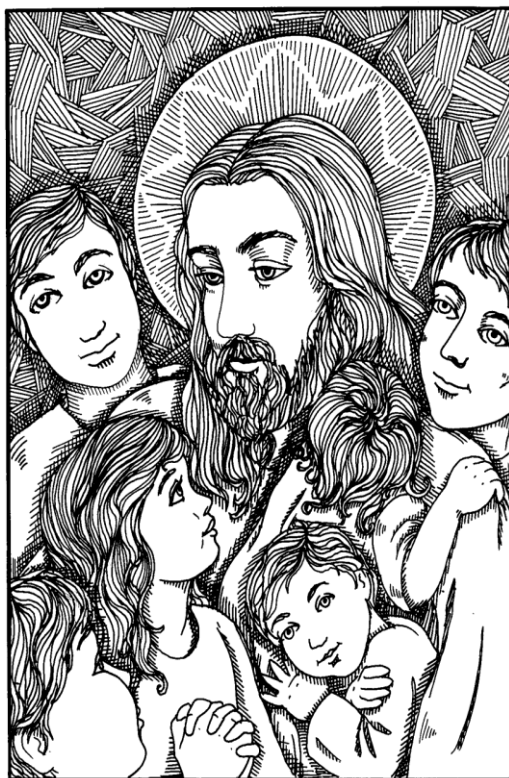


**Our Lady of the Mount
Office of Catechesis
Parent Handbook
2011/2012**



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**Teach me, Lord, your way
that I may walk in your truth,
single-hearted and revering your name.
I will praise you with all my heart,
glorify your name forever,
Lord my God. (Psalm 86:11-12)**

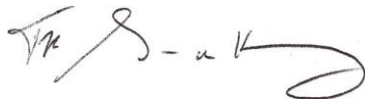
*Our Lady of the Mount Church
Office of Catechesis*

Dear Parent:

We are happy you have chosen a Roman Catholic Faith Formation Program for your child. Our program teaches the doctrine of the Catholic Church, upholds current documents, including The Catechism of the Catholic Church, and utilizes Diocesan programs to train volunteer catechists.

In selecting the Faith Formation program at Our Lady of the Mount you have made the decision to prepare your child(ren) in the best way possible for full initiation into the Catholic Church through the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation. These sacraments call us all into full communion with Jesus in the Church and full participation in the life of the community.

Please carefully review the handbook, print out, sign and return the Parent Handbook Agreement with your registration forms. Your registration is due by June 10 to the Office of Catechesis either in person or by mail. The signed form indicates that you have reviewed the program's policy and procedures.



Rev. Sean W. Kenney
Pastor



Karen Dill
Parish Catechetical Leader



OFFICE OF CATECHESIS MISSION STATEMENT

Faith formation is the presentation of doctrine and traditions of our Catholic faith. This presentation seeks to nurture the development of the whole person, where respect, dignity and faith in God will be developed in a Christian community. We strive to help children establish a personal and loving relationship with Jesus. We provide challenges and opportunities to integrate Gospel values in their everyday lives.

GOALS OF THE OFFICE OF CATECHESIS

We are committed to assisting parents in carrying out their role as the primary educators of their children. In order to achieve this end, we ask parents to join us in stressing the importance of the following goals:

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

- Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days
- Participation in religious education classes
- Development of personal prayer life
- Frequent reception of Holy Communion and Reconciliation

FOSTERING PROPER CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

- Proper reverence at liturgical functions
- Respect and courteous behavior in class
- Proper attire for attendance at liturgies and class

The responsibility of the education of children belongs by right to the parent. The Office of Catechesis assists parents in this responsibility. Parent participation is vital to the overall educational process. This includes attendance at the scheduled parent events as well as the support of Christian values in and outside of the classroom. Additional programs to assist parents may be made available by the Parish upon request.

ATTENDANCE AT LITURGY

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church states “The Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church’s life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church.” (CCC #1407) The Eucharist nourishes our spiritual life. We are obliged as Catholics to attend Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation.

Faith formation classes are a reinforcement of weekly Mass attendance, not a substitution for Mass. Parents are expected to bring their children to Mass and to emphasize the importance of attending Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. **For grades 2 and 8, Mass attendance is expected on a regular basis and signed bulletins must be submitted to class teacher on a weekly basis.**

BEHAVIOR

Student behavior at faith formation classes is expected to be exemplary. **Respect for the catechist and fellow students is required of every student.**

The Office of Catechesis has established a process to address unacceptable behavior during faith formation classes. At the beginning of each school year each catechist establishes a set of classroom guidelines. If misconduct occurs or the rules are not followed, our policy is: 1) for the first occurrence the student will be issued a warning; 2) for the second occurrence the student will be sent to the office and asked to write a note to their parents describing why they were sent to the office. After class, the catechist, student and Mrs. Dill will speak about the situation. At this time, a telephone call may be made to the parent; 4) after a third time to the office, a conference will be scheduled with the Fr. Sean, Mrs. Dill, parent and student. The student **will not** be permitted back into class until after the meeting. A make up lesson will be assigned and must be submitted prior to returning to class.

