

PRE-K TO 2ND GRADE WEEKLY CLASS ROUTINE

This year, we wanted to have something for the children to do in the younger classes while they were waiting either for their teachers to arrive or until all of their classmates arrived. (Little ones like to run from the church to the hall and our teachers were not always able to get to the classroom before the kids.)

We decided to incorporate a three step routine for the kids to do independently each Sunday when they walked into their classroom. Their teachers spent the first three Sunday of the school year teaching the kids about this routine and then the kids were ready to do it on their own.

UPON ENTERING THE CLASSROOM:

1. **Attendance** - Each child looked for their photo (taken at the beginning of the year) on the home poster and then moved their photo to the church poster.



The graphic for the houses poster was purchased on istockphoto and then printed/laminated at FedEx printing store. I placed a velcro dot under each house and placed the coordinating velcro dot on a baseball

card sleeve. The teachers took pictures of each child for the first three weeks of Sunday school and I printed and cut the photos out to place into the baseball card sleeves.

The children would come into the classroom, look for their photo and move the photo from the home poster to the church poster. "I went to church today."



I took a photo of the front of our church, printed/laminated it at a FedEx printing store, and then placed enough dots on the poster for the whole class.

2. What do we do in the narthex? - Lighting a Candle

We light a candle and place it in the sand. We are very careful because the flame is not and we carefully place the candle in the sand, without playing with the sand. Beeswax, being the work of many bees, is a symbol of communion in prayer. It is not just the person who lights the candle that prays, but the entire Church.

Above all, we use candles because they represent the light of Christ. Do you remember how dark it gets in the church when we go late at night for the Paschal liturgy? You can barely see anything - and then Father will come out singing, "Come, Receive the Light..." and slowly but surely the flame from Father's candle is passed around to everyone else in the church. Soon, the church is bright! Christ is the light of the world and we remind ourselves of this every time we light a candle. The candle is a witness to our faith - that we belong to the Divine Light. In all that we say and do, we should always strive to shine the Light of Christ to everyone around us. In doing so, more people are illumined and find Christ.



My husband made a wooden frame to hold an Ikea toy bucket for our sand. We had battery powered tea lights that could turn on and off on the bottom. After moving their photo from the home poster to the church poster, the kids would take a "candle", turn it on, place it in the sand without playing with the sand, and say a prayer for someone silently in their head.

3. What do we do in the narthex? - Venerating Icons

The teachers reviewed how to make the sign of the cross with all of the kids - and taught any children who didn't know how to do it.



Then they taught the kids how to make a small prostration and kiss the icon.



Each child would take a seat at the table and wait for everyone to finish their routine before class started. This provided the teachers a few moments before starting the lesson, taught the kids what to do when they enter the narthex at church, and limited the silliness before class started.

END OF CLASS ACTIVITY:

For the first semester, our younger teachers focused on teaching our kids, “Lord have mercy” in different languages. Our Pre-K / Kindergarten class learned how to sing, “Lord have mercy” in English and Greek, while our 1st / 2nd grade class learned it in English, Greek, Arabic, and Romanian. I was in the 1st / 2nd grade class one day taking photos for our Pascha Passports when the kids started getting a bit noisy. One of the teachers started singing, “Lord have mercy” in Arabic and all the kids immediately became silent and started singing along with her. It was amazing!

For our end of year Sunday School ceremony, our younger kids sang, “Lord have mercy” in all the languages they learned to the entire parish. So sweet!!

During the second semester, the teachers worked on singing, “Lord have mercy” and “Christ is Risen” in different languages with the kids.