

ST. MARY'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PARENT HANDBOOK 2021-2022

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Rev. Christopher Argano., Pastor
Rev. Matthew McDonald, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Paul Dmoch, Parochial Vicar
Deacon Timothy Curran
Deacon Barney Kahn

Jeanne M. Versweyveld, Director Religious Education

MASS SCHEDULE

Main Church 42 Goshen Avenue

4:00 PM & 5:30 PM SATURDAY 7:30-9:00-10:30-NOON-6:00 SUNDAY

DAILY MASS - 8:30 AM

Confessions Main Church

AFTER EACH MASS

God's Presence in Our Lives

The family is the basic unit of religious formation and experience.

In the words of the author, lecturer Kathleen Finley, the role of family prayer is not to make life holy, but rather to help families see the holiness that is already there.

You are encouraged as families to form habits of prayer: each morning, each evening, on Sundays, at family meals, before special occasions.

Informal and spontaneous prayers are most wonderful and natural for children.

Many families give a child a blessing before leaving home or at bedtime. Simply make the sign of the cross on child's forehead and say one of the following:

May God bless you.

May God keep you safe.

God be with you.

God be in your heart.

May God bless and protect you.

Children are expected to master the following traditional Catholic prayers:

Level 1 – Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be * Level 2 – Act of Contrition * Level 3 – Apostles Creed

Level 4 – Mysteries of the Rosary

IMPORTANT PRAYERS OF OUR FAITH

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the
Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Hail Mary

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

GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
as it was in the
beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen



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

Goals of Religious Education

- to teach students Catholic beliefs and how to live as a Catholic Christian
- to teach students how to pray and to invite them to become involved in the life of the parish in worship, service and community
- to assist parents in imparting the life giving Catholic Faith to their children
- to encourage parents to continue their religious education and faith development through involvement in the life of the parish
- to encourage all adults to continue their on-going religious education and faith development as members of the parish community

DIOCESAN GUIDELINE OBJECTIVES

To develop a child's awareness of God, of the wonders of creation and the promise of eternal life.

To present Jesus as the model for Christian living.

To present an understanding of the Church and to help the child experience a Christian community. To present the basis of Christian morality

To present the sacramental life of our Church.

To present the revelation of God in the history of a people of the Old Testament and a revelation fulfilled in the New Testament.

To present Jesus in the Gospels

To call adolescents to a fuller sacramental participation.

To present prayer in a variety of forms and to enable teens to experience a fuller prayer life.

To present a history of the Church.

To develop skills for moral decision making along with encouraging an appreciation and understanding of the gift of sexuality.



A Daily Blessing that a parent may pray over a child while placing their hands on the head or shoulders of the child.

*May the light of the Lord
Shine upon you.*

May God bend over you with tenderness.

May God keep you, bring you peace and bless you.

GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

MASS – Regular participation at Saturday evening or Sunday Mass is at the heart of a child’s growth in the love and practice of their Catholic faith.

Reminder: we are called not only to study and learn with the Church, but also to pray with the Church. In the words of Cardinal Dolan: “there is nothing more central, no blessing greater, no work more important than offering the Mass on Sunday.....” “No matter how much we accomplish during the week by our efforts, nothing can compare to what God does at Mass.....”

Mass times – 4 PM & 5:30 PM Saturday; 7:30; 9:00, 10:30 AM, Noon, 6 PM Sunday

ATTENDANCE – All students need to be present for the entire class lesson. If a student is absent a written excuse is required when the child returns to class and the parent needs to work with the child to complete the missed lesson(s). This should be submitted to the classroom assistant for review. If a student has excessive absences (more than 6) the family needs to confer with the Director and come to a resolution so that the child does not lose the year.

EARLY RELEASE OF A CHILD – As part of our security program, there will be no early dismissal of children while class is in session (barring serious emergencies at home). If you have scheduled an appointment that coincides with class time, please keep your child home, complete the lesson at home and send in a written excuse. Please note that the building will be locked down during class sessions as mandated by the Emergency Policy.

