

Religious Education Handbook

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

1 Passaic Street
Ridgewood, NJ 07450
201-444-0211

Cathy Hunt, Parish Catechetical Leader
chunt@olmcridgewood.com

Marie Cummings, Assistant Parish Catechetical Leader
mcummings@olmcridgewood.com

Lorraine Van Der Velde, Administrative Assistant
lvandervelde@olmcridgewood.com

Patricia Poole, Administrative Assistant
ppoole@olmcridgewood.com

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
School Model Program Grades 1 – 6	2
Home Groups Program	5
Junior High Policies and Procedures	9
When Families Gather	13
The Summer Program	17
Sacraments of First Reconciliation & First Eucharist	20

The School Model Program Grades 1 through 6

Classes for Grades 1 – 6 are held:

Sunday 10:45am to 12:15pm

Tuesday 4:00pm to 5:30pm

Wednesday 4:00pm to 5:30pm

Explanation of Program:

The children are taught by grade level in groups of approximately 10 to 12 students on a weekly basis for 90 minutes in our school building. There are three time slots available.

The Curriculum:

- We will use the Spiral Curriculum. Following the Guidelines of the Archdiocese of Newark our classes meet for 35 hours during the year. Classes meet for 24 weeks during the school year with each session being 1 ½ hours. The children gather in the auditorium and we begin each session with prayer and a short lesson.
- We ask that parents escort their child into the auditorium. After the prayer service, the children will proceed with their Catechist to their classroom. For safety reasons, all children will be dismissed from the doors at the FRONT of the school.

Being a Model of Faith to the Children:

- It is important that we live the faith we are teaching to our children. We show our children the importance of our faith by attending mass on Sundays and Holy days, attending reconciliation services, and helping with service projects.
- At OLMC our mass schedule is: Saturday at 5:30PM, Sunday at 8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM, 12:30PM, 3:00PM (Spanish mass) and 6:30PM.

If Class is Cancelled Due to Weather:

- A message will be left on the Religious Ed answering machine. If the public schools are closed due to weather, we are closed. If it begins snowing during the day, we will send an email to all families if we are not having class that day.

Volunteers Necessary for each Session:

All volunteers must take the Protecting God's Children Workshop

For the safety of the children we need parental participation in the various areas:

- Catechists: Each class needs one catechist for the entire year.
- Hall Monitors: We need four hall monitors per week. There needs to be one on each of the four levels of the school.
- Office Help: We need help in the office making phone calls, filing, etc. during the hour your child is in class.

- **Traffic Duty:** For safety reasons, we need an adult to arrive 10 minutes before the start of the program and stay for about 10 minutes afterward to help cross the children.
- **Catechist Aide:** We need an aide in each classroom to help the Catechist wherever necessary. Consider teaching with a friend.

Catechist Certification:

- Every Catechist should be working toward their certification. There are three separate parts to the certification process. Betsy Foer from the Archdiocese of Newark will present full day workshops for our Catechists on Spirituality, Methodology and Doctrine. Doctrine will be a two day workshop for certification.

If someone else is going to pick up your child you must put in writing who will be picking up your child. The Religious Ed office will keep the note on file and give a copy to your child's Catechist.

Attendance Policy:

- A child may miss two classes during the school year and not make up the work. However, once a child is absent a third time during the school year he/she must make up the lesson with the parent at home. Please ask the Catechist for the child's book the next time you pick him/her up from class and complete the missed lesson. Please have your child show the Catechist the completed work at the next class. After a fourth absence you and your child will meet with Father Ron to discuss the options.

In Case of Absence:

- When your child will be absent, please call the Religious Ed office at 201-444-0211. Please leave a message if we are unable to answer the phone. We will be calling each child who is absent if we have not received a phone call from you.

Discipline Policy:

- If your child is being disruptive in class the Religious Ed office will be notified. We will discuss the situation with the Catechist and notify you.

Allergies and Special Medical or Educational Needs:

- If your child has any special needs that you did not already list on the registration form please put in writing and drop it off at the Religious Education Office.

Grade 5 students only ACRE Assessment:

- All Grade 5 students will be required to take the ACRE Assessment mandated by the Diocese. It will be scheduled sometime during late February or early March and will take place during your child's regular class time.

