Parent-Student Handbook

2023-24

A church altar with a painting on the wall

Description automatically generated

Most Holy Redeemer

School of Religion

9536 S. Millard Avenue

Evergreen Park, IL 60805

***Pastoral Staff***

Fr. James Hyland, Pastor

Fr. Paul Guzman, Associate Pastor

Fr. Albert Adamich, retired Associate

Deacon Mark Phelan

***Director of Religious Education***

Margie Guadagno

***Administrative Assistant***

Meghan Sullivan

**Office**

Office Telephone #708.346.8185

**School of Religion Grades 1-8**

Mondays 6-7:15pm

**Parent/Guardian-Student Handbook**

Welcome to Most Holy Redeemer Faith Formation/Religious Education Program. We are pleased to partner with you as we foster the faith formation of your child(ren). We are committed to engaging your child(ren) and instilling in them a desire to continually learn about the richness of our Catholic faith.

This handbook will serve as a resource and guide for you. As parents/guardians, you are your child’s first catechists/teachers. We want to encourage and support you, so that together we can lovingly instruct your child(ren) to incorporate Christian values and traditions into daily living experiences.

I hope that you will find the information provided here to be helpful. It is important that you understand both the philosophy and the requirements of this program, as we dedicate ourselves to work together to effectively form your child in the faith so they grow in their relationship with God and assist them in deepening their knowledge of the Catholic faith so they can be effective servants of the gospel as true disciples of Jesus.

God Bless!

Margie Guadagno

Director of Religious Education

Most Holy Redeemer School of Religion Mission Statement

The mission of Most Holy Redeemer School of Religion is to provide our youth with opportunities to grow in their knowledge of the teachings of Jesus and to learn how to be his disciples living their lives as Catholics. We are dedicated through the help of the Holy Spirit to make disciples, build community, and inspire witness through worship, education and service.

Philosophy

The School of Religion at Most Holy Redeemer Parish supports the call of Christian parents/guardians to share their faith with their children. We will strive to develop each child's spiritual potential and endeavor to have the atmosphere, catechists, and materials for your child's spiritual growth and development.

Objectives

1. To help our children understand that they are called to be and make disciples.
   * 1. Help them encounter Jesus
     2. Stir within them the knowledge that they are loved by God
     3. Pray with them so they learn how to respond in prayer to God’s divine gift of love and mercy
     4. Prepare them to generously serve others in Christ’s name and share his love with all people
2. Assist our children in strengthening their bond with the community of Christ’s disciples, beginning with their peers and reaching out to the larger parish community
   * 1. Provide them with opportunities to be part of the communal celebration of the Eucharist
     2. Awaken in them a desire to serve those in need through parish outreach
3. Guide them in ways that will help inspire witness—to internalize their Catholic faith so that by their words and example they live a life that draws others to Christ.

Liturgical Life

Every parish is built of the “living stones” of the People of God, gathered to be built into a spiritual house. Liturgy is the context where Christ draws us into communion with him and establishes us in *communio* with each other. It is from our rootedness in our communal celebration of the Eucharist that the Lord sends us out as disciples to meet the daily needs of people in the world. Our children cannot grow in their relationship with Christ without being in an environment for hearing God’s word, growing in the life of Christ, proclaiming God’s love for all, and seeking out the lost and those in need.

Sacrament Preparation

**First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, Confirmation**

Due to the importance and limited time we have to prepare your children for Reconciliation, First Communion, or Confirmation, your child's **weekly attendance at class and Sunday Mass is of utmost importance.** Therefore, we must put a limit on the number of absences permitted in the pre-sacrament and sacramental years; *i.e.* first and second (Reconciliation & Eucharist) and seventh and eighth (Confirmation) grades. If a child misses five (5) or more classes, he/she must wait until the following year to celebrate the sacrament unless explicit permission has been given by the Director and missed work has been completed.

Admission into our Sacramental Program

Students celebrating First Eucharist and Reconciliation must be enrolled in the Religious Education program for grade one in order to prepare for **First Reconciliation and Eucharist** in second grade or provide transfer records from a first grade Religious Education program.

