

“Yia-Yia, what are they doing now?”
Learning about Orthodox Customs and Traditions

Led by Pam Weinroth and Dino Bardossas

Course Description: Learning about Orthodox customs and traditions will be approached by a well balance of lecture, interactive discussions, guest speakers and visual demonstrations.

Course objective: To learn about the proper use and abuse of Orthodox traditions, symbols and customs by Orthodox Christians (Greek, Russian, Serbian, Arabic, etc.) living in America.

Course outline:

1. Introductions and Housekeeping Items (Sept. 12)
 - a. Introductions, course expectations, and review of course outline
 - b. Sharing our personal Orthodox witness/experience

2. “T”radition vs. “t”radition (Sept. 19)
 - a. Holy and Sacred Tradition
 - i. Tradition and the Church
 - ii. Sacred Tradition and customary traditions
 - b. Truths
 - i. Traditions and customs as external signs
 - ii. Symbols and traditions as means

3. Church Protocol and Manners – The Sunday Liturgy (Sept. 26)
 - a. The long and winding road to Sunday...
 - i. The week prior to attending
 - ii. Sunday morning – what side of the bed did you get up on?
 - iii. The drive to church
 - iv. The Narthex – a decompression chamber
 - v. Seat selection and attitude
 - vi. Critical moments during the service to be aware of
 - vii. Approaching to receive Holy Communion
 - viii. ‘Is it fellowship time yet’? or ‘Not a memorial service again’?
 - ix. How do we keep the gift of the Divine Holy Gifts of the Eucharist alive for the remainder of the day?
 - b. Reverence for things that are blessed and/or holy
 - c. Roundtable discussion of ‘what is it about Church that moves you and distracts you’?
 - d. *Pan-Orthodox guests (two) sharing their respective unique customs/traditions*

4. The origins of traditions and symbols - Part I (Oct. 3)
 - a. Iron Chef does Prosforon (includes the actual baking of church bread)
 - b. Selected teachings along with a show 'n tell of...
 - i. The use of candles
 - ii. Making the sign of the cross
 - iii. Icons in church and home
 - iv. Fasting practices
 - v. Death and funerals
 - vi. Incense
 - vii. Philoxenia and philanthropia
 - viii. Kneeling/prostrations & prayers ropes
 - c. Holy Mysteries (Sacraments) & other liturgical symbols & practices
 - i. Baptism – white garment, new and clean items, etc.
 - ii. Marriage – wedding crowns, ring placed on left hand, no vows exchanged, etc.
 - iii. Blessings & special services (40 Day Presentation, sprinkling of Holy Water, Loaves, etc.)
 - d. *Cradle Greek Orthodox couple sharing their unique customs/traditions*

5. The origins of traditions and symbols - Part II (Oct. 10)
 - a. Julia Childs does Koliva (boiled wheat used for Memorial Services)
 - b. Continuation of topics not covered during Lesson #4
 - c. *Cradle Orthodox & Convert couple sharing their unique customs/traditions*

6. The presence of God in the Home and in the World: Are we degrading our Orthodox Christian heritage in America? – Part I (Oct. 17)
 - a. A walk-through of 'Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home'
 - b. Practical Orthodox witnessing in the market place/business
 - c. *Pan-Orthodox guests (two) sharing their respective unique customs/traditions*
 - d. Selecting one witness type thing that we can implement during the week

7. The presence of God in the Home and in the World: Are we degrading our Orthodox Christian heritage in America? – Part II (Oct. 24)
 - a. Sharing of the 'one witness type thing' from last week
 - b. A walk-through of 'Making God Real in the Orthodox Christian Home'
 - c. Practical Orthodox witnessing in public places
 - d. *Converted Orthodox couple sharing their unique customs/traditions*

8. Entering the Year of Grace...Highlights of the Liturgical Year – Part I (Oct. 31)
 - a. Brief teaching on the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar
 - b. Significant traditions and customs during...
 - i. The Time of Advent
 - ii. Christmas and Epiphany
 - iii. The Time of Lent

9. Entering the Year of Grace...Highlights of the Liturgical Year – Part II (Nov. 7)
 - a. Significant traditions and customs during...
 - i. The Time of the Passion
 - ii. The Time of Easter and of Pentecost
 - iii. Vacation?...or The Time after Pentecost

10. Make-Up Day (Nov. 14)