

St. Patrick's Religious Education Program



Parent Handbook

2018-2019

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Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

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Dear Parents,

Your role as Catholic parents is surely one of the most sacred, challenging and wonderful vocations that the Lord entrusts to His people. You brought your child to be baptized thus providing the opportunity to begin life as a disciple of Jesus in the Church. As your child grows, you continue to nurture that spiritual life. You enable your child to live joyously in the Love of God made tangible by your own goodness and love. In the intimacy of family relationships, you teach the Catholic faith to your child every day by what you say and do – a profound and irreplaceable witness.

We in the Parish Religious Education Program, have also been given a sacred role by the Lord – that of Catechist for your child. We welcome the opportunity to assist you in teaching your child to walk in the ways of faith. We pledge all the resources of our program to helping your child come to know and better understand the person of Jesus Christ who so loves him/her. We pledge to do all we can to help you instill Catholic beliefs and values so that your child may live in the joy of being Jesus' disciple.

Our experience has shown us that this is most effectively accomplished when the family and the parish work together. The parents place Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their family life --through Sunday Mass, family prayer, and daily life as disciples of Jesus. The Religious Education Program teaches the Catholic life which the child is living at home and experiencing in the Parish. The Parish supports and nurtures the parents and provides a "home-place" for the families who choose the Catholic way of life in a world that is increasingly lost without God and in need of the Truth that is Jesus.

May God bless us in the work of Catholic Education which we carry on together in His name.

In Christ,

Coordinator of Religious Education

MISSION OF ST. PATRICK'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The mission of the St. Patrick's Religious Education Program is to journey in faith with children and families and to transmit the Catholic Christian message with excellence; so that they may come to know and love Christ more deeply, and participate in the Sacramental and Liturgical life of the Church more fully.

PARENTAL ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of the children in all things. How a child prays and worships God and how he or she relates to others in a Christian way are values which children should already experience at home before they begin formal religious education. Please encourage your children to deepen their faith through prayer, reception of the sacraments, art, music, multimedia, family discussions, books, etc.

Prayer at Home with the Child

The parent is the primary educator in the faith for of the child and one of the most important ways to fulfill this responsibility is by praying with the child every day. Some important prayer practices to be done in the Catholic home are:

- grace before meals,
- prayers at the child's bedtime,
- blessing the child in the morning before he/she leaves for school by tracing the cross on the forehead and saying with the child the prayer to his/her guardian angel,
- the family rosary prayed together regularly,
- pictures and statues of Jesus and Mary in the home,
- a family bible kept in a place of honor, with a passage or story read from it regularly,
- recitation with the child of traditional Catholic prayers, Mass Attendance and the Sacramental Life.

Children learn to live as Catholics above all by experiencing their parents living as Catholics. Regular weekly attendance at Sunday Mass is essential to being a practicing Catholic. Therefore, doing this together as a family is one of the most powerful ways in which the parent can form the child in the faith. Catholic living also includes regular reception of the Sacrament of Penance and the parent should insure that the child does so from an early age. The Religious Education Program explains to the children the meaning of the Catholic life of faith that they are living at home and experiencing in the parish community.

***** IT IS ESSENTIAL AND EXPECTED THAT THE CHILDREN ATTEND MASS EACH WEEKEND AND ON HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION.*****

Weekend Mass Schedule

Main Church

Saturday - 5:15 P.M.

Sunday - 7:45, 9:15, 11:00 A.M., 12:30 and 5:00 P.M.

Stone Church

Sunday - 9:00 and 10:30 A.M.

Sacrament of Reconciliation Schedule

Saturdays: after the 9:00 a.m. Mass, and 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Please call the Rectory if you wish to make an appointment for another time.

