

Prayer for Parents

God, You have blessed us with life and
with the lives of our children.

Through Jesus, Your Son, give us the vision
to see Your mercy and love
in every experience we have.

Fill us with your grace to be patient,
understanding, forgiving, and kind at all times.

Bring us together as a family
in union with You and with each other
as we strive daily to grow in love.

Bless our families as we labor
to bring this love into the world.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit
and help us be witnesses of
faith, hope, and love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Brother,
who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Amen.



Religious Education Program

2011-12 Parent/Handbook

Parish Mission Statement:

*Our Mother of Sorrows/St. Peter the Apostle Parish
is a Roman Catholic Community.*

*We are called to celebrate and witness
God's presence*

through worship, prayer, sacraments and service.

*We are committed to religious formation and
social action to live the gospel message.*

*We welcome all to join us in striving to follow in
the footsteps of Jesus.*



Excerpt from Parish Philosophy Statement:

*Jesus told his disciples: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all
Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold I am with you always, until the end of the age.*

Mt. 28: 19-20

As catechetical leaders in Our Mother of Sorrows/St. Peter's Parish:

*We recognize our responsibility to provide the best possible programs and
processes to awaken and strengthen faith in all parishioners.*

*We accept as a special responsibility assisting parents in the spiritual
development of their children.*



Mission Statement for Religious Education

*As a welcoming community of faith,
we are committed to the religious formation
of all Parishioners.*

*Through evangelization, teaching, and renewal,
we seek to live the gospel message.*

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Dear Parents:

It is with great joy that I welcome you to the 2011-12 Religious Education Program at Our Mother of Sorrows/St. Peter the Apostle Parish. I pray that our year together will lead us to a closer union with God and with one another.

This handbook is intended to be your first point of reference for matters relating to our religious education program. Please take time to read it and make note of any matters of particular interest to you.

During the year you will be invited to join your child in various class activities. Your attendance is important, and we encourage your participation.

Volunteers are an integral and important part of our program. Our catechists are all volunteers. Volunteers also serve as classroom aides, hall monitors, and helpers for special events. We invite you to share with us some of your time and talents. It is when we work together that our children are able to experience the most profound sense of community that we know is foundational to our faith experience.

I am looking forward to working with you and your children. Please do not hesitate to let me know of ways that I may be of further assistance in making this program the most beneficial and effective for you and your family.

I pray for God's continued blessing upon you and your families.

Yours in Christ,

Mary K. Wood

Mary Wood
Director of Religious Education

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GENERAL POLICIES

Attendance

Students are expected to be present for all scheduled religious education classes, and to arrive on time. Our program provides less than 3% of their total classroom education during a school year. Therefore, attendance is CRITICAL to the proper and age-appropriate faith formation of spiritual development of the students.

Students who have less than 70% attendance will require additional home-study to advance to the next grade.

Baptism Certificates

You must provide a copy of your child's baptism certificate to the Religious Education Office to be kept in your child's Religious Education Record. This is a requirement for all students, even those who were baptized in this parish. (While OMOS baptisms are recorded in the official registry, copies of certificates were not kept until after 2007). If you are unable to locate your child's baptism certificate, please call the church office where your child was baptized and request that a new certificate be issued.

Calendar of Classes/Upcoming Events

The Religious Education Calendar is provided at the back of this booklet, is posted on the parish website, and also is posted on the bulletin board in Corbaley Hall. In addition, classes and upcoming events are published in the Parish Bulletin each week. As accurate as we tried to be with the calendar when published, occasionally changes are made. Please consult the Bulletin for announcements and updates.

Cell phones

Cell phones MUST BE TURNED OFF during class, no exceptions. If there is an emergency and you need to reach your child, please call 443-786-1941. Students who violate this policy will have their cell phones confiscated and turned over to the DRE. If a cell phone is confiscated, it will be placed in a ziplock bag, clearly marked with the child's name, and locked in the DRE file cabinet. The cell phone will then be turned over to the parent at the conclusion of classes for that day.

Classroom Guests

We understand that occasionally you may have young visitors in your home, and they are welcome to attend religion classes with your children. We ask, however, that you notify the DRE, prior to class time, as we are responsible for all the children in our care.

Community Service

Each grade will participate in a community service project during the school year. By participating in the service project, the students gain a greater understanding of our Catholic call to discipleship. Parents are encouraged to assist the catechists in executing the project and to encourage their children's full participation.

Conduct

All students are expected to share in the faith learning experiences of their class, to exercise self-control and to conduct themselves appropriately at all times. Students are expected to respect the authority of the catechist and the rights of other students. They are expected to respect the property of the religious education program, the classroom reserved for their use, and the teacher and student materials within the classroom.