PREPARATION FOR CLASSES- Children must arrive and be in class on time. Late arrivals disrupt the lesson in progress. Students should bring their text, a pencil and any assignment from the previous week. Parents are encouraged to check homework, help teach prayers and pray with their children daily. Homework ordinarily will be assigned weekly. Children may be assigned written or oral work such as a page activity from class lesson, a prayer to be learned, or other material to commit to memory, i.e. basic facts, names of the sacraments, 10 Commandments, etc.

TESTING – While the main objective of the Religious Education Program is to foster love of God and neighbor, there should be some assurance as to a level of knowledge and understanding of our religion and its practices; therefore, testing (written and oral) may be done.

REPORT TO PARENTS – Report cards for levels 1-6 are distributed twice yearly. Catechists will evaluate student participation, attendance and knowledge of material taught and homework. Student does a self evaluation re: prayer, Mass, actions. You are encouraged to discuss the report with your child.

DISCIPLINE – The Religious Education classes will take place in an atmosphere of learning and within a Christian setting. Each student is expected to uphold proper decorum, showing respect for the catechist, assistant and fellow students. Ordinary discipline problems will be handled by the classroom catechist. A catechist may dismiss a student from the classroom for repeated disruptive behavior. When this occurs, the student must meet with the Director before being permitted to return to the class. The Director will note the reason for the disciplinary action. In the event of a second offense, the parent will receive a phone call and parent and child are expected to meet with the Director. A third offense may mean dismissal from classes and the student will be taught at home. We stand ready to assist you in this training. Students who are removed from the program may re-register for classes the next academic year only if all conditions listed in an exit contract have been met. Our goal is to have every child succeed!

CONDUCT – Students, while in class, are expected to have cell phones turned off. Cell phone use and texting are not permitted during class.

DRESS CODE – Families have different standards for modesty in dress, thus a dress code for class is necessary. Students are expected to dress neatly and suitably for class. Shirts and tops should have sleeves and modest necklines. Abbreviated shorts and pajamas are not acceptable. Cleats are not to be worn to class.

REGISTRATION – Registration for classes will take place in the Spring. Classes will be assigned on a first come basis. All students must be registered each year for the program. A baptismal certificate is required for children entering the program for the first time.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS – Children are prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist during the second year. All children entering the second level must have completed level one.

FEES – Registration fees help to cover the cost of office and class supplies, AV equipment, mailings, etc. All other expenses of the program are provided for from the Sunday collection. Families are urged to use envelopes or WESHARE. Support of St. Mary’s Parish financially allows us to continue to provide the best for your children.

CANCELLATIONS – All class cancellations will be announced via One Call Now which will deliver a message to your home or cell phone. If you miss the message call 1-877-698-3261 and follow the prompts. **WHEN WASHINGTONVILLE SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED OR CANCEL AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES DUE TO WEATHER, THE PROGRAM IS ALSO CLOSED.** St. Mary’s also is using Flock Notes as a communication tool for text messages: text stmarywash to 84576 to sign up. The exception to the school calendar: We meet on Jewish holidays & Superintendents Days.

CATECHISTS – Each class is taught by a volunteer catechist who has responded to the teaching ministry of the church. All catechists receive initial instruction in the planning and facilitation of lessons. Catechists are encouraged to participate in on going catechetical formation scheduled throughout the county or on line at www.nyfaithformation.org. Click on iEcho and follow prompts.

CLASS STRUCTURE – Ordinarily each class is limited to 15 students and is staffed by a volunteer catechist along with a volunteer teaching assistant if sufficient volunteers come forward each year.

PARENT PARTICIPATION – Attendance at parent sacramental meetings is vitally important. Volunteers are needed throughout the year to help with the innumerable details inherent in a Religious Education Program. Your involvement will reinforce the importance of the Program and will help to improve the quality of your child’s experience.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS – This Catholic devotion is emphasized during the season of Lent. Praying the Stations recalls for us the story of Jesus and that of our salvation through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. Our Religious Education families are required to participate in at least one Friday 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross.