Religious Education Office Hours

<u>Office Hours:</u>	Monday – Tues, Wed, Thursday Friday	10am-7:30pm 10am-6pm By Appointment
<u>Summer Hours:</u>	Monday – Thursday Friday	Please call, hours may change Closed

Office Staff Contact Information

Kelly Vardakas, Coordinator of Religious Education
Mary Ellen Falco, Assistant Coordinator of Religious Education and Registrar
Cathy Scola, Sacramental Coordinator
Gloria Golia, Administrative Assistant

Telephone number: (914) 962-5586 Fax Number: (914) 962-3207 Email Address: saintpatricksred@yahoo.com

Kelly- Ext. 11
Mary Ellen- Ext. 12 For questions regarding tuition and placement
Cathy- Ext. 13 For questions regarding the Sacraments
Gloria- Ext. 10 For absences and other questions

ADMISSION POLICY

All families who are **registered** members of the Parish are able to sign up for Religion Classes. Classes are available for children in Pre-K through 8th Grade.

The essential Religious Education Program is an eight-year sequence of formation beginning with grade level 1 and continuing through grade level 8. All Catholic children of the parish who are not attending Catholic schools are expected to follow this 8-year program.

Children who have not yet been baptized and older children who have been baptized but have not yet received First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation are also encouraged to enroll and we make arrangements for them to receive.

Because of a disability, a child may require an individualized program of instruction. This may be done in a small group, in a one-on-one setting or as part of the regular Religious Education session but with a personal assistant. In consultation with the parent, the Director and Catechist will design an approach to Religious Education that addresses the child’s needs.

REGISTRATION

All children attending Religious Education must be registered yearly for CCD in the office. Registration will be held at the close of each academic year (end of May). There will be set times to come into the CCD office to register.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Grades 1 & 2: Monday-Thursday 4:30-5:40pm

All children in grades 1 and 2 must be dropped off and picked up at the classroom by an adult.

Grades 1-7: Monday Afternoon 4:30-5:45pm

Grades 4-8 Monday Evening 6:15-7:30pm

Grade 1-8: Tues, Wed, Thurs. 4:30-5:45pm

TUITION 2018-19

Registration Fees for 2018-2019

1 Child -	\$260
2 Children-	\$380
3+ Children-	\$460

Registrations received after May 25th

1 Child -	\$300
2 Children-	\$420
3+ Children-	\$500

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, PARKING

All arrivals, dismissals and parking must take place in the main Church parking lot at the top of the stairs. **By town zoning ordinance, no parking is permitted in the rear exit road behind Building B.**

Parking and driving is also prohibited inside of the barriers/white line where children are dismissed.

No cars are permitted in the school quad at any time. Any student, parent or catechist who requires handicap drop-off, pick-up or parking must arrange it in advance with the Office of Religious Education.

1st and 2nd grade parents or an authorized adult must drop off and pick up their child **at the class room**. Grades 1 and 2 dismiss 5 minutes earlier than grades 3-8 to allow adequate time for parents to do this. **Older siblings may not pick up a 1st or 2nd grader.**

At the end of the Religious Education session every child is released to the care of their parent or parent substitute. The parent substitute must be the person designated in writing at registration on the Child Information Record. If someone other than the parent or parent substitute is to pick up the child on a given day, this change should be given in writing to the Director prior to the session in question.

The Director should be informed in writing by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent as these pertain to the child's participation in the program as well as to the child's release from the program. A copy of the appropriate section of the custody papers should be attached to the written statement.

Further:

- A child will not be released to any one under age 18.
- A child will not be released to someone who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Children are not allowed to walk home.

For dismissal, parents or substitutes are asked to meet their children in the designated area at the top of the stairs and to please let the teacher know you are taking your child by a wave or a nod. If you carpool, a letter must be given to the Religious Education Office and to the Catechist in advance so that we know which children are to be dismissed to which parent. We have a form available for this in the office.

In order to avoid disturbance of classes in session, and for security reasons, doors to all buildings will be locked during class time.

THERE IS NO EARLY DISMISSAL.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

Excessive absences will result in a child having to repeat the year.