DRESS CODE

The students are expected to display modesty and respect when entering the House of God either to attend weekly Mass or faith formation classes. The following attire **will not** be permitted:

- Clothing with inappropriate, profane, derogatory, offensive or violent wording or graphics
- Clothing that is tight, revealing, or suggestive
- Shirts that are midriff, backless, see-through or off-the-shoulder
- Pants or sweatpants that have wording on the seat
- Hats of any type

The Pastor, parish catechetical leader and catechists will monitor the dress code on premises. Those students who do not comply with the policy will be sent home. Your participation in helping us enforce our dress code is greatly appreciated.

ABSENCES

The Office of Catechesis allows for a maximum of three excused absences for the year. Parents should call the office when a student will not be in class. Missed class work must be completed. Parents should contact the catechist directly or through the office to obtain the make up assignments. Please avoid scheduling conflicting appointments on the day of faith formation classes.

Those **students who exceed three absences** will be required to make up missed work during the summer before advancing to the next grade level.

HOMEWORK

Due to the limited amount of class time, homework may be frequently assigned. Homework should take no more than ½ hour. The homework, unless otherwise indicated, will be due at the next scheduled class. Homework will be used to reinforce the material reviewed in class.

If homework is missed more than five times, an unexcused absence will be recorded.

TESTING

Periodic testing, either oral or written, will be administered in all classes. Each student must have satisfactory knowledge of the material presented in his/her grade level in order to advance to the next year.

At the end of seventh and eighth grade, the students will be tested on their knowledge of the course material. A score of 70 or above should be obtained in order to advance to the next level.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will be issued twice a year - January and May. The areas of evaluation will include attendance, attitude, conduct, effort, class participation, homework and testing.

Parents are welcome to meet with their child's catechist or the parish catechetical leader about any matter. These meetings will take place at a time convenient for both the parent and catechist or parish catechetical leader.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS POLICY

The reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation are special times in the life of a young Catholic and his/her family. Our Sacrament Programs therefore require mandatory attendance. Those who are to receive their First Penance and First Eucharist must begin classes in first grade. After the reception of these sacraments in second grade, faith formation must continue without interruption in order to receive Confirmation in the spring of ninth grade.

Those students who attend parochial school must register and attend the Sacramental Preparation year (second and ninth grades) in order to receive their sacraments.

In addition to the regular class schedule, several special events are planned for the sacramental years. Attendance at these events is mandatory. **For grades 2 and 8, signed bulletins must be submitted to class teacher on a weekly basis.**

PARENT MEETINGS

Parent meetings are held during the sacramental preparation years. Attendance is mandatory in order to give parents and/or guardians the necessary information concerning schedules and program content that pertain to the individual sacraments.

Grade 1 – Parent information night held in the spring.

Grade 2 – Parent information nights will be held in the fall and spring.

Grade 8 – One meeting held in September.

OPERATING INFORMATION

Catechists/Volunteers - The Office of Catechesis relies on the generosity of our faithful parishioners who devote their time, talent and treasure to providing our young people with a quality Catholic education. We are grateful for their commitment to our program and are blessed to have them volunteer their time.

Please note we comply with the Diocese of Metuchen Protecting God's Children program to provide a safe environment for all children. Any volunteer, 18 years of age or older, must be screened through the Diocesan program. Volunteers are required to fill out a volunteer application form and attend a training workshop. In addition, a background check will be performed and fingerprints taken. There is no cost to the volunteer. We appreciate your cooperation with the Diocese and our parish.

If you are interested in becoming involved, please contact the office at 908-647-1402.

Text – At the discretion of the catechist, the textbook may be sent home from time to time. The text **must** be brought back to the next scheduled class. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for lost or misplaced textbooks.

Food Allergies – Food allergies are a growing health concern for children across the country. Even a miniscule amount of the allergenic food is sufficient to cause a life-threatening reaction and inadvertent contact (via nose, eyes, mouth) can be sufficient to put a child in danger. It is the goal of OLM to provide an allergen free environment for children with food allergies, so that they may enjoy a safe and respectful place to grow in the faith.

Taking into consideration our unique busing situation for the majority of our students in grades one through five, we will continue, with parent assistance, to provide snacks for these students **ONLY**. Students in grades six, seven and eight will not be permitted to have snacks and drinks.