Protecting God's Children Workshop and Safe Environment Paperwork:

- If you are teaching or volunteering you must take the workshop and fill out the paperwork by September 1, 2011.
- **All volunteers must have participated in a Protecting God's Children Workshop offered by the Archdiocese, and must have completed all Safe Environment paperwork and have it on file in the Religious Education Office.**

Protecting God's Children Workshop at Mount Carmel:

- Please register for one of these sessions at www.virtusonline.org. If you have attended a workshop at another site, please bring your certificate to Lorraine Van Der Velde in the Religious Education Office. You will need to complete safe environment forms at that time.

Registration Fee:

There is a lot of planning and preparation for our Religious Education Program. We begin our planning in January for the following school year therefore, there will be a late fee for registering after April 14 and it will increase after June 1. We strongly encourage you register your child/children early.

REGISTRATION MUST OCCUR BEFORE OCTOBER 31, 2011. NO CHILD WILL BE REGISTERED AFTER OCTOBER 31, 2011.

The Home Groups Program

Deadline to Register in a Home Group is April 14, 2011

All NEW Home Groups must be approved by April 1, 2011

Explanation of Program:

The children are taught in a home setting with at least 5 children in the group of the same grade level. The parents arrange these groups according to the guidelines of the Religious Education Office. The children are taught on a weekly basis for 90 minutes during the school year reflecting exactly what is being taught in the School Model. Each home group must have a lead catechist that has followed the Safe Environment Guidelines and attends all catechist certification training and workshops. All requirements of the Archdiocese of Newark and of our parish must be followed in the home groups.

Grades 1 – 6:

The Curriculum:

- We use a spiral Curriculum. Following the Guidelines of the Archdiocese of Newark our classes meet for 35 hours during the year. All service projects hours and field trips hours will count towards your 35 hours.
- We are encouraging all our programs to spend time at the beginning or the end of class saying prayers. They are located in the back of their book.
- There are opportunities during the year to do a lesson outside of the classroom such as a tour of the stained glass windows in our church or having our priests available for Stations of the Cross, Church tours, etc.

Being a Model of Faith to the Children:

- It is important that we live the faith we are teaching to our children. We show our children the importance of our faith by attending mass on Sundays and Holy days, attending reconciliation services, and helping with service projects.
- At OLMC our mass schedule is: Saturday at 5:30PM, Sunday at 8:00AM, 9:30AM, 11:00AM, 12:30PM, 3:00PM (Spanish mass) and 6:30PM.

Catechist Certification:

- Every Catechist should be working toward their certification. There are three separate parts to the certification process. Betsy Foer from the Archdiocese of Newark will present full day workshops for our Catechists on Spirituality, Methodology and Doctrine. Doctrine will be a two day workshop for certification.

Attendance Policy:

- Your child may miss two classes during the school year and not make up the work. However, once your child is absent a third time during the school year he/she must make up the lesson with the parent at home. Please ask the Catechist for the child's book the next time you pick him/her up from class and complete the missed lesson. Please have your child show the Catechist the completed work at the next class. After a fourth absence you and your child must meet with Father Ron to discuss the options. If your group is covering two lessons in one session then each lesson missed is an absence. In this case, if your child misses one of these sessions it will count as two absences.
- The time we set aside to teach our children Religious Education should be considered sacred time. **Please do not sign your child up for any new activities that coincide with your scheduled class.**

Please respect the time and effort that your Catechist has put into preparing for your child's class.

Conduct Policy:

- We have shared with the Catechist that if a student is being disruptive in the class they should call the parents to either sit in on the class or have you pick up your child. After class is over you can discuss the situation. Please allow the Catechist to finish teaching the class.

Allergies and special medical or educational needs:

- If your child has any special needs please notify your Catechist.

Grade 5 students only ACRE Assessment

- All Grade 5 students will be required to take the ACRE Assessment mandated by the Diocese. It will be scheduled for some time during late February or early March.
- **HOME GROUPS MUST PLAN ON HAVING THEIR CLASS ATTEND ONE OF THESE SCHEDULED SESSIONS. THIS ASSESSMENT CANNOT BE GIVEN IN THE HOME.**

Protecting God's Children Workshop and Safe Environment Paperwork:

- **All parents in Home Groups must take the workshop and fill out the paperwork by September 1, 2011.**

- **All volunteers must have participated in a Protecting God's Children Workshop offered by the Archdiocese, and must have completed all Safe Environment paperwork and have it on file in the Religious Education Office.**
- **Protecting God's Children workshops are offered here at Mount Carmel.** Please register for one of these sessions at www.virtusonline.org. If you attended a workshop at another site please bring your certificate to Lorraine Van Der Velde in the Religious Education Office. You will need to complete a form at that time.