Behavioral issues will be handled first by the catechist in the classroom, then by the DRE in her office. If the behavior persists, a "Problem Report" will be sent home to the parents, and a parent conference with the DRE may follow.

Curriculum

This year, all grades will be using the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies which are appropriate to their grade level. Grade 1 will use Promise, Grades 2 and 3 will use Good News, Grades 4, 5 & 6 will use Ventures, and Grades 7 and 8 will use Visions.

This is a lectionary-based curriculum, meaning that the lessons each week are based on the readings from Mass that Sunday. In addition to the lessons they receive each week, each student will also have a companion student book entitled "What the Church Believes and Teaches" appropriate to their grade level.

Curriculum Outcomes

The Diocese has developed a list of learning objectives and outcomes for each grade. These can be viewed on the Religious Education page of the parish website.

Dismissal

In order to maintain the safest and least disruptive learning environment for the students, catechists will dismiss their students into the main gathering area at 11:25 a.m. No student will be permitted to leave the premises unless accompanied by an authorized adult. Siblings do not qualify as “authorized adults” unless they are over the age of 18.

Drugs and/or Alcohol

We have a zero tolerance policy for drugs and alcohol. If your child brings these substances with them to class or to a parish-sponsored event, you will be notified immediately, and your child will be dismissed from the program.

Early Pick-up

We discourage picking your child up early from class as it curtails your child’s learning experience and is potentially disruptive to your child’s class. However, we understand that occasionally certain circumstances may require your child to leave early from class. If you need to pick your child up from class prior to the 11:25 dismissal time, please come to the office to sign your child out. Someone from the office will then bring your child to you. If you know in advance that your child will be leaving early, please send the child in with a signed note so that your child’s catechist will be aware that your child is leaving early that day.

E-Mail

Reminders, notices, and announcements are frequently sent from the Religious Education Office. If your e-mail address changes, please notify the Office ASAP. If you do not have access to e-mail, please notify the Religious Education Office so that you may be placed on a call list for important announcements and notices.

Emergency Medical Cards – Form A

Each child must have a completed “Form A” on file in the Office. This form contains emergency contact information as well as allergy information that we must have to ensure the safest possible environment for your child. It also contains general releases for medical treatment and the policies regarding personal electronic technology devices. The information contained on the form will be shared only with your child’s catechist and will be kept confidential.

Family Activity Nights

Five Family Activity Nights have been added to the calendar this year. These special evening events are designed to give families some time together to learn about a particular aspect of our Catholic faith and to engage in a fun activity. Each family is asked to participate in at least two Family Activity Nights which will count toward student attendance.

“For the Sake of God’s Children”

Your children’s safety is of paramount importance to us. The Diocese developed this program several years ago to ensure the safest environment possible for our children. Our full compliance with this program means that all our catechists have signed a Volunteer Covenant which outlines specific parameters for dealing with students. It also means that every catechist submitted to a background check and obtained a clearance for working with your children. Further, a separate curriculum developed by the Diocese which explores such issues as “secrets,” “appropriate boundaries,” “peer relationships,” “bullying,” “harassment,” and other related topics is incorporated into the lessons each week. For more information about this program, please contact the Religious Education office.

Homework

Homework is left to the discretion of each catechist. Just as in the classes your children take during the week, certain key points may be best reinforced with a homework assignment. These assignments are not “busy work” and should be regarded with the same importance as any other homework assignment that your child brings home from school. Please check with your children each week to determine whether homework was assigned.

Library Resources

The Religious Education Office contains many books, videos, and DVD's that you are welcome to borrow. Please consult the "Resource Guide" for an updated listing of the materials available.

Medication

Our policy is NOT to administer medication to students. Parents are invited to make any necessary arrangements with the Religious Education Office to pull their child from class to parentally administer medication, if necessary. Arrangements can be made if there is a need to make a policy exception in an emergency situation (e.g. "epi" pens, etc.) It is the parents' responsibility to notify the Religious Education Office of all known medical conditions of their child, including allergies, that may require the immediate administration of medication in an emergency situation.

Parent Participation

Religious Education neither begins nor ends with our religious education program. Your child's religious education began at home, and remains a constant process at work there. As primary educators of your children, parent involvement is a necessity for the success of any Religious Education Program.

Parents actively participate by:

- Attending weekend Mass as well as any other scheduled Liturgical celebrations and Family Activities throughout the school year.
- Assisting your child in learning prayers, completing homework assignments, and reviewing any materials that come home with your child each week.
- Talking to your child's catechist. Introduce yourself and make it a point to regularly touch base with the catechist on your child's progress. Offer your assistance if needed.
- Modeling for your children that our faith community is an integral part of our daily lives by taking an active role in the social life of the parish through our numerous activities.

