

**MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION
(PSR)
PARENT HANDBOOK
2016-2017**



Parents as Primary Educators of Faith

In the *Rite of Baptism*, parents promise to accept “the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.” Then, later in the rite, parents are told, “On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him (her) up in the practice of the faith.” In the *Directory for Masses with Children*, we are told, “By reason of the responsibility freely accepted at the baptism of their children, parents are bound in conscience to teach them gradually to pray. This they do by praying with them each day and by introducing them to prayers said privately.”

Since parents are the primary faith educators of their children, our role as Catechists is to guide parents in their teaching role. Therefore, every parish should concentrate, foremost, on adult formation. With all of this in mind, our parish community will continue offering support for families within the Parish School of Religion on Sunday mornings. Our volunteer catechists may be sending activities, lessons, and ideas home with your children. These are to be completed with you the parents. In no way is this intended to add a burden to your already busy lifestyle. Instead, it is intended to promote greater spirituality and close family relationships. It is my hope that you will find these activities enriching.

Praying should also be a regular part of Christian family life. Different personalities respond to different types of prayer. While mantras might be helpful for some to prayerfully mediate, others may find memorized prayer meaningful. Still others need to compose more personal prayers out of their needs and experiences. Most children love guided meditations and the use of symbols in prayer. A starting point could be teaching children that prayer could be thought of as conversation with God; both talking and listening are involved.

Prayer will be a regular part of the Sunday Parish School of Religion, but we will give parents the responsibility of teaching specific prayers to their children. In this way, parents and children can decide which prayers will most effectively bring them into oneness with God. If you need guidance, your child’s catechist can offer suggestions, or I will be happy to help you in this area. In terms of memorized prayer, parents might wish to begin with the *Our Father*, and gradually teach children the liturgical prayers that will enable them to participate more fully in the Sunday liturgy. More importantly, parents need to teach their children the meaning behind these prayers. Most importantly, every week, parents, with their children, need to actively participate in the Sunday Eucharist.

In addition to these activities, I strongly encourage all families to spend 15-30 minutes together on the weekends, reading the upcoming Sunday Scriptures aloud and then reflecting on their meaning. Readings for the coming Sunday are posted in the Sunday Bulletin and in the Catholic Telegraph each week. By preparing for the Eucharistic Celebration in this way, each person can truly hear God’s word when it is proclaimed.

Remember that your Catholic faith formation should be from womb to tomb. Grade school education is not enough. For your convenience, adult faith formation is offered every Sunday morning in St. Francis Hall while your children are in the Parish School of Religion. This program is for you, and there is no charge to you for this service. Frequent workshops, for a nominal fee, are offered in the Dayton Area. If you would like a schedule of events, please let me know.

Lastly, try to help your children find ways to connect God to their everyday life experiences. Our spiritual lives should not be compartmentalized – should not be saved for Sundays only – should not be disconnected to the rest of our lives. Rather, our spirituality should be an integral part of everything we do.

Welcome Students and Parents

INTRODUCTION

Parish School of Religion Mission Statement:

The Parish School of Religion of Mary, Help of Christians endeavors to provide opportunities for all members to grow in their understanding of faith. We offer assistance to parents interested in passing on their faith. For children, we approach faith education with a comprehensive view. Worship preparation and participation, along with service opportunities, and evangelization-or faith-sharing-are components of this catechetical approach.

In this effort, we currently offer Sunday sessions for 3-year olds through adults, provided we have Catechists for each level.

SCHEDULE

9:45-11:00 am

3-year-old-High School meet in the Parish Center

STAFF

Director of Religious Education Molly Hynes Collinsworth
Office phone 878-7325
(When someone is available to answer it.)

ADMISSION POLICIES

There is no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin or handicapping conditions. Non-custodial Parent Rights - The Catechetical Leader needs to be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent. It is expected that all children enrolled in the Early Childhood program are toilet trained.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents should discuss lessons with their child each week. Catechists may ask for family participation outside of PSR time. **For children to learn their faith well, parents must be involved in the evangelizing.**

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

What we learned as children cannot sustain us for life. Parents especially have an obligation to be educated in the faith, since parents are the primary educators of their children. Learning is a lifelong process. A variety of styles and opportunities for learning are available at MHC. All adults are welcome to participate in as many choices as interest them. Various topics of interest are held in the evenings throughout the year [If you have suggested topics, let us hear from you!]. Please watch the weekly bulletin for topics.