Parents/guardians are reminded that their child(ren) should be enrolled in the School of Religion Program for the entire eight years. Acceptance into the **Confirmation Process** for conferral of **Confirmation**, which is a two-year commitment of learning, prayer, and service hours, is based upon regular attendance of the student in the School of Religion Program grade 6 here or in another program. **Weekly attendance at Sunday Mass is an integral part of the sacramental program.**

Special Sacrament Preparation Process

Children in grades 4-8, who have not routinely attended Religious Education classes and have not received the sacraments of Reconciliation and or Eucharist, will be placed in their grade level Religious Education class. **They will be supplemented with an At Home Program to be administrated by the parents, who are the first teachers of our Faith.** After this first year of School of Religion, these children become eligible for the Sacramental Program. Attendance in the Sacramental Program is **in addition to** all regular classes. Please contact the Office of Religious Education for placement of your child in this program.

Parent Guardian/Catechist Co-operation

Parents/guardians are first and foremost teachers of their children. They teach informally but powerfully by example and instruction. Parents/guardians nurture faith in their children by showing them the richness and beauty of lived faith. Catechists are there to enrich what has already been instilled by the parents/guardians at home. The catechists need the support of the parents/guardians in all areas, i.e., homework, being prepared for class, attendance at Sunday Masses and special Family Masses, etc. Parents/guardians should understand that Christian formation is not limited to preparation of a sacrament, but rather must continue as long as one lives.

Admissions Requirements for Registration

1. Admission to the religious education program is open to all children of all registered families in the parish. No child will be refused admittance to the program on the basis of sex, race or national origin. A family may register at any time during office hours.
2. At the time of initial registration, a baptismal certificate is to be presented for any child not baptized at Most Holy Redeemer Parish.
3. Transfer students must bring a record of participation from the previous religious education program and their baptismal certificate. They must meet with the DRE who will explain the goals of the program and ask for a commitment to those goals by the parent/guardian and the student.

Specific Areas of Parent/Guardian Participation

1. Teaching prayers, **attending weekly Sunday Mass**, using any teachable moment at home, and financial support by using church envelopes will give credibility to the teaching presented in class.
2. You will have an opportunity to attend prayer services with your student. Please mark your calendar with these special nights.
3. Helping your child(ren) with homework and completing the parent page provides an opportunity for the sharing of faith.
4. Parent/guardian participation in parent/guardian meetings held during the year is essential. This is especially true for parents/guardian with children who are preparing for the reception of a sacrament.
5. Progress reports will be sent home November 13th and at the End of Year Mass.
6. Parents/guardians are encouraged to call the child's catechist with any questions, concerns, or problems via the DRE.
7. **Parents/guardians are required to call the office when their child(ren) will be absent. Please call 346.8185 x225 and leave a message**. **After three (3) consecutive absences, a phone call will be made to you by the Director. After a total of five (5) or more absences, your child will have to repeat the grade unless there are special circumstances.** Parents/guardians are also required to help their student with any make-up work due because of their absences.

Tuition

The tuition for the School of Religion Program is applied toward salaries for professional staff, rentals, materials, and catechist training and enrichment. The parish must then subsidize the difference between monies collected and expenses incurred. In order to keep this subsidy to a minimum we do depend on full payment of tuition.

Tuition is due on room assignment night. Tuition is due at the time of registration for families new to the program. Please contact the Director of Religious Education for further information. **(Registration should not be delayed for financial reasons.)**

Fees are as follows

One child $265.00

Two 375.00

Three/more 425.00

Book Fee: 20.00/per student

**Sacrament Fees:**

First Reconciliation/Communion 50.00

Confirmation 50.00

There will be an additional $20.00 book fee to replace a lost book. In addition to the payment of fees, it is important that all families with children in the School of Religion Program financially support the Church, i.e. through use of Church envelopes.

Attendance/Absences

Parents/guardians are required to call the office at 346.8185 x225 when their child(ren) will be absent. The SchoolMessenger Program has been initiated and will be used frequently to relay messages. If parents do not call in their student’s absence, they will receive a call via SchoolMessenger. This is for the safety of your student.