SUPPORT MATERIALS – Materials are available by visiting Loyola, our book publishers site: www.Christourlife.com for Levels 1-6.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS – Please read the weekly parish bulletin available in the lobby of Church after each Mass. It is the best way to keep informed of current events in the Program. You may also visit www.saintmaryswashingtonville.com for weekly bulletin updates and information.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS – Parents are requested to follow the direction of the Traffic attendant. Sunday class parents who choose to stay the hour are asked to park in the designated area. NO child is permitted to cross the driveway to get to a car. An adult must come to the pick up area and escort the child to the vehicle.

SPECIAL NEEDS – A plan can be made for a small group or a one on one setting for a child, who because of special needs, may require individualized instruction.

CONFESSIONS - For Levels 3-6 the sacrament of Reconciliation is made available after each Mass.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT – The New York Diocese is requiring volunteers to submit an application authorizing a background check and to participate in a training session that addresses the topic of keeping children safe. All children in the program will be taught about sexual abuse and prevention. This is to be integrated into a regular classroom lesson. To view sample lessons supplied to us, please visit our website at www.saintmaryswashingtonville.com and click on Safe Environment link.

MASS ATTENDANCE CARDS - All students are given dated Mass attendance cards the first day of class. Cards are brought to Mass **by the student** and left in the receptacle at the end of Mass. Credit will be given for cards dated for the Mass attended. **DO NOT submit cards for missed Masses.** Parish bulletins from another church should have the card stapled and then submitted upon return to St. Mary's. Be sure the pastor has signed it. DO NOT hold on to them for weeks/months. A maximum of 8 absences will be allowed for the whole year-there is a quarterly review and warning letters will be sent. In order to be included in the 7th Level Fall Confirmation, the student must have consistent Mass attendance from Level 4 onward. Absent of that, the student will be Confirmed in the Spring of Level 9.

FIRST PENANCE

Parent Orientation Meeting –

At least one parent is expected to attend the orientation meeting for Reconciliation as well as the orientation meeting for First Holy Communion to enable you to assist your child in preparation for the sacraments.

Parent has the option to attend either time.

Dates and times for the sacraments will be given at the meetings.

It is within your family that your child has first come to faith. It is within your family that your child will continue to live out that faith.

PARISH CELEBRATION OF FIRST PENANCE

Saturday, January 29 – 9:30 AM, 10:45 AM

Snow date is February 5

Your Child Needs to Know....

- That God loves him/her
- The difference between a mistake and a sin
- That sins harm our relationship with others and with God
- That the sacrament offers God's forgiveness
- That he/she must be sorry for his/her sins
- The Act of Contrition
- How to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation

Examination of Conscience

Jesus told us to love God with our heart, mind and strength

Do I respect God's holy name? Do I go to Mass each week on Sunday?

Do we remember to pray each day?

Jesus told us to love others in the same way we love ourselves

Do I help my mother and father and let them know I love them?

Do I try not to hurt others? Do I share my things?

Do I try to be fair? Do I treat others with respect?

Jesus told us be the best people we can be because we are important to Him and God the Father.

Do I try to be truthful? Do I do my best to study and learn?

Do I play fairly? Do I avoid temper tantrums and fighting?

Do I forgive others who hurt me?

Do I take the time to talk to my parents about things that are bothering me?

FIRST COMMUNION

Second level students who have completed the first level religious education curriculum will receive instruction for First Holy Communion in their regular classes and at home as outlined for parents.

Go to Mass with your child regularly before First Communion day and help your child follow what is happening during Mass. St. Mary's Mass schedule: Saturday 4:00, 5:30 pm; Sunday 7:30, 9:00, 10:30, Noon and 6:00 pm.

Parent Orientation Meeting –

At least one parent is expected to attend the orientation meeting for Reconciliation as well as the orientation meeting for First Holy Communion to enable you to assist your child in preparation for the sacraments. Parent has the option to attend either time. Materials will be distributed.

PARISH CELEBRATION OF FIRST COMMUNION

Mass – Saturday, April 30 9:30 AM

Mass – Saturday, April 30 11:30 AM

Your Child Needs to.....

- Know who Jesus is
- Desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist
- Be able to know there is a difference between ordinary bread and the Eucharistic bread
- Participate regularly at Mass
- Experience prayer as a part of family life.