

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK



Holy Redeemer Church  
College Park, Maryland

# Prayer For Parents

O HEAVENLY FATHER, MAKE ME A BETTER PARENT. TEACH ME TO UNDERSTAND MY CHILDREN, TO LISTEN PATIENTLY TO WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY, AND TO ANSWER ALL THEIR QUESTIONS KINDLY. KEEP ME FROM INTERRUPTING THEM OR CONTRADICTING THEM. MAKE ME AS COURTEOUS TO THEM AS I WOULD HAVE THEM BE TO ME. FORBID THAT I SHOULD EVER LAUGH AT THEIR MISTAKES, OR RESORT TO SHAME OR RIDICULE WHEN THEY DISPLEASE ME. MAY I NEVER PUNISH THEM FOR MY OWN SELFISH SATISFACTION OR TO SHOW MY POWER. LET ME NOT TEMPT MY CHILD TO LIE OR STEAL. AND

GUIDE ME HOUR BY HOUR THAT I MAY DEMONSTRATE BY ALL I SAY AND DO THAT HONESTY PRODUCES HAPPINESS. REDUCE, I PRAY, THE MEANNESS IN ME. AND WHEN I AM OUT OF SORTS, HELP ME, O LORD, TO HOLD MY TONGUE. MAY I EVER BE MINDFUL THAT MY CHILDREN ARE CHILDREN AND I SHOULD NOT EXPECT OF THEM THE JUDGMENT OF ADULTS. LET ME NOT ROB THEM OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO WAIT ON THEMSELVES AND TO MAKE DECISIONS. BLESS ME WITH THE BIGNESS TO GRANT THEM ALL THEIR REASONABLE REQUESTS AND THE COURAGE TO DENY THEM PRIVILEGES I KNOW WILL DO THEM HARM. AND FIT ME, O LORD, TO BE LOVED, RESPECTED, AND IMITATED BY MY CHILDREN. I ASK

THIS TO JESUS CHRIST, OUR BROTHER  
AND OUR HOLY REDEEMER THROUGH  
THE INTERCESSION OF HIS MOTHER,  
THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.  
AMEN.



The parish **Office of Religious Education** is located in the Holy Redeemer School building at 49<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Berwyn Road. During the school year, office hours for Mrs. Marie Winterson, the Minister of Religious Education and Youth Ministry, are generally as follows:

Sundays – 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Monday through Fridays – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Mondays and Fridays – 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The telephone number for the **Office of Religious Education** is 301-474-4299. You can also reach Mrs. Winterson via e-mail at **[mwinterson@holy-redeemer.org](mailto:mwinterson@holy-redeemer.org)**. In addition, Mrs. Perry, the Religious Education secretary, can be found in the office from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

A developmental program of instruction in the Catholic Christian faith is provided for all of our children, three years old through high school.

**Three and four year olds and kindergarteners** meet on Sunday mornings from 9:50 a.m. until the end of 10:00 a.m. Mass.

**Grades one through eight** meet on Sunday mornings from 8:50 a.m. until 9:50 a.m. with 10:00 a.m. Mass to follow.

**Grades nine through twelve** meet on Sunday mornings for 10:00 a.m. Mass followed by class time from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



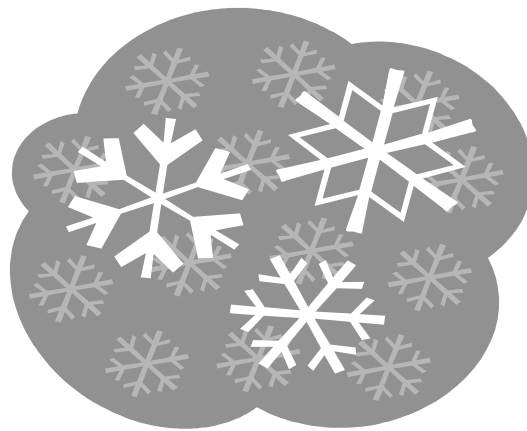
**MASS ATTENDANCE** – *Regular attendance at Mass is an important part of the Holy Redeemer Religious Education Program. Participation in the Holy Redeemer Religious Education Program presumes regular attendance at Sunday liturgy. **Class attendance does not take the place of Mass.** By age six (first grade) children should be attending Mass regularly.*



The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that “**Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in faith, prayer, and all the virtues.**” The goal of our religious education program is to assist you, the parents in this important responsibility of forming your children in their Catholic faith.