Scripture Study

A number of small groups are meeting throughout the parish to study the Scriptures, or to discuss what it means to be a Christian in the world today. Those interested in joining a group are asked to call the Director of Religious Education at 878-7325.

Books, Video & Audio Tapes

Books on various religious topics such as Scripture, saints, devotions, family life and spirituality are available for lending in the MHC Parish Religious Library. There are also many fine video and audio tapes available. The library is open during PSR hours and by appointment (878-7325).

SACRAMENTS

A vital part of each student's development as a Catholic is regular participation in the sacraments of the Church. All students in the first grade and older are expected to attend Sunday Mass weekly, as well as holy days of obligation. All students in the third grade and older are invited to participate regularly in the sacrament of Reconciliation. **For children to grow into appreciation of the Sacraments, parents must model this participation.**

Students in the second grade prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist Communion, while seventh and eighth graders prepare for Confirmation every other year. The next Rite of Confirmation is planned for Sunday, April 23, 2017.

Sacramental preparation is family based, and it takes place outside the classroom. Information letters are sent out to families enrolled in the PSR program. Information is also published in the bulletin. Please contact the DRE with any questions, 878-7325.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Any child who has not received Baptism must make arrangements with the Director of Religious Education. Anyone who has not received either Reconciliation or Eucharist by the third grade must also make arrangements with the director. Preparation for these sacraments will take place outside of regular class time.

CHILD PROTECTION

The program administrators are required by the Ohio Revised Code and Archdiocesan Policy on Child Protection (March 31, 1998) to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. All volunteers are required to receive training regarding the archdiocesan child protection policies. In addition, all catechists, aides and volunteers working with children at least once a month will undergo a background investigation and train under the on-going VIRTUS safe environment system..

Child Abuse Prevention Education will be part of the curriculum each year. Parents will be invited to participate with younger students.

REGISTRATION FEE

Registration Fees for Parishioners: **(High School Free)** \$65 per student, 3 & 4 year olds-8. **Registrations received by Aug 31, 2016 for a family with 1 student early registration is \$60, for a family of 2 students early registration is \$110 and a family of 3 students or more early registration is \$150 max (ONLY BEFORE AUGUST 31, 2016).** Payment is due at the time of registration. You may enclose the completed form and payment in a sealed envelope marked "DRE" and drop in the collection basket at any mass. Please

make checks payable to Mary, Help of Christians Parish (954 N. Maple Ave., Fairborn, OH 45324).

Non-parishioners: \$85 per student [Must talk to DRE if you are a non-parishioner] Since the parish provides the larger portion of the program costs, there is no proration of the fee for late entrance, or refund for early withdrawal. If these fees present a financial hardship, please call Molly at 878-7325.

PARISH REGISTRATION

It is assumed that the family of each student enrolled in the program is also registered in the parish. If this is not the case, please contact the parish office for a registration form, and/or call the DRE at 878-7325 to explain the circumstances.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is required for the maximum benefit to the student. A written excuse or a phone call to the catechist explaining the absence is requested. After two unexcused absences, parents will be contacted by the catechist to find out why the child has not been in attendance.

CANCELLATION OF CLASS

In the event of severe weather, cancellation of classes will be announced on WHIO radio (AM 1290), WHKO radio (FM K99.1) and television (channels 2 and 7) stations. You can also go to www.whiotv.com/closings/index.html or www.wdtn.com/subindex/weather/closings to see cancellations. Please do not call the Rectory or the DRE.

CONDUCT

Students are expected to

- *arrive on time
- *participate fully
- *show respect for others
- *handle parish property with care
- *celebrate the Sunday Eucharist every week

Parents are expected to help their child meet these expectations.

DISCIPLINE

In the case of unsatisfactory conduct (behavior contrary to policies and procedures described in this handbook), the catechist will speak with the student privately. If misconduct continues, the child may be sent to the coordinator or the DRE. Parents may be contacted the first or second time this occurs. A child may only be removed from PSR when unsatisfactory conduct continues after this parent conference. Specific standards for re-admission will be set at the time of dismissal. Because every child is a unique individual, the Director of Religious Education retains the right to make exceptions to stated rules and penalties.