Restrooms

Please encourage your children to use the restroom prior to religion classes. The time we have with your children is very brief, and while they will certainly not be denied the use of the restrooms in Corbaley Hall, we prefer if this matter can be addressed prior to the beginning of classes. It is disruptive to the flow and sequencing of the lesson specifically and to the class in general when a child needs to be excused for this purpose, and we want to provide the best learning environment possible for every child.

Sacraments

In order to receive the Sacraments of First Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation, the child must be enrolled in a Religious Education program or a Catholic school for at least one year prior to entering a sacrament preparation program AND be able to verify at least 70% attendance in that religious education program or Catholic school.

First Reconciliation/First Eucharist – no earlier than 2nd grade. Classes are held in addition to regular religious education, and must be attended by the student and at least one parent. An additional sacrament registration form is required. Please consult the religious ed. calendar for class dates.

If your child is in grades 3 – 8 and has not celebrated First Reconciliation and/or First Eucharist, please see the DRE in the Religious Education Office.

Confirmation – no earlier than 9th grade. Classes are held on scheduled Sundays following the morning classes. Please consult the religious ed. calendar for class dates. A Confirmation Registration form must be completed.

Tuition Fees

Tuition fees are as follows:

Religious Education Program	Family fee: \$60.00
<u>PLUS</u>	\$15 per child
First Reconciliation/First Eucharist	\$50.00
Confirmation	\$75.00

These fees help to cover the cost of books, supplies, etc. However, ***no child will be denied participation in our Religious Education Program because of money.*** If you are unable to pay, please contact the DRE or the pastor.

Weather Cancellation

Parents are encouraged to sign up for School's Out alerts offered through www.schoolsout.com. Free e-mail notifications are sent when classes are cancelled due to weather. Our Mother of Sorrows is listed under "Private Schools" in Maryland. Text message alerts are also available through this website. In addition, the DRE will send out e-mail notification, if possible. Information will also be available on the parish answering machine, and closings will be announced on local television and radio stations.

Website

The parish website, www.sorrowsparish.org, has a link for the Religious Education Program. Calendar updates and other announcements will be posted there along with other material and links as they are developed.



2011-12 Religious Education/Events Calendar

** Confirmation class meets from 11:45 am- 1:15 pm on Sundays marked with asterisks

SEPTEMBER 11 Parents' Meeting and Meet the Catechists 10:15 a.m
18 No class
25 Classes begin.

OCTOBER 2 Blessing of the Animals
9**
16
23 No class
30**

NOVEMBER
[Wed., 2 Family Activity 6:30 – 8 pm]
6**
13
20**
27 No class
[Monday, 28 Family Activity 6:30 – 8 pm]

DECEMBER 4**
11
18 Special Advent Celebration – followed by Cookie Bake
25 No class - Christmas

JANUARY 1 No class – New Year's Day
8**
[Wed., 11 Family Activity 6:30 – 8 pm]
15 No class
22
29**

FEBRUARY 5

[Monday, 6 **Family Activity 6:30 – 8 pm]**

12**

19 **No class**

26**

MARCH 4

11

18

25 [10:15–12:30 Stations – 8th Gr]

[Thurs., 29 **Family Activity 6:30 – 8 pm]**

APRIL 1

8 **No class – Easter Sunday**

15

22

29 **Last Day – Awards Brunch**

First Reconciliation Classes:

September 26 (Monday) Parents' Meeting 6:30 – 8pm

October 30 Parent/Child Class 11:45 – 1:15 pm

November 20 Parent/Child Class 11:45 – 1:15 pm

First Reconciliation – Saturday, December 3 – 10:00 am

First Eucharist Classes:

January 4 (Wed.) Parents' Meeting 6:30 – 8pm

February 5 Parent/Child Class 11:45 – 1:15 pm

March 18 Parent/Child Class 11:45 – 1:15 pm

April 28 (Sat.) First Communion Fair 3 – 4:30 pm

May 11 (Fri.) First Communion Rehearsal – 7 pm

First Communion – Saturday, May 12 – 10:00 am

Important Confirmation Dates

Sunday, Oct. 2 – Parent/Registered Candidate Meeting 6 pm

Saturday, Nov. 12 – Field Trip to SSPP – Knowing Jesus Retreat

Saturday, Jan. 21 – Retreat – Corbaley Hall

Sunday, Mar. 18 – Guest Speaker – 6 – 8 pm

Friday, Mar. 23 – Rehearsal

Confirmation – Saturday, Mar. 24 – 2 pm