Recognizing that strict avoidance of the allergen is the only way to prevent a potentially life threatening reaction, we ask your cooperation with the following policy: **Only pretzels, gold fish crackers and animal crackers will be the approved snacks. No other food, snacks, gum or candy will be permitted to be distributed during religious education.**

Parents and guardians of highly allergic children **MUST** make known the special needs of their child to the parish catechetical leader and catechist, so that all precautions will be taken.

If you would like to treat the students, we suggest "Non-Food" items such as stickers, holy cards, pencils, etc. Holiday parties can include Christmas or Easter crafts. Contact your child's catechists to determine what would be appropriate.

Office telephone and hours – The telephone number for the School of Religion is 908-647-1402. The hours during the school year are Monday, 9:30 a.m. - 8:15 p.m.; Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.; and Thursday, 9:30 – 4:30 p.m.

The Our Lady of the Mount Parish Office phone number is 908-647-1075.

Hours for Religious Education Classes –

GRADES 1 – 5:

Monday	Woodland School	3:20 - 4:30 p.m.
	Greenbrook – IEF and Middle School	
Tuesday	Mt. Horeb School	3:20 - 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday	ALT School	2:50 – 4:00 p.m.
Thursday	Central School	3:20 – 4:30 p.m.

GRADE 6

Monday – 5:00 – 6:15 p.m.

Wednesday – 4:15 – 5:30 pm (New for 2011/2012 if we have a catechist volunteer for this slot.)

GRADES 7 and 8

Monday – 7:00 – 8:15 p.m.

Wednesday – 4:15 – 5:30 p.m. (limited enrollment – by request only – must notify us on registration form)

GRADE 9

Monthly gatherings held one Sunday a month for five sessions beginning with Mass at 10:00 a.m. followed by class discussion and lunch. – Parents are notified of the dates in May of eighth grade. A retreat is held the sixth month.

Emergency parent/guardian numbers – We utilize the Honeywell Instant Alert system. In order for your child to participate in our program, you must register with the system as Our Lady of the Mount, Warren. The system will be used for emergency closings notifications as well as non-emergency updates and reminders.

Snow policy – When the Warren schools close for snow or inclement weather, religion classes will be cancelled. If Warren schools dismiss early due to inclement weather, classes will be cancelled. Please make arrangements with your child in the event classes are cancelled during a school day.

Arrival/Dismissal information – please read carefully

Grades 1 – 5 – Warren students arrive by bus. All other students are to be dropped off by their parents or guardian at the Office of Catechesis entrance. Students must be picked up at their classroom. Please wait until after the dismissal bell is rung before entering a classroom. If someone other than a parent picks up a child, the office must be notified.

Grades 6 – 8 – Please drop off students at the Office of Catechesis entrance. Students are to go directly into the building. Students are not allowed to wait outside the building after they are dropped off. Students must be picked up at their classroom. Please wait until after the dismissal bell is rung before entering a classroom. Students are not permitted to go the parking lot unattended.

Late Pick Up - Please pick up your child(ren) on time. We are aware that emergencies arise. If a parent is going to be late, please call the Office of Catechesis at 908-647-1402 ASAP.

Busing - Busing is provided by the Parish for Warren students in grades 1 - 5. Please talk with your child about this privilege and the importance of proper bus behavior. Students should

remain seated and buckled (if bus is equipped with seatbelts) at all times and refrain from screaming out. Those students who do not comply with this policy **will no longer be permitted to ride the bus** to religious education class.

Fire Drills - Fire drills will be administered twice during the school year. The procedure for exiting the building is posted in each classroom.

Registration – All registration information and forms will be available online during April. A notice will also be placed in the bulletin when registration packets are available. For new students and those attending parochial school, registration packets must be picked up in the Office of Catechesis. Registration deadline is June 10. Re-registrations received after June 10 will be assessed a \$50.00 late fee for re-registrants only. **Late registrations received after August 2, will not be accepted.**

Families must be registered in the Parish to be registered in the Office of Catechesis.

Students who attend parochial school must register for the Sacrament preparation years (grades 2 and 9).

Home School – Parents may choose to home school their child, with the exception of a sacramental preparation two-year programs. In October, parents must meet with the parish catechetical leader to discuss the material to be covered as well as testing. Please speak to the parish catechetical leader for further details. This option may not be done for consecutive years.

The home school option must be decided upon prior to classes beginning in September. Please consider all after school activities that might present a conflict with our schedule.

Calendar - Copies may be obtained in the Office of Catechesis and at www.olmwarren.org in June.

Fees – The registration fee is \$175.00 for the first child, \$50.00 for each additional child. A \$50.00 late fee is charged for registration that is received after June 10. **No child will be denied religious education due to finances.** A payment plan option is available. Please contact the parish catechetical leader for further information.

There is an additional \$50.00 fee for students preparing for First Eucharist to be paid at the second parents' meeting in January. This fee **is not paid** at the time of registration.