DRESS POLICY FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

The children will be active participants in our program. Please send them in appropriate clothing. Think of your child's comfort and provide simple clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Think of messy art materials and other messy activities and provide clothing that is washable. We will be using paint, crayons, markers, glue, glitter, etc. We will also be dancing and sitting on the floor.

TEXTBOOKS

All texts are on a preferred list published annually and listed on the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Office of Religious Education website. Each student is supplied with a textbook. If the text is lost, a replacement copy is available at cost.

SEX EDUCATION

Sex Education is offered as a family based program. Parents will be given an opportunity each year to order grade level text books & parent guides to assist them in linking Gospel values to forming healthy relationships, understanding biological sexual development, and making moral choices.

RECORDS

Attendance, Progress reports, ACRE results and Sacramental Records are maintained by the Religious Education office. Parents may have access to these records by request.

PARENT-CATECHIST COMMUNICATION

Written progress reports concerning student attendance and participation in class activities will be sent home at the end of each semester (January and May) for grades 1-8. Parents are asked to sign and return both semester reports. Parents are encouraged to introduce themselves to their child's catechist and contact the catechist or director to discuss any matter of concern to them.

MASS PARTICIPATION

Grades 6-8 are given the opportunity to minister at one or two Sunday 11:15 am masses. *Parents and family are invited to sit in reserved seating with their child. Please mark your calendars and plan to be present on the appropriate dates for your children. Any student lecturing must be present in class both of the two weeks prior to ministering.

Jr. High	November 20, 2016 & February 19, 2017
Grade 6	January 15, 2017 & March 5, 2017

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Emergency Medical Information - Parents are expected to include any special medical or dietary information on the registration form. When the information changes, please notify the DRE and the catechist.

Entrance/Exit - Parents are asked to accompany their children to and from the classroom, unless written permission is given on the registration form. All students and parents are asked to exercise caution while walking in the parking lot area.

Facilities - All grades will be housed in the Parish Center. **Please do not leave your child unattended; wait until a catechist is in the classroom.**

Field Trip Policy

Teachers will communicate the time, place, mode of transportation, and purpose of the field trip to parents prior to any trip off parish grounds. Parents are required to sign a permission form, which releases the parish and the catechist from liability.

Parking - Parents are asked to observe the "No Parking-Fire Lane" areas surrounding the Parish Center building, and to exercise care while driving in the parking lot before and after PSR.

Drills – Fire drills and tornado drills will be practiced occasionally during PSR sessions.

VISITORS

Students who wish to bring a friend to PSR are asked to notify the catechist or director ahead of time, as a courtesy. Visitors must have a **Guest Health Info. /Archdiocese permission slip** and the **one-time permission slip for guest** filled out and signed by their parent/guardian. Blank permission slips are available in the PSR office in the Parish Center. You will need to pick both up the week before bringing a guest. Feel free to copy blank ones for future guests.

ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

Parents may not move your child to a different class without the permission of the DRE and the catechist involved.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers create the success of the PSR program. We need catechists and aides, as well as people to do other miscellaneous jobs. We would be happy to have a volunteer for music or special programs. If you have ideas, please speak with the DRE. All parents are asked to discern to which ministry they are called, so that the tasks may be shared by all.

All Catechists are unpaid ministers. They are required to comply with all Child Protection policies and are to work toward Basic Certification.

PROCEDURE FOR A COMPLAINT

Dissatisfaction with an individual catechist and/or administrative action needs to be handled with the catechist in question or the appropriate administrator.

1. Communicate with the person with whom there is a problem.
2. Communicate with the person's most immediate supervisor.
3. Seek the help of a third party to facilitate discussion.
The pastor (if he is not already involved) and the staffs of the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Religious Education may be helpful in this regard.
4. Pursue the matter through the local due process procedure.
5. Seek information concerning the Archdiocesan Mediation Office.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY

If a young person is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his or her possession, the director will have to search. An adult staff member or volunteer will witness the search. The decision to search will involve some suspicion of wrongdoing on a young person's part. That individual will be asked to cooperate. If the person refuses, the parents will be contacted to come to the program site and assist in the search. If the parents do not cooperate, the director may impose a penalty, even exclusion from the program. The Sheriff's Office will be called, when necessary.

AMENDMENT POLICY

Parents will be notified in writing when policies are to be added or amended.

