

Welcome!

It will be an interesting but faith filled program year at Holy Family and we are looking forward to sharing it with you. While the pandemic has shut down many things, we have not stopped our efforts to share the love and faith of Our Lord, Jesus, with our parish children. The current pandemic requires us to change the methods, we have not changed our mission.

The mission of our program is to promote the faith, and to teach the Word of God, in our parish and our community will strive to help all who come to explore their Catholic faith, develop morally correct attitudes towards God, self and others as they grow in religious understanding and practice. Specifically, by our example and commitment to our own formation, will assist parents in their roles as the primary educators of their children.

Classes for this year will be online for students in kindergarten through high school. Our new text for students in K-6 is *Christ in Us* by W.H. Sadlier; *We Live Our Faith* for our 7th & 8th graders; and various books for teens for our High School program.

The Faith Knowledge Standards developed by the Archdiocese of Washington are at the core of our teaching and are based on the 6 pillars of catechesis (pray, learn, celebrate, share choose and live).

Although we use the term “grade” to represent each level of our program, our intent is to provide a complete catechesis. Therefore, each child is placed in what is deemed an appropriate level/grade with the expectation that he/she will participate from the beginning level to the end. It has happened in the past, where a child may attend for one or two years and drop out, only to return at “sacrament time”. In this situation, the child will be placed at the level when he/she left our program.

Parents, we need your support in our mission. Please review this handbook for program policies. Discuss with your child what is being taught in the classroom. Most importantly, attend Mass together (even if it is virtual) Let us all pray for a fruitful year filled with learning and love for the Lord.

Holy Family Catechists

As mentioned on page 5 of this handbook, knowledge based assessments will be administered annually to students in grades 3 to 8. Our students will take this assessment in the spring. **Please make sure your child is in attendance for the Assessment.** Any missed FKA will be scored as a 0 (zero) on the progress report.

Collaboration with Parents

We are a team. We cannot and should not replace you as the primary catechist of your child.

It is our role to support you in your efforts and we respectfully ask that you reciprocate.

We believe that with prayer, faithful Mass attendance (again even online or TV), reception of the sacraments, service to others and study of the teachings of our faith we can all be the people that God has called us to be.

Internet Communication

Each week, on Thursday, you will receive reminder emails/texts (via Flock Note) regarding the upcoming classes. A link on the front page of our website will help you to register for this application. This is a courtesy and not meant to replace the printed calendar.

Our parish has a webpage www.holyfamilywoodmore.org and a page link for Religious Education. On this page you can find the calendar, syllabus, handbook, Unit Tests, Summer Packet and other related program information.

Knowledge Based Standards For Religious Education

In 2011 the Archdiocese of Washington, implemented the new Faith Knowledge Standards. Recently all of the standards underwent revision. Parents should be familiar with these standards so we have provided a link on our webpage. The guidelines are called:

*Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization
Archdiocesan Religion
Curriculum Guide
Grades Pre-K to 8*

This curriculum looks at the six tasks of catechesis as six key elements of lived Catholic life so as to help young disciples in formation to realize the intimate connection between our Catholic faith and life. These six key elements of Catholic life “constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.” (GDC nos. 85-86; NDC no. 20)

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or by email at: holyfamilyprep@msn.com
Visit our webpage at www.holyfamilywoodmore.org

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Program Times

All classes are virtual until at least December 31, 2020. It will be reviewed to see how the remainder of the year will progress.

PREP - (Preschool—8th Grade) K-4 will meet virtually on Sundays, grades 5-6 will meet on Wednesday evenings, grades 7-8 on Tuesday evenings. (see calendar for times).

REAL Faith —(Religious Education for Atypical Learners)

HSPREP - (High School Religious Education) meet on Thursday evenings.

Our program year runs from September through May to meet the Archdiocesan requirement of 30+ hours of instruction.

Please make your best effort to have your child here on time. It is very disruptive to have a child enter the classroom once instruction has begun! **Excessive tardiness (20 minutes or more)** will be counted as an absence.

Morning Reflections & Family Event

In an effort to be more creative in the ways that we teach and learn, we will be holding virtual gatherings in Advent and Lent, along with our Family Event (in January). Attendance is expected as it is part of our parish program. These one day events will count as 2 absences, each, if missed. Please see the calendar and syllabus for the dates.

Attendance Policy (Updated in 2015)

If a student should miss 8 or more classes, during the program year, the parent(s) will be required to meet with the pastor to discuss the reason for such high absenteeism. Students are still accountable for making up any missed class work/homework.

Attendance is taken and tardy arrivals are noted. Arriving 5-15 minutes late for a class is considered tardy. No one arriving 16+ 5 minutes after the class start time, will be admitted and it will be counted as an absence.

Confirmation

In the Archdiocese of Washington, it is recommended that confirmation be celebrated during the 7th-8th grade year. Here at Holy Family, we begin our preparation in January of the student's 7th grade year. Preparation concludes in June of the 8th grade year.