Our religious education program is staffed by a group of outstanding volunteers, many with years of teaching experience. Many of our catechists have completed the Archdiocese of Washington Catechist Formation Program. Others are currently working towards their catechist certification through the Archdiocese of Washington Catechist Formation Program or other recognized educational programs.

**STUDENT EVALUATIONS** – Twice a year, parents of students in grades one through eight will receive a completed evaluation from their child’s catechist. The evaluation form will assist in keeping you informed of your child’s progress. The evaluation form will also indicate the number of classes missed and times late during the reporting period.



**INCLEMENT WEATHER** – On Sunday mornings when inclement weather is a factor and class is cancelled, a cancellation notice will be on the taped message at the Office of Religious Education (301-474-4299).

There is no need to call the rectory for verification. For activities held during the school week, if the Prince George's County Public School system is closed, then our activities will be cancelled as well. If inclement weather occurs after the close of the regular school day, we will follow the directives of the Prince George's County evening activities as announced on local radio. Again, a cancellation notice will be on the taped message at the Office of Religious Education.

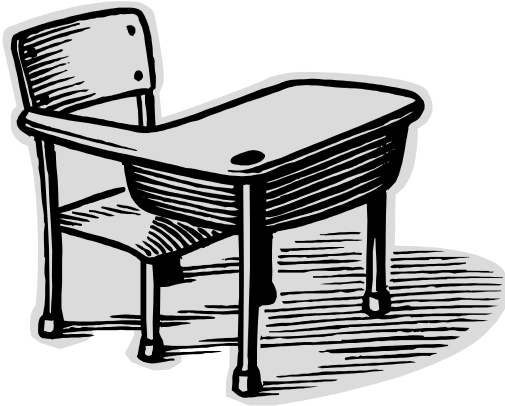
**STUDENT RECORDS** – If you move, have a telephone number change, or for some reason have to withdraw from the program, please notify the Office of Religious Education so that we can maintain accurate student records.

**CLASSROOM VISITATION** – A School of Religion Open House will be held in the fall to allow parents to observe their children in a classroom setting. Parents are welcome to come observe the class at any time. Please notify the Office of Religious Education if you intend to be in the classroom.

**HOME ASSIGNMENTS** – Since our time in class is so short, some preparation for class or follow-up work may be required. Please check with your child concerning home assignments and assist them in completing any required work.

**BOOKS AND SUPPLIES** – All books and supplies will be provided for the student. Students must remember to bring their books to class. If a book is lost, please notify the Office of Religious Education to purchase a replacement copy.

**COMMUNICATION** – Throughout the year, many letters, memos, bulletins, parent information sheets, etc. will be sent home with your child. After class each week, ask your child for any papers passed out in class and please read all these notices carefully.



**SACRAMENTS** – A unified program (Holy Redeemer School and School of Religion) of sacramental preparation is provided for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. A series of activities including classroom instruction, parent meetings, special liturgies, and retreats are provided as immediate preparation for the sacraments. ***(Regular participation in parish life and worship and attendance in an approved religious education program are***

***required as remote preparation before accepting any child as a candidate for our sacramental program.)***

Pre/K:	Foundational Catechesis I
Grade 1:	First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Preparation I
Grade 2:	First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Preparation II
Grade 3-6:	Foundational Catechesis II
Grade 7:	Confirmation Preparation I
Grade 8:	Confirmation Preparation II
Grades 9-12:	Catechetical Mystagogy & Continuing Conversion

Individualized sacramental preparation is available for children with special needs and for families with children who did not receive the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, and/or Confirmation at the usual age. Please contact the Office of Religious Education to discuss your particular situation.

**SCHOOL OF RELIGION SERVICE PROJECTS** – “Whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do unto me.” During Advent and during Lent, the School of Religion will take part in class service projects. During Advent, the School of Religion will help support the less-fortunate of our local community by participating in collecting goods for the parish Angel Tree Project benefitting a local charity. During Lent, the School of Religion will help support the impoverished of our global community by collecting spare change for Catholic Relief Service’s Operation Rice Bowl benefitting the poor of developing nations.

