

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Religious Education Program



HANDBOOK OF POLICY & GUIDELINES

2023-2024

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

Parish Staff

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Deacons: Lex Ferraiola
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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 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 2023-2024 school year will hold classes as follows:

Sunday Mornings 8:45 – 9:55 a.m. Grades K-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. 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 1-8 is via the stairway near the elevator (North Parking Lot). Upon arrival students in all grades report to the church for prayer at 3:30, then report to class. 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 200 students and their families. This program depends on the valuable assistance of many individuals. Our greatest need is for individuals to volunteer as catechists, substitute catechists and classroom aides. Please contact the Religious Education Office if interested in volunteering. 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**

Mass Times: Saturday at 5 PM and Sunday at 8 AM, 10 AM, 12 NOON

Holy Day Mass Times: 8:30 AM, 12 NOON, 7 PM unless otherwise noted

- **participating in the sacrament of Reconciliation**

Reconciliation Time: Saturday 4:00 – 4:30 PM, or by appointment

- **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.



**“Childhood is a critical time.
It is when the foundation is set
for lifelong faith and devotion to God.”**

SOURCE: *Being Involved in Your Child's Faith Formation*, Channing Bete Company

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 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.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR 2023-2024

Families are responsible for helping their children attend religious education classes on a regular basis to ensure continuity of lessons. It is the responsibility of parents to share the Catholic faith with their children by attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist regularly is strongly encouraged.

CLASSES ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE FOLLOWING DATES

This calendar is subject to change as we move through the year of religious instruction.

	Sunday (Gr. K-8) 8:45 - 9:55 a.m.	Tuesday (Gr. 1-8) 3:30 - 4:45 p.m.
September	17 24	19 26
October	1 8 15 22 29	3 10 17 24 31 (No Class)
November	5 12 19 26 (No Class)	7 14 21 (No Class) 28
December	3 10 17 24 (No Class) 31 (No Class)	5 12 19 26 (No Class)
January	7 14 21 28	2 9 16 23 30
February	4 11 18 (No Class) 25	6 13 20 (No Class) 27
March	3 10 17 24 31 (No Class)	5 12 19 26
April	7 14 21 28	2 (No Class) 9 16 23 30
May	5 12 (Last Class)	7 14 (Last Class)