Parents are asked to call or email the office when they know their child will miss class. The child or a parent should then follow-up with the Religious Education Office to make sure that the missed work is completed.

CALENDAR/CLASS DAYS

A program calendar will be sent home to each family in August. We normally follow the Yorktown School District Calendar. The calendar is subject to change based on changes in the Yorktown School District Calendar, weather, or church events that would affect safe arrival and dismissal.

The Yorktown School District calendar is followed for seasonal recesses and holiday observances or days off. Classes are not held when the local district is off, including days where there is inclement weather. Weather cancellations are announced on WHUD radio (FM 100.7) and on their website: www.whud.com See "Storm Center Report."

We will be using **GOOGLE Remind** to send text messages in case of weather closings.

*******You may also sign up for text message closing alerts through WHUD.com.**

COMMUNICATION

Important communications (reminders, date changes, etc.) will be texted to your cell phone and emailed to you, so please be sure that the office always has up to date email address and telephone information for your family.

Also, please check the Mass bulletin each week for announcements and upcoming events.

If a parent cannot be reached in case of an emergency, the emergency contact provided at registration will be called. Please let us know if the emergency contact's information changes.

COST OF PROGRAM AND TUITION

The Religious Education Program runs on a budget which covers the expenses of running such a large program. Tuition payment must be made at Registration in the month of May in order for the registration of any family/child to be complete. If you are in a financially difficult situation, please let us know so we can arrange a payment plan. Financial Hardship should not prevent a family from re-registering for faith formation classes.

SPECIAL NEEDS/MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please make the office aware of any special needs or medical conditions that your child may have before the first day of classes so that arrangements may be made to best accommodate them.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

We do not allow students to carry on their person any medication of any kind for any reason, unless we have a letter from a doctor on file. We also do not administer medication of any kind for any reason to any child, as we are not qualified to do so. If there is a chance your child might need to have medication administered to him or her during class time, a parent is required to stay on the premises to do so.

HOMEWORK

For learning to truly take place, children need to review, use, teach others and integrate into their lives the information they have been given. For this reason, 1 or two pages of "homework" may be sent home each week by Catechists to reinforce what has been learned in class. The purpose of this work is also to involve parents in the faith formation process. Please help your child with any work that is sent home.

DRESS CODE

We hold the dignity of the person in the highest regard, and believe that clothing reflects who we are and what we believe.

All students are expected to be appropriately dressed while attending our program.

Our dress code requires that all bellies, backs, and shoulders are covered. This means no low cut shirts, no short skirts, no spaghetti straps, and skirts and shorts must reach the fingertips when hands are at sides. Bellies, backs, bottoms, shoulders and chests need to be covered.

All clothing, and especially shirts worn to class that have messages or sayings **must not:** be negative, disrespectful, have skulls or demons, advertise alcohol or have sexual innuendo, or demean the human person in any way, etc.

Any child who comes to the program and is not in compliance with the dress code or is dressed inappropriately will be sent to the office and parents will be called to pick him or her up. **This dress code will be strictly enforced**

DISCIPLINE

We aim to transmit the Christian message with excellence and love. To do this, we understand that there needs to be an atmosphere of mutual respect and preparedness in each class. Students should arrive on time, with their textbook, pencil, Bible (grades 6-8), folder (grades 1-3), etc. and be prepared to participate to the best of their ability.

Our most basic expectations for each child who attends our Program are as follows:

- 1. Being respectful toward the Catechist and other students in word and action.**
- 2. Listening to the lesson prepared by the Catechist without interrupting or carrying on side conversations.**
- 3. Raising one's hand when wanting to ask or answer a question.**
- 4. Respecting the property of St. Patrick's School (desks, chairs, classrooms, bathrooms, grounds, buildings, parking lot, etc.)**
- 5. Completing assignments in class or at home and good performance on any work required.**
- 6. Turning off and not using cell phones or electronic equipment or recording devices during class. If a child is using one of the above during class, it will be given to the Director and parents must come in to the office to pick it up.**
- 7. No child is ever to record (audio or visually) a class in session, the catechist, or the other children in the class.**
- 8. No child is ever to leave a session or the premises during class time.**

We have the right to remove a student from a class if we believe that the student cannot behave and/or is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group. If a child physically harms or endangers another child, they will be asked to leave the program.

