

# Our Lady of Mount Carmel Religious Education Program



Catechetical Theme 2020

*"I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you."*

## **HANDBOOK OF POLICY & GUIDELINES 2020-2021**

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church  
10 County Road, Tenafly, New Jersey

## Parish Staff

**Temporary Administrator:** Fr. Ashley Harrington, O.Carm.

**Pastoral Associate:** Fr. Anthony Armstrong, O.Carm.

**Deacons:** Lex Ferraiola  
Dr. Michael Giuliano

**Director of Religious Education:** Sr. Regina M. Chassar, SSJ

**Religious Education Assistant:** Roxanne Kougasian

**Mission Development/Director of Confirmation:** Elliot Guerra

**Director of Music:** Andrea Covais

### Office Phone Numbers

**Church Office** 201-568-0545

**Fax #:** 201-568-3215

**Religious Education Office:** 201-871-4662

**Religious Education E-mail:** [reled@olmc.us](mailto:reled@olmc.us)

**Church Website:** [www.olmc.us](http://www.olmc.us)

# PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The philosophy and goal in our Religious Education Program is to establish a dynamic partnership with parents of children who attend the parish Religious Education Program. This goal can only be developed in each child and family by a sense of belonging to a faith community. Our goal is faith—a faith that is alive and mature which can affect our everyday actions and is deeply rooted in our Catholic tradition.

The religious education of a child begins in their early years and continues in a more formal manner when the child enters school. We believe that parents and religious educators in partnership can develop a faith that is truly alive in each child. This partnership requires a working relationship of: *communication, collaboration, and cooperation.*

The Religious Education Program provides formal instruction in the faith; the family provides the practice in the home, the community, and in our world. A religious education program cannot accomplish what a family and the practice of faith can do to deeply root that faith in their children.

***Faith is seeking to understand!***

The active participation of the family in weekly worship, good works, faithful attendance at religious education classes and the study of the faith at home will enrich both the family and the entire parish faith community of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

## **ADDRESS & PHONE CHANGES/MOVING**

Please notify the Religious Education Office when you have a change of address and/or phone number. When leaving the program, the Religious Education Office can provide your new parish with information regarding your child's religious instruction and sacramental information.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **ABSENCE, EARLY DISMISSAL, TARDINESS**

All absences and early dismissals need to be reported to the Religious Education Office. When a child is absent, the parent is asked to call the Religious Education Office to report the absence and to work on the missed lesson with the child at home before returning to the next class. Please note that excessive absence can hinder the continuity of religious knowledge. Students are permitted eight absences. Early dismissal is done by written note or phone call from the parent. Children are not dismissed without notification from the parent/guardian.

## **CALENDAR**

The Religious Education Office posts a calendar of classes on the parish Website. This calendar is updated, as necessary. Refer to the calendar in this handbook.

## **CANCELLATION**

The Religious Education Program follows the schedule of the Tenafly Public Schools. If the Tenafly Public Schools are closed on a weekday, religious education classes are automatically cancelled. If there is inclement weather or other reason for cancelling class on a Sunday, class parents or catechists will notify families. Also, the Religious Education Office voice mail and web page will have current information pertaining to class status. Please call (201) 871-4662 or visit the website at [www.olmc.us](http://www.olmc.us) and click on the Religious Education tab.

## **CATECHISTS**

Individuals who are interested in serving as a catechist should contact the Religious Education Office. The catechists in our Religious Education Program are individuals who desire to share their faith with the young people of our parish. All catechists over 18 years of age must comply with Archdiocesan regulations regarding safety and protection of children. All catechists over 18 years of age must complete the "Protecting God's Children" workshop and have a background

check. Re-certification and background check must be done every five years by participating in either “Keeping the Promise Alive” or “Protecting God’s Children” workshop. Our catechists have completed the requirements of the Archdiocese and continue their ongoing development in the faith. Each catechist is called to model for the children a way to serve God, the Church, and others.

## **CLASS SCHEDULES**

The 2020-2021 school year will begin with remote learning as scheduled by individual catechists for each grade. In classroom classes, when announced, are held as follows:

Sunday Mornings	8:45 – 9:55 a.m.	Grades 1-8
Tuesday Afternoons	3:30 – 4:45 p.m.	Grades 1-8

## **CURRICULUM GUIDELINES**

The Religious Education Program follows the guidelines provided by the Archdiocese of Newark. These guidelines are contained within an approved textbook.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Children are expected to conduct themselves in a way that speaks of Christian love toward the catechists, fellow classmates and themselves. The following rules should be followed:

### **Respect for God:**

- 1) Come to class with a good attitude and an openness to learn the faith and pray with others.
- 2) Remove hats in the building and classroom out of respect for God and others.
- 3) Children coming directly from school on Tuesday afternoon may snack before class begins.
- 4) Come to class with book, folder, etc.

### **Respect for others:**

- 1) Do not argue with adults.
- 2) Address the catechists by Mr., Mrs., or Ms.
- 3) Listen to others without interrupting.
- 4) Do not talk out or cause any disruption in the classroom.
- 5) Respect the desks, classroom space and all material.
- 6) Honor, care for and respect all school and church property.
- 7) Make every effort to arrive on time for class.

Students who disregard any of these areas of respect will report to the Director of Religious Education. The director will discuss the problem with the student. The child will be asked to reflect on what has happened and consider what needs to be done to correct this situation. If a disrespectful situation continues in a given classroom, the parents will be notified by the Director of Religious Education.

## **EVALUATION**

The catechist is encouraged to evaluate the child and their grasp of religious knowledge. The evaluation can be done by oral or written quizzes. Parents are encouraged to inquire about their child's progress.

