropolitan Philaret, 1830).*

A prayer rule is the outline of our daily prayer routine. It is important to have a thought out rule. Prayer books available in the bookstore or elsewhere. There are also fine resources for developing one's Prayer Rule online. One link is: http://www.orthodoxprayer.org.

Answer the questions below regarding your Personal Prayer Rule:

When will you privately pray during each day?
What will you pray?
What about prostrations? (What will do if you can't do prostrations?) The Jesus Prayer?
Where will you pray?
When will you pray as a family?
What will you pray as a family?
What non-obligatory services will you attend at Church?

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Scripture Reading

We should read scripture daily. There are Orthodox online scripture readings available. How will you approach learning the "whole counsel of God"?

Please answer the questions below regarding your daily scripture reading:

When will you read Holy Scripture?
What will you read?

Fasting

Do you know and are you keeping the Church standards for fasting?
Do you need to fast from anything particular other than that expected of every other Orthodox Christian?

Almsgiving and Service

Besides your tithe are there areas of service you wish to make an offering to God on a regular basis?

Confession

When will you make your confession? (After you do your life confession)
How will you prepare?

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Catechumen Renunciations and Affirmations Form

Exercise:
Part of the formal process of conversion is clearly identifying the heresies of one's previous confession and renouncing them. Heresy is from the devil, and all Christians are called upon by God to hate with righteous hatred all heresy. Use the chart below to write down Orthodox doctrines and next to them the doctrines of your former confession which are heretical. Be thorough.

Having identified your heresies you will be asked by the priest who is catechizing and receiving you into the Orthodox Church to renounce these heresies and to affirm Orthodox teachings. In some traditions this formal renunciation takes place at the beginning of the service of the reception of converts.

At the same time it is of the utmost importance for converts to realize that wherever truth is found, it is authored by God Himself. In virtually all religious traditions there are true beliefs and practices, and in some there are many. In the procession of conversion the catechumen should also be able to identify and appreciate the Orthodox elements of his previous confession and be genuinely thankful for them. It is very important to avoid a critical and negative spirit. (List of common heresies are listed below this form)

Name:	
Write the name of your former Confession:	

	Orthodox Beliefs	**Heresies/Errors**
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

(Continued next page)

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List of Common Heresies

- **Filioque** – The word *filioque* means “and son” in Latin. It is referred to as the “filioque clause” because the phrase “and son” was added to the Nicene Creed, indicating that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father “and Son.”
- **Papal Infallibility** – Papal infallibility is a dogma of the Latin Church which states that, in virtue of the promise of Jesus to Peter, the Pope is preserved from the possibility of error "when, in the exercise of his office as shepherd and teacher of all Christians, in virtue of his supreme apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church" (Letter of Pope Agatho, 680, on the two wills of Christ, received by the Third Council of Constantinople). This doctrine was defined dogmatically in the First Vatican Council of 1869-1870. The doctrine of infallibility relies on one of the cornerstones of Latin dogma: that of petrine supremacy of the pope, and his authority to be the ruling agent in deciding what will be accepted as formal beliefs in the Roman Latin Church.
- **Iconoclasm** – Iconoclasm constituted a ban on religious images, accompanied by widespread destruction of images and persecution of supporters of the veneration of images. Today this heresy consists of viewing the reverence of Saints through icons as a form of idolatry.
- **Monophysitism** – Greek: monos meaning "only, single" and physis meaning "nature"), is the Christological position that, after the union of the divine and the human in the historical Incarnation, Jesus Christ, as the incarnation of the eternal Son or Word (Logos) of God, had only a single "nature" which was either divine or a synthesis of divine and human.
- **“Symbolism Only” Sacramental Theology** – The belief that baptism and the Eucharist are non-efficacious – only symbolic.
- **Sola Scriptura** – The Bible alone is authoritative for Christian dogma.
- **Sola Fidei** – Salvation by Faith Alone. The doctrine of sola fide or "by faith alone" asserts God's pardon for guilty sinners is granted to and received through faith, conceived as excluding all "works", alone. God, on the basis of the life, death, and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ alone, grants sinners judicial pardon, or justification, which is received solely through faith.
- **Millennialism/Chiliasm** – Christ will come back and rule on earth for 1,000 years before the end.
- **Marian errors** – The belief that the Holy Virgin was not a perpetual virgin, had other children, committed actual sins, Immaculate Conception, etc.
- **Total Depravity** – Total depravity is the fallen state of man as a result of original sin. The doctrine of total depravity asserts that people are by nature not inclined or even able to love God wholly with heart, mind, and strength, but rather all are inclined by nature to serve their own will and desires and to reject the rule of God. Therefore, in Reformed theology, if God is to save anyone He must predestine, call, or elect individuals to salvation since fallen man does not want to, and is indeed incapable of choosing God.
- **Instantaneous salvation** – The belief that justification is a once-for-all, instantaneous pronouncement guaranteeing eternal salvation, no matter how wickedly a person may live from that point on.
- **Invisible Church** – The invisible church or church invisible is a theological concept of an "invisible" body of the elect who are known only to God, in contrast to the "visible church"—that is, the institutional body on earth which preaches the gospel and administers the sacraments. Every member of

the invisible church is saved, while the visible church contains some individuals who are saved and others who are unsaved.

