

Catechumen Enrollment Form

St. John the Merciful Orthodox Church | Orlando, Florida

A Word Before You Begin

The catechumenate is not simply a class or a period of study.

It is the beginning of a new way of life—one of repentance, prayer, worship, and communion with Christ in His Church.

The Orthodox Church receives those who seek the truth sincerely and carefully. This is done through a period of instruction, testing, and discernment, so that what begins well may also endure.

According to the practice of the Orthodox Church, Holy Baptism—followed by Chrismation and Holy Eucharist—is the normative means of entering the Church. In some cases, depending on prior baptism and confession of faith, a person may be received through Chrismation. In all cases, reception is determined pastorally in accordance with the practice of the Orthodox Church in America.

This form begins that process. Before filling this out, you should have a 1-on-1 meeting with the rector to discuss your journey to the Church and so that you can begin to know one another.

“Man is a hungry being. But he is hungry for God. Behind all the hunger of our life is God. All desire is finally a desire for Him. Man may desire bread, or love, or power, or possessions; but in all these he desires something else, something that no bread, no love, no power, no possession can satisfy. All these are only signs of that which we really desire. God is life, and life is communion with Him. Man was created for this communion, and only in it does he find life. Outside of this communion there is no life, but only the illusion of life. The whole world was created as the “matter,” the material of one all-embracing Eucharist, and man was created as the priest of this cosmic sacrament.”

— Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

“It is not enough to know about Orthodoxy; one must live it. Orthodoxy is not merely a set of doctrines or a way of thinking, but a way of life. It demands struggle, it demands repentance, it demands that we change our lives and not simply our opinions.”

— Fr. Seraphim Rose

1. Contact and Family Information

Full Name

Phone Number

Email Address

Home Address

Date of Birth

Marital Status

Single Married Divorced Widowed

Children

Name	Age	Birthday	Will they be received as catechumens?
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not now
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not now
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not now

2. Background Information

Previous Church Affiliation

Past Affiliation 1

Church/Denomination: _____

Years Affiliated: _____

Past Affiliation 2

Church/Denomination: _____

Years Affiliated: _____

Past Affiliation 3

Church/Denomination: _____

Years Affiliated: _____

Baptismal History

If you come from a Christian background, were you baptized with water in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

Yes No Baptism did not meet these requirements

If yes, please attach a copy of your baptismal certificate if available.

Membership Status

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

Yes No

(This is required for enrollment as a catechumen at SJTM.)

Additional Background

Are you currently or have you previously been a member of any organization or group whose beliefs or practices are incompatible with the Orthodox Christian faith (for example, Freemasonry, occult or esoteric societies, or groups that promote teachings contrary to the Christian understanding of God, the human person, or the moral life)?

Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Do you have a criminal record and/or a sex offender status?

Yes No

If yes, please arrange to speak with the priest in person to see if accommodations are required.

Hobbies / Interests

Anything else you would like the priest to know?

3. Sponsor Information

All those who wish to join the Orthodox Church at St John the Merciful must have a sponsor (godparent), who serves as a guide and witness in the life of the Church before being enrolled as a catechumen.

A sponsor must:

- Be an Orthodox Christian in good standing of the same gender
- Regularly participate in Confession and Holy Communion
- Have been Orthodox for at least one year
- Receive a blessing from the priest

The sponsor testifies that you are striving to live a life suitable for an Orthodox Christian and that you are making an effort to learn and practice the faith through prayer, fasting, almsgiving, stewardship, and repentance. If you need help finding a suitable sponsor, please contact the priest before submitting this form.

Sponsor Name:

Sponsor Home Parish/City/State (if not SJTM):

Sponsor Email / Phone:

4. Patron Saint

As you begin the catechumenate, you should begin prayerfully considering your patron saint.

If you were given a Christian name, it is normative to choose a saint of the same name. A blessing from the priest is required before your patron saint is formally established prior to reception into the Church.

(Optional at this stage)

Proposed Patron Saint: _____

5. The Catechumenate at SJTM

The catechumenate is a period of preparation marked by:

- Faithful attendance at Divine Liturgy and other services
- A growing life of prayer
- Instruction in the teachings of the Church
- Participation in the life of the parish
- A commitment to repentance and spiritual growth

You will be given a **Rule of Life** to help guide you in this process. This rule is meant to be simple, consistent, and lived—not merely read.

The catechumenate is also a period of discernment. Enrollment as a catechumen does not guarantee entry into the Church. The timing and manner of reception will be determined when the priest, the sponsor, and the catechumen are in agreement that the catechumen is prepared to be received, in accordance with the practice of the Orthodox Church.

6. Participation & Stability

Enrollment as a catechumen carries with it a commitment to begin living the life of the Church in a real and practical way.

Catechumens at St. John the Merciful are expected to:

- Attend services regularly at SJTM, especially Sunday Divine Liturgy and Saturday Great Vespers
- Participate, as they are able, in the life of the parish, including financial and service stewardship and at parish events
- Begin establishing a rule of prayer and repentance with the guidance of the priest

Because the catechumenate is rooted in a particular parish community and a relationship with a spiritual father, catechumens should ask for a blessing before regularly attending services at other Orthodox parishes during this time.

If at any point a catechumen discerns that they no longer wish to continue at St. John the Merciful, they agree to inform the priest so that they may be removed from the list of catechumens.

7. Acknowledgment & Commitment

By signing below, I affirm that:

- I have read and understand the Catechumenate Guidelines of St. John the Merciful Orthodox Church in this guide and in the document “The Rule for Catechumens at SJTM”
- I understand that enrollment as a catechumen does not guarantee reception into the Church
- I understand that I am expected to participate faithfully in the life of the parish during the catechumenate and to uphold to moral and ethical standards of an Orthodox Christian
- I desire to enter the catechumenate and begin preparing for reception into the Orthodox Church at St. John the Merciful
- I will strive, with God’s help, to live a life of repentance, prayer, and participation in the life of the Church

Signature

Printed Name

Date

8. For Parish Use Only

Catechumen Enrollment Date: _____