

Greek Alphabet Primer

Yearlong, September 2021-May 2022

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

Grades 3-4 *Students should be past the “decoding” stage of reading English, and able to follow instructions well.*

Class Dates: Beginning Tuesday, September 7, 2021; running through Tuesday, May 24, 2022. (ORIENTATION: Tuesday, August 31)

Class Times: Tuesdays, 1:30 pm (EST,) running 45 minutes

Instructor: Mallory Stripling

E-mail: mstripling.raphaelschool@gmail.com

SCHEDULE FOR GREEK ALPHABET PRIMER

Orientation: Tuesday, August 31

First Day of Class: Tuesday, September 7

Thanksgiving Break: No class on Tuesday, November 23

Resume: Tuesday, December 7

Christmas Break: No classes on December 21, 28, January 4

Resume: Tuesday, January 11

SRS Winter Break: No class on Tuesday, February 15

Resume: Tuesday, February 22

Holy Week Break: No class on Tuesday, April 19 (Holy Tuesday)

Resume: Tuesday, April 26 (Bright Tuesday)

Last Class: Tuesday, May 24

GREEK ALPHABET PRIMER COURSE MAP:

QUARTER 1

Letters Αα-Ηη and corresponding saints,
Greek Alphabet Song
Lord Have Mercy
Glory to You O Lord
The Jesus Prayer

QUARTER 2

Letters Θθ-Νν and corresponding saints
Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us
Trisagion
Praise the Lord from The Heavens

QUARTER 3

Letters Ξξ-Ττ and corresponding saints
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
One Is Holy

QUARTER 4

Letters Υυ-Ωω and corresponding saints
Letter blends and finishing touches
We Praise You, We Bless You
Come Receive Ye Light
Christ is Risen

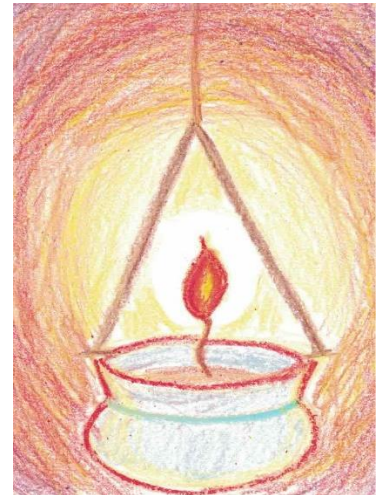
OFFICE HOURS: Contact Mrs. Stripling to determine the best time to meet via Zoom or talk on the phone to ask questions or discuss concerns. MWF afternoons are usually the best times.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS:

Greek Alphabet Primer course text by Mrs. Stripling (available at www.paideaclassics.org)

OTHER MATERIALS:

Crayons, colored pencils, composition journal with drawing space, whiteboard and dry erase marker, blank flashcards



GREEK ALPHABET PRIMER COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students will engage with the Greek alphabet in the following ways:

- Learn to recite the entire Greek alphabet
- Learn to recognize, pronounce, and write both the sound and name of each Greek letter (both lowercase and uppercase)
- Learn to read, pronounce and write many Greek words through copy work
- “Illuminate” each letter with an illustration of a Greek word beginning with that letter (e.g. the letter kappa is drawn as though it is made out of branches with a fruit/ *καρπός* hanging from it)
- Read the life of a saint whose name starts with the letter being studied, and color an icon of that saint, learning to read the saint’s name as inscribed on an icon
- Learn to sing short Orthodox hymns and recite short prayers

Classes will begin with prayer, usually the Lord’s Prayer in Greek, and incorporate a drawing demonstration, recitation or singing, pronunciation practice, and the story of the saint.