**ABSENTEEISM** – Our class time with the children is very short and consequently, regular attendance is imperative for the continuous growth in faith of the student and the continuity of the classroom experience. For students in grades one through eight to successfully complete a grade level and advance to the next, the student should be present for at least 75% of the classes. (Example: If there are 25 scheduled classes, a student should attend at least 19 classes to move on to the next grade level.) If a student fails to attend the required number

of classes without making up the missed assignments, that student may be required to make up the work over the summer in order to advance to the next grade.

**PUNCTUALITY** – In order to gain the most from the weekly religion classes, students should arrive at least five (5) minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

**DISCIPLINE** – Discipline problems cannot be permitted to occur constantly if meaningful learning is to take place. Specific problems will be first handled within the classroom and referred to the parents if there is no improvement. Although it is not desired, children will be removed from the program if they are consistently disruptive and cooperation from parents is lacking.

**CALENDAR CHANGES** – Written notice of changes in our calendar will be sent home with the students. Notice of changes will also appear in the parish Sunday Bulletin.

**DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES** – In order to ensure the safety of the children (preschool through grade 6), it is important that when dropping them off for class and picking them up after class, the parents, legal guardians, or authorized adult sign each child in and out of class and escort each child to their classroom. At the end of class, parents, legal guardians, or authorized adults are asked to pick up their child from their classroom.

**ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON CHILD PROTECTION POLICY** – The parishes of the Archdiocese of Washington are committed to do all that they can to create safe environments for children and young people. This commitment involves children and young people in our parish religious education programs. The Child Protection Policy (CPP) of the Archdiocese, [www.adw.org/youth/protect\\_index.asp](http://www.adw.org/youth/protect_index.asp), outlines policies and procedures to help ensure their safety and protection. Section 2.3 of the CPP, regarding Educational Curriculum, outlines various topics that must be reviewed and presented on an annual basis to the children and young people within our religious education programs. In addition,

every adult involved in parish religious education and youth ministry programs within the Archdiocese of Washington must be in compliance with the Archdiocese of Washington Child Protection Plan.



## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS**

As directed by the Office for Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Washington, Holy Redeemer School of Religion has developed the following Emergency Response Plan to be implemented in the event of a crisis situation during class.

**FIRE/BOMB THREAT...** In the event of a fire or a bomb threat, our students will take their coats and proceed in an orderly fashion with their classroom catechists and assistants to the lower part of the parking lot (Quebec Street side). The students are to remain in the play area until it is safe to return to the building or until each child has been dismissed to their parents. The classroom catechist will take roll and will note the safe dismissal of each child on the attendance log.

**INTRUDER/HOSTAGE SITUATION...** In the event of an intruder in the building or hostage situation, the classroom catechist will lock the doors and windows of the classroom and close the shades. The students will remain in the classrooms until it is safe for them to be dismissed to their parents. The classroom teacher will take roll and will note the safe dismissal of each child on the attendance log.

**TORNADO/WEATHER EMERGENCY...** In the event of a tornado warning or other weather related emergency, the classroom catechists and assistants will escort the children to the hallway outside the Adult Education Room. The children will sit on the floor in the hallway and wait for the all-clear signal. After the danger has passed, the classroom catechists and assistants will return the children to their designated classroom where they will take roll and dismiss each child to their parents, noting each safe dismissal in their attendance log.

**CHEMICAL/BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY...** In the event of a chemical or biological emergency, the children will be escorted by their catechists and assistants to the hallways outside the Adult Education Room and will be “sheltered in place” in that corridor. After everyone is present and the catechists have taken roll, the doors to the corridor will be sealed with plastic and tape and everyone will remain in the hallway until the all-clear signal has been given. This area of the building contains an emergency supply of food and water and affords access to the lavatory. Along with the emergency food and water, there will be first aid supplies, flashlights, a battery operated radio, and a cell phone. After the danger has passed, the classroom catechists and assistants will dismiss each child to their parents. Each safe dismissal will be noted in the catechist’s attendance log. For the duration of the emergency, no one will be admitted to the building or the sealed area.

***SPECIAL NOTE: Since many different groups are using the same space, everyone must contribute to the order and beauty of the facility and respect the rights and property of others.***

**HOLY REDEEMER OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & YOUTH MINISTRY**

**Mrs. Marie A. Winterson, Minister of Religious Education & Youth Ministry**

**Mrs. Kathleen Perry, Religious Education & Youth Ministry Secretary**

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