Our program has 7 Components:

1. Faithful attendance at Sunday Mass (even if it's virtual)
3. Faithful attendance of Confirmation Classes
4. Completion of Community Service Projects
5. Participation in a parish ministry
6. Written essay regarding desire for the sacrament
7. Interview with the pastor to determine readiness

Confirmation is a Rite not a Right. Readiness of the candidate determines its reception. It is also not a graduation nor should it be considered the end of religious instruction.

Students that are out of sequence should review the requirements on page 7 of this handbook.

Service Projects

Over the years, we have offered several opportunities for the children to participate in service projects. Given the pandemic, some of these types of projects may not be possible. While the projects may vary from year to year, some traditional ones include:

Cemetery Clean-up	Christmas Giving Program
Lit For Little Ones	Shepherd's Cove
So Others Might Eat (SOME)	Various Charitable Collections
Warm Nights/Bridges of Hope	March For Life Hosting

While these projects are not mandatory, we hope that you would encourage your children's participation to give them a sense of stewardship of God's creation and towards each other.

Sacrament Preparation

It is Archdiocesan Policy that students receive Sacraments at their home parish. Preparation (catechesis) for the reception of these sacraments is also received at their home parish. Students attending a Catholic School should contact the pastor to obtain his permission for catechesis to occur outside of the parish program. Otherwise your child will be expected to participate with the parish program for their preparation. Primarily this affects those students in grades 2, 7 & 8. Please be aware of the following:

1. All parents of children preparing for sacraments are required to attend parent meetings.
2. Catholic School children will need to attend classes, as scheduled (see calendar). These classes will focus on knowledge of the sacraments, exploration and investigation of the specific sacrament and foster a sense of community.

Children Out of Sequence

These are children who did not receive sacraments at the usual prescribed age. This program aims at helping them become fully initiated Catholics.

Any new student:

- in grade 2 (of their regular school) that has had no prior religious instruction will be enrolled in grade 1 and will meet during PREP with those students.
- in grades 3-12 will meet during the regular PREP or HSPREP class time and given additional assignments for home preparation.

Cancellations or Delays

Given that we classes are online this policy may not be needed for this program year.

Classroom Expectations

The expectation is that students will participate as if they were in a live classroom. Each teacher will provide their students with the guidelines for behavior. The classroom link will be open 5 minutes prior to the scheduled class time so that instruction may begin on time.

Every class will have two adults in attendance that are in compliance with the ADW's child protection policies. Parents are always welcome to attend with their child and many need to assist their younger children during class time.

All students should begin class with all requested supplies, their cameras should be on, and their microphones muted.

Classwork

We will be using a combination of Sadlier Connect Classroom and Google Classroom for giving and recording assignments. Students will use digital versions of their textbook for K-8. High School students will be provided a digital copy of the book that is being used in class. Please make sure your child knows how to access their textbook.

If accommodations are needed, please let us know at the beginning of the program year.

A Faith Knowledge Assessment will be given in the Spring to students in grades 3-8. (yet to be determined by ADW)

Homework

Students will be given homework including. Assignments will be posted online and students will submit them online. The teacher will determine the due dates.

Progress Reports

Two progress reports will be given to students in grades 1-8. The first report will come mid program year and the final report will be emailed home in June. Reports will indicate scores from any Unit Assessments, Faith Knowledge Assessment (if applicable), Summer Packet Score (see below), Homework and Special Event attendance. It will also reflect attendance records. **An overall proficiency of at least 60% must be obtained to progress to the next grade level.**

Home Schooling/Study

Parents are the primary teacher of their child. If the preference is to teach Religious Education at home, we have materials that can be purchased. This excludes those students preparing to receive Sacraments. These children should be part of our Preparation Program per the Liturgical Norms—Archdiocese of Washington (2010), para.17.1.

Summer Packets

The traditional activity was waived this past year. In its place there were online classes. Students that attended them will be given extra credit in place of the Summer Packet scores.

Child Protection

The Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) has implemented policies and procedures in an effort to protect our children. All of our adult volunteers, who work with children are required to be in full compliance with the ADW's policy. Volunteers undergo a background check, fingerprinting and Child Abuse awareness training.

Students are educated, in an age appropriate manner, about ways to maintain their safety. Upon request, parents will be given a guidebook and an overview of the lesson material given to their child. They are welcome to attend any of the sessions.

Our program offers Safe Environment education for all students in grades PreK to 12. The curriculum to be used is *The Circle of Grace*. These sessions are held in the fall and your child's participation in all of the sessions is required as we must meet 90% or greater participation. You may find the curriculum on the links page of our website.

REAL FAITH

(Religious Education for Atypical Learners)

Formerly called SPRED people of all abilities have a right to know the "mystery of faith". However, we recognize that each person develops at differing rates. Some may also have special education needs. These needs may include learning related or developmental related issues .

We ask that you work with us, to help identify what needs there are so that we can do our best in bringing your child to God. Our catechists will utilize the individual's learning style so he/she can be a more integral part of our parish community of faith. Any information provided will be treated with respect and confidentiality.