

CHURCH ATTIRE

Coming to church involves preparation of oneself for a serious and sacred encounter and is not a casual experience! We dress accordingly out of love and respect for our Lord who we meet in a mystical manner in church each time we celebrate the Divine Services.

Our clothing reveals much about us – our lifestyle, outlook on life, and even our self-esteem. When it comes to Church attendance, our clothing can convey many messages: modesty, discretion, simplicity, indifference or vanity. For Orthodox Christians, there are several principles that must be considered in referring to what is appropriate attire for church.

As Christians we are called to offer to Christ our best in all areas of our life, and the same is true of our attire. There was a time when people referred to times when they wore their “Sunday best.” In the past, dress clothes were often referred to as “Sunday clothes” because people wore their very best to church. When we dress up for Church it is a reflection of the importance we place on church attendance.

An important word to keep in mind is respect – respect for God, respect for oneself, and respect for those in whom we share in Christian Orthodox fellowship. Equally as important as respect is - modesty. We should dress modestly, not in a flashy way that would call attention to us. We must also realize that many of the styles that are popular today, especially among young people, are not appropriate for Church. For

example, exposed midriffs, pants or skirts worn very low, t-shirts with any kind of writing or slogans, shorts and mini-skirts, along with any kind of extreme hairstyles, or body-piercing and exposed tattoos, are not appropriate for either men or women. Also, not appropriate are tank-tops and sleeveless shirts, or tops that are low cut in either the front or back. Women's dresses and skirts should be at or below the knee in length.

One final point that is of paramount importance is that we should not focus on what other people are wearing but, instead, focus on ourselves and our own spiritual life. Remember, judging others is a far greater sin than dressing inappropriately. Look within yourself and evaluate where your priorities are and make sure that your own attire reflects your faith as an Orthodox Christian.