

# Orthodoxy 101

*An Introduction to Orthodox Christianity*

## *Purpose of the Course*

- To reacquaint an Orthodox Christian with his or her Faith years after he or she “graduated” from Sunday School.
- To help the non-Orthodox spouses of Orthodox Christians understand their mate’s religion.
- To familiarize participants with the history, teachings and doctrines of the Orthodox Christian Church.
- To enhance the student’s understanding of the Orthodox Christian faith and lifestyle.
- To begin to prepare an individual who has an interest in becoming an Orthodox Christian communicant.

## *Method*

- Lecture and Discussion
- Question and Answer

## *How to Get the Most Out of the Course*

- Attend all the classes and ask questions
- Read one or all of the recommended books
- Study the notes that will be given to you
- Attend Church Services regularly

## *Recommended Books for the Course*

- *The Orthodox Church A to Z* by Father George Grube
- *Introducing the Orthodox Church* by Father Anthony Coniaris
- *The Orthodox Church* by Metropolitan Kallistos Ware
- *The Orthodox Study Bible* by Conciliar Press is recommended but not necessary – most translations are acceptable

## *Where to Order Books*

- Mount Tabor Bookstore – 2990 S Cashua Dr, Florence, SC 29501
  - Open Sundays during Coffee Hour or by appointment when calling 843-662-5471
  - Online at [www.GoFlorence.org](http://www.GoFlorence.org)

*Course Day and Time - Monday Evenings – 6:00 – 8:00pm*

*Weekly Schedule and Topics of Discussion*

***Session 1 – January 30 – Introduction to the Orthodox Church***

An introductory discussion on the history, doctrines, and teachings of the Church will be made. A cursory discussion on the importance of the Sacraments to Orthodox spirituality will also take place.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 1 – What We Believe (pp 1-19)*

*Chapter 11 – God’s Kingdom on Earth: The Church (pp 144-163)*

***Session 2, February 6 – The Church Building***

This session will be conducted in the Church. An explanation of the appointments, icons and symbols in the narthex, nave and sanctuary will be given.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 10 – The Setting for Worship: Returning the Gift (pp 128-144)*

***Session 3, February 13 – The Church Year***

The season from Pre-Lent to Pentecost in the Orthodox Church is rich in liturgical celebration and festal commemoration. Observances such as the Feast days of St. Gregory Palamas, St. Mary of Egypt, Pascha, and Pentecost take place during this time of year. The liturgical significance of all this time of year and meaning of all festal observances will be made.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 13 – Time in the Kingdom: The Calendar of the Church (pp 169-187)*

***Session 4, February 20 – The Major Feast Days of Our Lord and The Theotokos (Mother of God)***

There are twelve such Feast Days: Christmas, Pascha, Ascension, the Transfiguration and the Annunciation are but a few. The significance of all Twelve Feast Days is both historical commemorations and events that have meaning for our lives today.

***Session 5, February 27 – The Bible, Prayer and Fasting***

Orthodox Christianity teaches that there are three pathways that lead to God and a personal relationship with Him: The Bible, Prayer and Fasting. The how and why of these three pathways will be discussed.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 3 – Prayer Transforms Our Lives (pp 24-47)*

*Chapter 5 – Fasting: A Noble Discipline (pp 53-57)*

*Chapter 8 – The Bible and Orthodoxy: The Gift of His Word (pp 104-118)*

***Session 6, March 5 – The Divine Liturgy and How to Live It***

The Divine Liturgy is the central act of worship in the Orthodox Church. Though regarded by many as a ritualistic gem, the reality is that many contemporary Christians neither understand liturgy, nor do they know how to meaningfully participate in the Divine Liturgy. How to come to better know the Divine Liturgy and worship will be the thrust of the discussion for Session 6 and 7.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 6 – Worship: Returning the Gift (pp 57-66)*

### ***Session 7, March 12 – The Divine Liturgy cont.***

### ***Session 8, March 19 – The Sacraments and What They Do for Us***

The Orthodox Church is a Sacramental Church. The so-called “Seven” Sacraments (Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist, Confession, Unction, Marriage, and Ordination) will be discussed. The relationship of Sacraments to Grace and Spirituality will be discussed.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 7 – The Holy Mysteries: Gifts of Salvation (pp 66-104)*

### ***Session 9, March 26 – Just What Does the Orthodox Church Teach About the Virgin Mary and the Saints?***

Most Protestant Christians have difficulty in accepting the teaching of the Orthodox Church on the Virgin Mary and the saints, and the veneration accorded by Orthodox Christians to them. What is the basis of the Orthodox Christian teaching of the Ever-Virgin Mary? Who are the saints? Why do Orthodox Christians pray at times to the Saints and Mary? Answers to these and other questions will be given.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 12 – Saints: Special Friends of God (pp 163-168)*

### ***Session 10, April 2 – The Church as a Moral Compass***

A discussion on topics of morality and life issues from the perspective of the Orthodox Christian Church will take place as a conclusion to the course. Topics such as abortion, euthanasia, gambling, drugs, stem cell research, sexuality, death issues, etc will be touched upon.

*Reading Assignments in The Orthodox Church A To Z by Father George Grube*

*Chapter 2 – Living as Orthodox Christians (pp 19-24)*

*Chapter 4 – Gifts of the Holy Spirit (pp 47-53)*

*Chapter 9 – The Church Teaches Morality: Teaching the Gift (pp 118-128)*



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