Consultations with the student, his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), the Director and the Catechist may be necessary to determine the best option for all involved.

Individual Meetings with Catechists

All communication between parent and Catechist regarding the faith formation or behavior of a child should be approved and arranged by the Director. Parents should not phone the Catechist directly, but speak with the Director about any concerns or issues.

Use of Social Networking Sites by Religious Education

Program Regarding the use of Social Networking Sites and all other electronic communication, the parish Religious Education Program follows the directives published by the Archdiocesan Safe-Environment Office (Nyfaithformation.org – Safe Environment Resources – Facebook and Child Protection). These include the following:

- There may be no private direct communication with a minor. All communications must be through parents.
- There may be no photographs or videos of minors posted without the written permission of the parent.
- There may be no photographs or videos of religious education personnel posted without the individual's written permission.
- With regard to a group photo or video, written permission must be given for every person in the photo/video.
- There may be no contact information, or other personal information, of a minor or of religious education personnel posted without the written permission of the parent or Catechist/Director.

The written permission for all the above must be given directly to the Religious Education Director.

Cell Phones

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices by the child is not permitted during the Religious Education session unless this is directed by the Catechist as part of the educational process. Cell phones brought into the place of the Religious Education session should be turned off. Children in need of contacting a parent must ask the Catechist's permission to go to the Religious Education Office to place the call.

Behavior Management

Catechists use behavior management (or "discipline") appropriate to an educational environment as a necessary means for the Religious Education Program to accomplish its goals. The purpose of behavior management is to help the children develop self-control, self-respect, respect for others, and reverence for the Word of God which is being explained to them in these sessions. Several infractions of rules of conduct will result in a call by the Director to the child's parent in which the Director will describe the situation and work out a solution with the parent. If the infractions continue, the Director will organize a conference with the parent, the Catechist, the Director and the Pastor.

The Religious Education Program reserves to the Director, under the authority of the Pastor, the right to remove a child from the group session, either temporarily or permanently:

- if the child's behavior is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group;
- if the child's behavior is seriously inhibiting the safety or well-being of others in the group;
- if temporary removal is used as a disciplinary measure for serious and persistent disruptive behavior.

Bullying and Cyber-bullying

Bullying includes but is not limited to: threatening physical harm, verbal abuse, intimidation, cyberbullying. The Archdiocesan policy against bullying is followed. This policy states: A safe and civil environment is necessary for children to learn and achieve Christian value. Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying (using technology to bully such as but not limited to: posting an inappropriate picture of a child on the Internet) and other violent behaviors will not be tolerated in a Religious Education Program environment. Any child who engages in this behavior may be asked to leave the religious education environment if this is seen to be in the best interest of the rest of the religious education community.

Vandalism

Vandalism, i.e. willfully damaging or destroying property, will not be tolerated. Vandalism must be paid for by the parent of the child who did it. Accidental damage should be immediately reported to the Director.

Safe Environment Archdiocesan Children Protection Policy

The Archdiocese of New York and (Name of Parish) are committed to ensuring the personal safety of all children in the Religious Education Program. Therefore the parish and its Religious Education Program follow all the policies, directives and requirements of the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. These policies and programs are to be found on the Safe Environment web page which can be accessed through the Archdiocesan web site (Archny.org) and the Catechetical Office web site (nyfaithformation.org)

Safe Environment Training and Possibility for Parent Opt-Out

Each year, the Religious Education Program provides to each child the curriculum entitled Right, Safe and Good Relationships following the lesson plans provided by the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. (See Safe Environment Web site: Children's Curriculum.) These dates will be provided to parents in advance.