Parents should expect to work with their students during the week, unless the student is very mature and self-motivated for this age group. The purpose of the class meeting is to provide responsive instruction from an instructor experienced in Greek, to model and coach students in correct pronunciation, and to provide a fun, communal Orthodox learning environment. It is recommended that parents look over each week’s material and decide how to incorporate songs, copy work, and stories into their own family’s learning rhythms.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: CLASS BEHAVIOR

- Students are expected to be able to sit quietly and listen respectfully for the duration of the class (45 minutes.) Students will frequently be called upon to participate actively, and should remain sitting at the computer, listening and ready to contribute when asked.
- Students should be able to operate the Zoom program without frequent parental intervention.
- Students should come to class prepared to draw and write, with all materials at hand (composition notebook with space for drawing and crayons or colored pencils for illuminating the letter of the week.) A whiteboard with dry erase marker makes it easy for students to write letters and show them to the instructor.
- Students should strive to answer questions correctly and clearly during class times and respond willingly to guidance from Mrs. Stripling. For example, students should give their best try at pronouncing Greek words, and then listen carefully to the teacher's correction, and try again, until they pronounce the words correctly.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS: WORKING AT HOME

At home, parents will determine how the material is incorporated into the child's education (examples would be choosing on what days to do which activities and deciding whether a child needs to repeat an activity until mastered.) It is understood that every homeschooling family is different, and that life frequently disrupts the best-laid plans, but an ideal week would include engaging in each of the following activities.

- **Drawing** the illuminated Greek letter in class, and perhaps doing another, more polished drawing to display in a book, either drawn directly into the book or pasted in (buy a composition notebook with space for drawing.) Ideally the child would make a **second drawing the day after class**, so that he or she can "sleep on" the experience and engage with it freshly the next day, and **coloring** the icon of the saint.
- **Singing** the assigned songs or reciting assigned prayers **daily**. Most singing assignments can easily be incorporated into family prayers or "morning time." The best would be for the whole family to learn these songs and prayers together, so that they become a part of the family culture.
- **Writing** Greek letters and words as indicated in the copy work, at least **three days a week**. The student could practice writing the assigned words and letters several times on loose paper, and then do their best writing in the above-mentioned book where the best drawing of each illuminated letter is kept. Another helpful activity is for the parent to write the copy-work on a chalkboard or dry-erase board on the wall, and have the child copy from the board, both while sitting down and writing on paper, and on the board directly; having to look up and back down to the paper makes them work to remember the shape of the letters, and the different motions of writing on the board and on the paper also aid learning. With all copy-work, the student should be saying the words and letters that they are writing.
- **Reading** the life of the saint **at least once during the week**, besides hearing it during class. Younger students can have a parent or older sibling read to them. Have the student narrate the story in their own words at some time during the week.

STUDENT EVALUATION: MASTERY PORTRAIT

Students in the 3rd-4th grade levels suggested for this course have a wide range of facility with written language skills. Parents will best know what level of mastery to expect from their child. It should also be understood that this course is simply an introduction, intended to familiarize children with the Greek alphabet and show how the Greek language can be part of the life of an Orthodox Christian. The following levels of mastery are arranged in ascending order, with each level including the skills of the previous levels. A young student may only fully master the first one or two skills over the year, and a mature student should seek to master all of them.

- Can sing or recite the Greek alphabet and name all the letters on sight, can copy letters accurately
- Can recall how to write all 24 Greek letters without seeing them
- Can sing Greek songs or recite prayers from memory
- Can “decode” and pronounce a Greek word with some effort, for example on an icon
- Can fluently decode and pronounce a Greek word
- Can transcribe a short Greek “dictation” of familiar words

STUDENT EVALUATION

Most of the evaluation and feedback of student progress is done in class in a natural way, as I coach students through writing and reading Greek letters and singing Greek songs. Students will upload their best work each week to Schoology, where I will review them and often share good work with the class. This “assignment” is not for a grade but rather so that I can see how they are doing, communicating any concerns or suggestions in comments and conversations. I may comment directly on the work on Schoology (always in an encouraging manner, sometimes with small critiques.) I will send personal comments on each student’s progress at least once a semester. Parents should feel free to contact me with any concerns.