Visitors - Other than students, catechetical personnel and parish staff, no persons are permitted in the hallways, classrooms or restrooms during class sessions without the authorization of the Office of Catechesis.

All visitors must enter at the Office of Catechesis door and report to the office located on the second floor. Parents are always welcome, but must register with the office first.

Catechists are expected to notify the office if they notice anyone other than authorized persons in the building.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

If a catechist or the parish catechetical leader suspects a child has been abused, NJ State Statutes require that the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) be notified immediately. Failure to make such a report is punishable as a disorderly persons offense.

Catechists are required to notify the office immediately in the event of any student-on-student violence.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, WEAPONS

Students are forbidden to use or possess drugs, cigarettes, alcohol and weapons on Our Lady of the Mount property. If a student is found to be in possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons, the police will be notified. Suspension or expulsion from the program may be enforced upon review and consultation.

In addition, a catechist or the director will not send a student home with a driver who is visibly impaired. The parish catechetical leader reserves the right to call the emergency contact number.

RECORDS AND TRANSFER POLICY

The Office of Catechesis maintains a permanent record card for each student in the program. This card contains important information that includes the records of sacraments that have been received.

Those entering the program must submit a copy of their baptismal certificate and record of religious education from their previous parish.

For those students moving to another parish, parents may request a copy of their child's records. Please provide the Office of Catechesis with at least 10 days notice in order to prepare the form.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

RCIA (adapted for children) – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – The program is adapted to meet the needs of a child who has had little or no formal faith formation training. Please contact the parish catechetical leader.

Special Needs – Please complete the enclosed pink form regarding special individual and family information. Please notify the parish catechetical leader of any special situation your child may have such as a learning classification and/or food allergies. This information will be kept strictly confidential and shared with the catechist with your permission. The information is used in order to provide the best learning situation for your child.

CURRICULUM

Our program utilizes the Sadlier We Believe series for grades one through eight; Loyola Press - God's Gift Reconciliation and God's Gift Eucharist for grade two; and The Spirit Sets Us Free for grade nine. Parents are always encouraged to review the text and resources we have in the School of Religion Office. Parents may also use the websites www.webelieveweb.com for grades one through six: <http://GodsGift.LoyolaPress.com> for grade two and www.weliveourfaith.com for grades seven and eight that correlates with our programs.

Grade 1

The students cover these unit themes: Jesus teaches us about God's love; We are followers of Jesus; We belong to the Church; and We celebrate and live our faith.

Prayer Formation

Our Father
Hail Mary
Sign of the Cross

Grade 2

While preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion, the students will cover these unit themes: Jesus Christ is with us always; Jesus calls us to Penance and Reconciliation; Jesus gives himself in the Eucharist; and We live our Catholic faith.

Prayer Formation

The prayers from the previous year, plus:
Act of Contrition
Glory Be

Grade 3

The students cover these unit themes: Jesus gives us the Church; We are members of the Church; The Church leads us in worship; and We are called to discipleship.

Prayer Formation

The prayers from the previous years, plus:
Apostles' Creed

Grade 4

The students cover these unit themes: Growing in Jesus Christ; Learning about God's law; The commandments help us to love others; and We are called holiness.

Prayer Formation

The prayers from the previous years, plus:
The Ten Commandments
The Beatitudes

Grade 5

The students cover these unit themes: Jesus Christ shares his life with us; Confirmation and Eucharist complete our initiation; The sacraments of healing restore us; and We love and serve as Jesus did.

Prayer Formation

The prayers from the previous years, plus:
Spontaneous Prayer, praying from the heart

Grade 6

The students cover these unit themes: Forming the covenant; Building the covenant nation; Redefining the covenant people; and The covenant fulfilled in Jesus.

Prayer Formation

The prayers from the previous years, plus:
The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy

Grade 7

The students cover these unit themes: Who is God?; Who is Jesus?; How is Jesus Christ alive in the Church today?; and How does the church live as the Body of Christ?

Prayer Formation

The prayers from the previous years, plus:
The Rosary

Grade 8

The students cover these unit themes: How do we nourish God's gift of faith?; Who are our ancestors in faith?; How can the Church's heritage give us hope?; and What does it mean to be Catholic?

Prayer Formation

Review the prayers from the previous years.

The Family Life Program

In addition to the basic course of study each year the Family Life Program is presented throughout grades one through eight. Five core themes are presented at each level based on the maturity and the comprehension of the children: Family Living, Personal Growth and Self-Understanding, Respect for Life, Catholic Christian Sexuality and Social Living.

Parents of students in grades three, five and seven are notified by mail before the Family Life units begin.

Students should know these prayers:

Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those
who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you!
Blessed are you among women,
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Act of Contrition

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have mercy.