

## **New Parent Policy Info**

These are just a few of the more important things you should know – we also have all of our policies on the parish website, [www.smmchurch.org](http://www.smmchurch.org). The calendar is on there too, we're always online!

Our classes are more than just classroom lessons – we have some field trips for older classes, and we use our family days to be sure everyone is involved. We know that we can count on you to be our partners in carrying the gospel home, and continuing the faith experience begun in the classroom. You are the domestic church!

To make learning a little more fun and to give your whole family the opportunity to discuss your faith together, part of our year are what I call family days for children and their parents in grades 1-8. I give you a choice of 7, once a month starting in October, and you choose the four that work best for your family's schedule. That means the three weekends you don't choose, you are off for the weekend, unless you are in Pre-K or Kindergarten. There are a few exceptions, as some of the family days involve participation by certain classes; for example, the 7<sup>th</sup> grade is asked to attend our saints family day, as they study a particular saint and then dress as that saint for a presentation. Since you are there with your children, it gives you all an opportunity to reinforce what they learn with discussion around the dinner table later! This is described again under "instructional materials.)

### **General Information**

We ask that all children pre-K through 4<sup>th</sup> grade be picked up at the classroom door by a parent or an older sibling. Sadly, with today's climate we have changed our security policy. When you are bringing your child to PREP, only the doors behind the building – the main school entrance by the gym – will be open on a regular basis. We will close the security doors by 10:05 and reopen them at 10:50 for you to enter for pickup; in the meantime, the lobby area outside the gym will be open. When there is bad weather (either heavy rain or freezing temperatures) we will send out a remind text (using our cellphone, text the message **@smprep** to the phone number **81010** to join our texting group) letting you know that the front doors will be open for entry; otherwise, you can always go OUT the front doors, you just can't come in them. If you need to pick up your child early for some reason, we do have someone who will sit in the office there to buzz you in after she checks your name against the list of students.

In order to be sure your student has really grasped the concepts for the year, we ask that you ensure that they attend at least **80% of the classes, 90% during sacramental years** (2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades). If you miss more than that, you can either make up the work missed, or stay back in that grade the following year.

All of our teachers are background-checked and cleared by the For the Sake of God's Children charter. The charter also mandates that we discuss at an age-appropriate level things like good touch-bad touch, keeping secrets, etc. This past year they developed an entirely new curriculum in conjunction with Prevent Child Abuse Delaware. This is a mandatory curriculum being taught by the state of Delaware in all public schools, and many private schools and child care facilities use it as well. They worked with the diocese to develop lessons and add a faith component to them, so what we will be teaching is the same thing taught in the public schools with the addition of faith. The diocese has all of this curriculum on their website for those who would like to see it! Along with it is information from the diocese for parents and guardians regarding the abuse crisis; I have a limited number but it is also now online at <https://www.cdow.org/giving/fsgc/>

### **Disciplinary Policy**

All students are expected to behave in a way that doesn't interfere with any of the others being able to learn. That being said, we are an inclusive program, and have a number of children with special needs. We find that they generally do not interfere with other children's learning – it's those who choose to be disruptive that need a helping hand! Most students love the program, but if someone is disruptive, we'll try to deal with it in-house first, and if needed, contact you for help. If necessary, an incident report will be filled out and kept in the student's permanent file. We do all we can to attain the best possible learning situation at all levels.

### **Emergency Situations**

We cannot administer any drugs or medications to your child, other than those of any emergency nature, like an epi-pen. We will call the number you give us should a need of any kind arise. If it is an emergency situation, we will also call 911, although we are also blessed to have a nurse as one of our catechists! Older students found with drugs or alcohol will be suspended and expelled from the program if the problem continues.

If we need to cancel the program for any reason, we will have it on WDEL news radio (1150AM) and on the answering machine in the office (652-7141). It's generally for weather, we did have one tornado! Again, we will use the remind texting system described under general information to save you the trouble of listening to the radio or calling in!

### **Sacramental Policies**

Students need to receive **two full years** of preparation prior to receiving a sacrament. That preparation is in addition to classroom instruction. All information is given at a series of parent meetings beginning the year prior to the celebration of the sacrament. On occasion exceptions are made for those willing to do the entire year's work with their child, bringing them in to me for testing at the end of each unit. All previous year's work must be completed prior to the end of that year. In general the diocese does not permit homeschooling for this time period.

### **Instructional Materials**

Our grades 1-6 PREP classes use materials from Sadlier. They also have a wonderful website, <https://religion.sadlierconnect.com/anonymous/resources.html> . It will provide you with lots of great info in addition to what is done in the classroom. If you can't attend some weekend for any reason, it's a great resource to keep your student on track! Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade students use a lectionary-based program from Pflaum called Gospel Weeklies, as do our Pre-K and kindergarten. The lesson plans takes the Gospel for the week and bring it to life in a way that is very relevant to what's going on in their lives. Each week they'll be given the pamphlet from class. You can find more information about them online at [www.gospelweeklies.com](http://www.gospelweeklies.com), and there are pages there where you can find some fun things to do at home too! Additionally, there is a booklet that deals with general faith information; we'll keep that here for them to reference during class until the end of the year, when they will bring it home. All of the lesson calendars are on the parish website too; since some dates (like Easter) change every year, sometimes lessons are not taught in order! You can find all that at <https://www.smmchurch.org/prep-news>

Some of our classes take place in other locations on the property, but there are also occasions when we will send a permission slip home for another experience. These are generally reserved for upper grades, and parents are welcome to attend all of them. They include an interfaith seder, a trip to the

St. Veronica Giuliani Monastery, and a service trip. I will also use a signup genius with the link on the same page as the family days. Those trips would count as family days if you attend with your child! We'll occasionally use speakers on different topics, and you are always welcome to join us!

Part of our program for grades 1-8 is a monthly 2-hour family day. We have seven (7) of them, and you will need to sign up for four (4) of them each year. You can find them on the parish website at <http://www.smmchurch.org/family-catechesis-classes>. Each topic is something all of the classes cover, and some involve a particular class (for example, whenever we do saints as a topic, our 7<sup>th</sup> grade are required to attend, since they research saints as part of their class.) We provide materials for your family that day. **This enables you to have three (3) weekends "off" during the year. If you are not signed up for a particular family day, your child has no class that day.**

Since many of our students have differing vacation times, especially in the spring, this is often helpful to them so that the children don't miss as much class time. And as we already noted, that's very important during a sacramental year!

If you want to see the full diocesan curriculum for your child's year, it's on the parish website at <http://www.smmchurch.org/classroom>. Our lesson calendars for each class are on there too, so you can see when we are teaching a particular class. Our textbooks have tear-out pages if you need to do a class at home, or are the gospel weeklies and can be given out ahead of time as well.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade has a program relating to their preparation to take personal responsibility for their faith, as they will in the fall of 9<sup>th</sup> grade when they receive their Confirmation. Confirmation classes are now taught in February through April of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year on Sunday mornings from 9-10:45AM. As a result, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes run from September through the end of January, and those students are asked to attend **three family days** in that time period. The regular classes are video based from the same curriculum we use for Confirmation, a program from Ascension Press called **CHOSEN**. Students will watch a video clip on a topic while taking notes; afterwards they will discuss questions in the classroom. For those in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade who have to miss a class, if you send me a request I am working on arranging for a Google classroom where the videos will be available; the questions will be emailed to you.

Our catechists always strive to give your child a real love of their faith. We appreciate all that you do to help us by reinforcing the lessons at home, and at Mass on weekends and holy days. God is so good to us, we all need to work together to be sure our children know!