- **Judaizing Errors** – Refers to a Christian who has accepted the necessity of adhering to specific OT laws such as circumcision, Sabbath observance, or observation of the Passover.
- **Soul Sleep** – "Soul Sleep," means that after death believers are not conscious of anything and their souls become completely inert until the time of the final resurrection of the dead. During this period of soul sleep, the soul resides in the memory of God.
- **Annihilationism** – This refers to the belief that when we die, the soul ceases to exist – non-immortality of soul.
- **Original Guilt** – The belief that man is inherently guilty of the sin of Adam from birth.
- **Created Grace** – This belief states that because of the fall, there is a great gulf between God and humanity. We are so corrupted that God cannot dwell within us. Therefore he gives a special, permanent grace, a supernatural substance or infusion, a created grace called Habitual Grace, that changes our nature permanently so that we become acceptable to God, so that God can dwell within us. It is called created grace because the grace includes the aspect of our created response and changed natures.
- **Purgatory** – is the condition of purification or temporary punishment by which those who die in a state of grace are believed to be made ready for Heaven.
- **Indulgences** – The full or partial remission of temporal punishment due for sins which have already been forgiven. The indulgence is granted by the Roman Latin Church after the sinner has confessed and received absolution. An indulgence is thus not forgiveness of sin nor release from the eternal punishment associated with hell in Christian beliefs. The belief is that indulgences draw on the Treasury of Merit accumulated by Christ's superabundantly meritorious sacrifice on the cross and the virtues and penances of the saints. They are granted for specific good works and prayers.
- **Development of Doctrine** – the belief that doctrine improves over time.
- **Superogation** – The technical term for the class of actions that go “beyond the call of duty.” The special merit of supererogatory acts accredited to their agent can be used both for that individual's own salvation and for the salvation of others. In the Roman Latin Church, the “superabundant merit,” most typically collected by the actions of Jesus and the saints, who far exceeded what was required for their own salvation, is deposited in the Spiritual Treasury of the Church to be disposed by the Pope and the bishops for remitting the sins of other, ordinary believers.

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Catechumen Patron Saint Form

All Orthodox Christians are given Christian names by Christ through his priests. The Christian name is the name of the person's patron saint.

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 that name be retained and devotion to that saint begin, if not already in existence. The issue of naming is the prerogative of the priest so catechumens are required to make a proposal, and the priest will confirm the name.

What will be your Christian name with which you are received into Orthodoxy?_____

Who is this Saint? *Obtain a life of this saint and study it. Summarize it here.*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is the date of your nameday? _____

What is the Troparion of your patron saint? Write it here.

_____
_____
_____

What is the Kontakion to your patron saint? Write it here.

_____
_____
_____

How does an Orthodox Christian celebrate his nameday?

_____
_____
_____

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I would like to participate & contribute to Parish Life

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____ DATE: _____

The list below is about blessings, not volunteering. The lists are not definitive, but suggestions. Tasks, ministries and the ordinary, everyday work of parish life may be listed here, but the purpose of listing these things is not to spread the workload around. Like tithing, these things aren't done for God's sake—He lacks nothing, certainly not from us. The tasks listed here are ways in which WE find fulfillment in our Christian life.

In contributing to parish life in some way one finds great blessings; also there are the necessary Christian struggles in living out brotherly love, patience, faith and self-giving. There is no age requirement for living the Christian life, or contributing for the good of the whole. Youth and adults alike receive great blessings from their gift to the Lord.

Church Services & Support
❏ Church Reader
❏ Altar server
❏ Choir
❏ Sacristan Assistant
❏ Prosphora baking
❏ Candle Desk attendant
❏ Greeter or Usher
❏ Church Cleaning
❏ Flower decoration
❏ Sewing, Repairing vestments, Ironing

Building & Grounds
❏ Grass cutting/leaf raking
❏ Gardening
❏ Grounds: Repair & Maintenance
❏ Facilities: Repairs & Maintenance

Communication
❏ Live Streaming
❏ Pamphlets, Flyers and signage (design/distribute)
❏ Archivist/photographer
❏ Bookstore attendant

Stewardship (time, talent & treasure)
❏ Parish Council
❏ Sisterhood
❏ Charity Committee

Education
❏ Church school teacher or assistant
❏ Retreat Organization

Hospitality, Fellowship & Outreach
❏ Kitchen Team (various tasks)
❏ Meal prep Sunday and/or Feast Days
❏ Sunday meal set-up
❏ Funeral Team (care for the dead)
❏ Mercy meals for the sick
❏ Men's Fellowship Group