Parents have the option to exempt their child from any session of the Safe Environment Training. If the Parent chooses to do so, they must complete and sign the Parent Opt-Out Form which they secure from the Religious Education Office.

Visits to Religious Education Program by Unauthorized

Persons For security reasons, no unauthorized persons are allowed in the area where the Religious Education sessions are taking place. Even parents and other family members may only go to the Religious Education office or designated reception area until the program sessions are completed and the children are dismissed to the care of their parents.

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK SAFE ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Keeping an eye on boundaries

Adults have a responsibility to maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in their relationship with minors. Here are some specific behaviors that may indicate that an adult is failing to maintain proper boundaries:

- Having an excessively familiar relationship with a child (e.g., trying to be a child's friend or "confidant" rather than dealing with them as a professional or treating the child as a "favorite")
- Trying to be alone with minors, or being with them in private locations (e.g., in living quarters or bedrooms, or giving them rides in a car).
- Displaying sexual materials (especially pornography) to minors
- Having private communications with a minor (e.g., text messages, emails, cell phone calls, instant messages, "Friending" or putting a child on a "buddy list" through a social networking site)
- Giving gifts (especially expensive presents) to children without their parents' knowledge and consent (other than small items distributed to entire classes or groups)
- Touching children in an inappropriate way (e.g., regularly kissing or hugging a child; tickling or wrestling; holding hands for a long time; repeatedly touching on the arm, back or legs; putting an arm around a child's waist and leaving it there)

If you become aware of any of these behaviors, you should talk to your child to find out if there is anything else inappropriate going on. You should assure your child that this is not their fault, but that this behavior by the adult is not right. Encourage your child to let you know if anything else inappropriate takes place. You should also monitor very closely

any further contact your child has with this adult, or exclude them entirely from any contact with your child. If the adult works with your child in an Archdiocesan program or institution, you should contact the adult's supervisor immediately.

What to do if you suspect abuse

1. Talk to the child. Believe what he or she says and allow them to comfortably discuss the events or actions. Do not pressure them with demands or numerous questions.
2. Don't dismiss the action as a 'misunderstanding' or 'accident' (sexual abuse is intentional and not an error in judgment.)
3. "It's ok to tell," that's the important message for a child to hear. Assure them that they will never get in trouble for tattling or not keeping a secret.
4. Keep calm; validate the child's innocence. Assure the child he or she did nothing wrong. "It's not your fault."
5. Contact local law enforcement immediately.

Have open discussions with your children

1. Emotionally support your child - always. Kids with a strong sense of self are much less vulnerable to an abuser.
2. Discuss the human body and where it is okay to touch and where it's not ("private parts").
3. Validate the idea that "My Body is My Own" and that no one has a right to touch a child anywhere that makes him or her uncomfortable.
4. Talk about feelings and what makes physical situations good versus bad. Hugs from one's parents can be good and different from sitting on a family friend's lap, which could be weird or funny. (For young children, read-aloud "The Right Touch" by Sandy Kleven, LSCS, Illumination Arts Publishing Company, Inc.)
5. Condition the child that if something happens that makes them uncomfortable they must "SAY NO AND GO" encourage them to get away from the bad person, and then "GO-and-TELL" direct them to find an adult in a position of trust and report what happened.
6. Talk to your child daily about school and after-school activities. Listen carefully to his or her descriptions of encounters with adults at school or in programs. Assess the interest that adults show in your child: is it related to their professional concerns (e.g. how he's doing in math) or their personal lives (e.g. personal outings, giving of gifts, etc.)? If you're uncomfortable, talk first to the adult about it. Assess his or her reactions. If still uncomfortable, talk next to the adult's supervisor.
7. Be very cautious about outings that only involve certain children without other adult chaperones. Should you hear about such activities contact the program supervisor (e.g. pastor, principal, DRE, etc.) at once.