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom. The virtual classroom will provide students with video, audio and an interactive whiteboard in which

texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

We will also be using an online Learning Management System called Schoology to communicate about assignments. In a traditional classroom, the teacher would be handing out materials to the students physically. Consider Schoology our medium for sharing instructional materials. This is where Mrs. Stripling will be sharing all of the printable content for the course and music recordings, as well as anything she finds interesting and pertinent to our studies together. **Note:** I do not expect students in this age range to be able to use Schoology responsibly, and in fact I strongly recommend that parents are responsible for or at least aware of all of their children's online communications.

New tools for learning are always being developed. Throughout the school year I may be experimenting with new programs to find the best ways to help students engage actively with the material and the group. If anything is required for you to download or sign up for, I will communicate this clearly via Schoology assignments or messages.

ONE LAST THING: WHAT KIND OF GREEK IS THIS ANYWAY?

This explanation was written for my students in higher level Greek courses, but you may find it helpful to give context for even for your young student who is just beginning to learn the Greek alphabet.

When your child tells someone that she is studying Greek, the next part of the conversation may be confusing if you are not clear on what kind of Greek she is learning. We are learning *Biblical Greek*, using *Modern pronunciation*.

Biblical Greek is essentially the same language as "Classical" or Attic Greek, in which Plato, Aristotle, and Thucydides wrote in the century before Christ's birth. The Septuagint was translated into, and the New Testament was mostly written in a variant of Greek called "Koine," meaning "common." This is a simpler form of Greek than Attic Greek. Koine Greek basically persisted into the Byzantine era, so that our Orthodox hymns, liturgy, and much of our theology were written in this language.

Today, the Greek language is very different from the language of the Bible. The influence of Turkish and other languages has infused new vocabulary, and the grammatical structure has become even simpler. To give you a *rough* idea of the different eras, I like to compare Homeric Greek to Old English (*Beowulf*, basically incomprehensible to modern English-speakers without intense study,) Attic Greek to Middle English (Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, readable to us with some knowledge of French and extensive footnotes) and Koine Greek to Elizabethan English (Shakespeare, understandable to us with a bit of effort if we have grown up hearing the King James Bible.) Modern Greek speakers understand Koine Greek pretty well if they have grown up in the Orthodox Church, BUT, learning Koine

Greek will not teach you how to ask a modern Greek person where you can buy a fish sandwich.

The other important thing to clarify is that we are using the Modern pronunciation. Scholars differ on how Greek sounded during classical and Biblical times. In the middle ages, a German monk named Erasmus came up with a system of Greek pronunciation that is still used in academic circles today (including non-Orthodox scholars of the Bible.) This system sounds different from the way that Greeks speak today (mainly in vowel sounds, but also in a few of the consonants.) In Greek Orthodox churches and any Orthodox seminary that teaches Biblical Greek, the Modern Greek pronunciation is used for the liturgy, chanting hymns, and reading the Bible. At St. Raphael School, we have chosen to use the Modern pronunciation, because our study of Greek, besides being an essential part of a classical education, is also an element of our catechism in the Orthodox faith.

So, when a Greek parishioner tries to make conversation with your student in Greek, or when a friend with a classical education quotes the Bible or Homer in a strange-sounding accent, you will be able to help your student explain that she is studying *Biblical Greek* (the language of the liturgy) and using the *Modern pronunciation*.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR:

Mallory Stripling begins her seventh year of teaching Greek with St. Raphael School in September of 2021. She embarked on her teaching career as a founding faculty member at Hagia Sophia Classical Academy in Indianapolis, Indiana, where she taught Latin, art, language arts, and science. Mallory is a homeschool alumna and a 2010 graduate of St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she studied philosophy, history, literature, French, Greek, mathematics, science and music. In Santa Fe, she also met and fell in love with the Orthodox Church (into which she was baptized in 2008) and her husband, Matthew (whom she married in 2011.) Matthew and Mallory live in Annapolis, Maryland with a second grader, a kindergartener, and a toddler.