## **FEES**

The registration fee covers only a small portion of the expenses to operate the Religious Education Program and supports both the Religious Education Program and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. **Information regarding the payment of fees is included on the registration form.** Additional donations are welcome and appreciated. We are most grateful to all parishioners for their kindness and generosity. Families are reminded that all checks are to be made payable to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. Credit card and cash payments are made in the Religious Education Office; please call the office. Installment payments are accepted. Any family that is unable to meet the religious education fees is invited to speak with the Director of Religious Education. Registration is not contingent upon payment of fee and no child is denied religious instruction if a family is unable to pay the fee.

## **HOME STUDY**

If a child is unable to attend religious instruction at the parish, the parents may choose to work with their child at home. The Religious Education Office will provide materials, lesson plan schedule and a testing schedule. Home study is permitted for two consecutive years. Home study is **not permitted in Grade 2** since attendance is necessary for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

## **SACRAMENT PREPARATION**

Families who have a child ready to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist will receive notification from the Religious Education Office regarding the preparation schedule.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

All religion textbooks being used are approved by the Archdiocese of Newark and are in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catechism of the Catholic Church. The text is consumable; students should read and write in the textbook.

## **TRAFFIC CONTROL AND SAFETY**

**Sunday Morning:** Entrance is via the stairway near the elevator (North Parking Lot). Dismissal is to the North Parking Lot or to church for the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

**Tuesday Afternoon:** Entrance for Grades K-8 is via the stairway near the elevator (North Parking Lot). Upon arrival: Grades 1-4 report to the church for prayer; Grades 5-8 report directly to the classroom and go to the church at 4:30 p.m. for prayer. Dismissal for all grades is to the North Parking Lot.

*Parents are reminded to follow safety rules...*

- ❖ Please park in a space when picking up your child from class.
- ❖ Do not block the entrance and exit from the parking lot.

*Thank you for keeping the children safe!*

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The Religious Education Program has almost 300 students and their families. This program depends on the valuable assistance of many individuals. When you receive a volunteer form, please consider helping in some area. Our greatest need is for individuals to volunteer as catechists, substitute catechists and classroom aides. Please make every effort to assist when contacted by the Religious Education Office, particularly when asked to substitute for the catechist in your child's class. Additionally, the Religious Education Office is in need of volunteers to assist in the office on Sunday mornings during class time (answer phone, assist the catechists, if necessary).

## **WORSHIP**

We are a community of faith and teach the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. We expect families who attend our parish Religious Education Program to be registered with the parish and practicing members by:

- attending Sunday and holy day liturgies
- participating in the sacrament of Reconciliation
- participating in other liturgical practices of the Church  
(Advent, Lent, Holy Week, Easter)

In the program of religious instruction the children are taught the prayers, sacraments and practices of the Church and it is our hope that parents and families will pass on these treasures of the church by teaching, practicing and example.



## PRAYERS FOR GRADE LEVELS

Parents are asked to make sure their child knows the following required prayers as they move through religious education:

**Grade 1:** The Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be to the Father, Grace Before and After Meals

**Grade 2:** All of the above prayers, plus:  
The Act of Contrition (Prayer of Sorrow) and the Apostles' Creed

**Grade 3:** All of the above prayers, plus:  
Hail Holy Queen

**Grade 4:** All of the above prayers, plus:  
The Angelus, Come Holy Spirit, The Mysteries of the Rosary

**Grade 5:** All of the above prayers, plus:  
The Nicene Creed (recited at Sunday Mass) and The Memorare (prayer to Mary)

**Grade 6 -8:** All of the above prayers

Memorization of these prayers ensures our knowing them for life. Practice and recitation helps our remembering.



## **NOTES TO PARENTS**

- Pray and worship together each Sunday; discuss the weekly readings with your child.
- Make sure your child is on time for class and comes with book and materials.
- Check the parish Website [www.olmc.us](http://www.olmc.us) for information regarding the parish community and the Religious Education Program.
- Discuss/review with your child the lesson covered in class each week.
- Review all required prayers with your child.
- Call the Religious Education Office when your child is absent or needs to be dismissed early from class and provide a note to the classroom catechist.
- Volunteer to assist in the Religious Education Program.



## **NOTES TO CHILDREN**

- Prepare for class by gathering book and materials.
- Complete any assignments given by the catechist.
- Study your required prayers faithfully; pray these prayers daily.
- Enter and leave the building by the assigned doors.
- Observe the rule of good Christian behavior and safety at all times.
- Remember to use kind words and actions toward all of God's people: catechists, fellow classmates, and other adults.
- Use the words 'please' and 'thank you' often.
- Do not enter a classroom if the catechist has not arrived yet.
- Do your best to follow all the class rules put forth by the classroom catechist.

## **DIGITAL COMMUNICATION CONSENT**

Please confirm via email with the Religious Education Office that you have read and agree to digital networking and communication for religious instruction for your child for the 2020-2021 school year as set forth in the following statement issued by the Archdiocese of Newark.

"By registering my child(ren) in this parish catechetical program and acknowledging receipt of this handbook, I understand that I am giving my permission for my child(ren) to participate in the parish catechetical program through any and all digital networking and communication including, but not limited to, email, texting, Zoom, Facebook, other social networking sites or digital educational platforms, etc. I understand that the use of digital media will be ministry related and NOT personal in nature. All communication will be restricted to matters concerning classes, youth ministry events, and parish events. The person(s) being authorized to communicate with the minor child is in compliance with the Archdiocesan Child Protection policies and protocols. Virtual sessions may be recorded for parish use."