We request that parents/guardians see to it that their child arrives **PROMPTLY** for class and is picked up **PROMPTLY** after class. Regular, consistent attendance is expected for a productive learning experience in Religious Education.

The children are expected to attend **ALL** classes and should be in class by his/her starting time. When unsatisfactory progress is noted by the catechist or the student is absent from class three (3) or more times, a call will be made to the parent/guardian by the DRE. If a student is absent from class a total of five (5) times, the child will repeat the grade unless there are special circumstances or until the child has made up the missed work and learned the necessary material covered for the current year.

Attendance in a Sacramental Year

Same expectations as non-sacramental year except student may be asked to withdraw from the Sacrament Preparation Process for the year if attendance is not regular and punctual and assignments and service hour requirements are not completed. Upon an interview with the parent/guardian, DRE, and catechist (if necessary), a determination will be made whether or not the sacrament will be celebrated by the family member enrolled in the School of Religion Program. All absences must be reported.

Safety

In the interest of fire safety, we ask that parents/guardians do not congregate in the halls. If you arrive early to pick up children, please wait outside.

Program Policies-Discipline

The gospels teach us that love, forgiveness, and respect should govern all actions. It is expected that each family become actively involved in Most Holy Redeemer’s School of Religion Program, weekly attendance at Sunday Mass, and financially supporting the Church in order to model a living conscious faith and to reinforce the values of that faith.

Should we have a problem with your child during class this procedure will be followed.

1. Verbal warning, their name placed on a list indicating some rule has not respectfully been followed, being sent to the office so the student and DRE can discuss what happened and why they were sent to the office. The student will return to class.
2. Continued unacceptable behavior or any other serious misconduct will not be tolerated. A note will be sent home to the parents/guardian. Parent/guardian and DRE will meet to discuss the situation and a determination will be made regarding the student's status.

Students are expected to show consideration for their education, their catechist, their classmates, all others involved, classrooms and desks. Students are expected to be ready for class so bathroom visits need to be kept at a minimum. Please have your child go to the bathroom before coming to class. Students will not be allowed to wear baseball caps in the parish building or classrooms. Caps must be removed when **ENTERING** the building. No gum chewing or candy will be allowed unless approved by the DRE. No games, electronic devices, cell phones, or toys will be allowed to be used in class. Devices will be collected by the teacher or the Director and will be returned after class. If any item is broken or stolen, MHR will not be held responsible.

Homework

Homework when given must take its rightful place in the child(ren) curriculum. Work at home is particularly important in the sacramental grades. Catechists request your help and support in this area. Make-up homework due to an absence needs your prompt attention before returning to the next class. You may go online and check lesson schedules to see what chapter your student has missed.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the "heart and soul" of the School of Religion Program. Parents/guardians are asked to give of their time and talents during the school year. Further information can be received by contacting the School of Religion. All volunteers working with children within the Archdiocese are required to participate in all aspects of the Safe Environment Program, including Virtus Training and a criminal background check. It is our goal to ensure that everyone completes all aspects of this program.

Sports Program

Any student involved in the MHR Sports Program needs to be in good standing in the School of Religion Program. This means attendance at all classes, (parents must call when child will be absent) weekly work completed, and projects completed. All past tuition must be paid in full and monthly payments being made for the current year. If you are not in good standing, this could jeopardize your student from qualifying for the MHR Sports Program.

Emergency Closing Information

The Religious Education Office will follow District 124 snow days.

Traffic Pattern

On Monday evenings children must enter the school from the North parking lot. Please follow the drop off and pick up procedures that follow. Your cooperation will help to keep your children safe.

**Drop off procedures:**

1. Please enter the school parking lot from Lawndale.

2. Drive straight along the path marked by the lines.

3. Children should exit on the passenger side only and enter the school doors at the Porch Entrance.

4. Proceed to Millard Avenue to exit.

**Pick up procedures:**

1. 1. Enter the parking lot from Lawndale Ave.

2. 2. **Park** in the lot on the north side of the yellow lines.

3. Children will be released into the parking lot for pick up.

4. Proceed to Millard Avenue to exit.

School of Religion parents are assigned

one evening during the school year

to help patrol the parking lot during pick up.

Please follow their directions.