Registration Deadline for ALL Home Groups is April 14. If you are not registered by April 14 you will have to put your child into another program.

Junior High Home Group Grades 7 & 8:

Registration Deadline for ALL Home Groups is April 14. If you are not registered by April 14 you will have to put your child into another program.

The Requirements for all JR High Students:

- Cover 2 mini courses each year
- Attend retreat(s) for 3rd mini course
- Attend one Penance Service each Year
- Participate in one Service Project
- Attend the large group event sponsored by the Religious Education Office
- 8th grade only: Take the ACRE Assessment

The Curriculum:

- We will be using the Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum. There are 6 mini courses that the students will complete in the two year cycle. One in each of the 2 mini courses each year and one on the retreat(s) each year totaling 3 mini courses per year.

The Retreats:

- There are retreat(s) to cover the third mini course. The topic covered on retreat will be different each year on a 2 year cycle.
- The retreats will be held in the Parish Center.
- **Information on the retreats for the Home Groups:**
One parent from each home group must attend retreat(s) with the home group.

- **Conduct Policy:** The first time a child acts inappropriately, a verbal warning will be given to the child unless the action is severe. If that is the case, then the parent will be called immediately
- **Retreat Attendance Policy:** If your child misses the retreat you must teach the material that was covered on the retreat. You will meet with Cathy Hunt to get the book and the written assignment that must be handed in.

Attendance Policy:

- We take attendance very seriously. It is vital that your child not miss any classes. If a child misses a class due to sickness or other serious reason, please call the Catechist to let them know your child will be absent. Please pick up your child's book from the Catechist and teach the lesson at home. Should there be another absence, the Religious Ed office must be contacted to plan how the lesson will be covered. If your child misses more than two sessions you and your child must meet with Father Ron and may be taken out of that home group.

The Conduct Policy:

- If the Catechist calls you because your child is acting inappropriately during class time please support the Catechist. If the child continues to act inappropriately the Catechist will contact the religious education office and you and your child will meet with one of the directors to discuss the most effective way to teach your child.

Parent Involvement: Please ask your Home Group Catechist how you can assist the group. Please volunteer to drive for the service project or volunteer to participate in one of the retreats with the group or assist some other way that supports the Catechist.

Junior High Policies and Procedures

APRIL 14 is the Deadline for Registration for Summer Program, Home Groups and When Families Gather

The Requirements for all Junior High Students:

- Cover 2 mini courses each year in one of the following 4 programs:
 - School Model
 - Home Group
 - When Families Gather
 - Summer Program
- Attend retreat(s) during the school year
- Attend one Penance Service each year
- Attend the large group event sponsored by the Religious Education Office
- 8th grade only: Take the ACRE Assessment

Parent Participation: All parents are required to participate in at least one event.

We are asking the parents to participate in the retreat(s), one of the mini courses, or large group assembly.

Conduct Policy for all Four Junior High Programs and all other Junior High Events:

- The first time a child acts inappropriately, a verbal warning will be given to the child unless the action is severe. If that is the case, then the parent will be called immediately. At the second warning the child must call his parent to pick him/her up immediately. After the event the Catechist or the Director of Religious Education will talk to the parent to work out how the child will be able to participate in the program in a fashion that is appropriate to the situation.
- If a child acts inappropriately on a consistent basis Cathy Hunt will call the parent and then the child and the parent will meet with Cathy to solve the problem.

The Retreat(s):

- The retreat(s) are mandatory for all students in every Junior High Model--the School Model, Summer Program, When Families Gather and Home Groups.
- The retreat(s) will be held in the Parish Center.
- **How to Sign Up for the Retreats:** In September you will get more information at the Parent's meetings.
- **Information on the retreat(s) for the Home Groups:** One parent from each home group must attend the retreat(s) with the home group.
- **Attendance Policy:** The child must attend the entire retreat time. If a child misses any or all of the retreat(s) the parent must speak with the Director of Religious Education. The Director will determine how the retreat will be made up.

- **Parent Involvement:** One parent from each family must help out with the retreat or one of the other large group events.

The School Model:

- **The set up of the classes:** The students will attend two six week mini courses. They will be offered at 2 different times and the students will register for one time slot. The classes will be held on Thursday afternoons from 4:00PM -5:30PM and Thursday evenings 7:00PM – 8:30PM
- There will be a limit to the number of students that can participate for each time spot. This will be done according to the date the students register. Therefore a child may not get their first choice of time.
- **The Curriculum:** We will be using the Our Sunday Visitor Curriculum. There are 6 mini courses that the students will complete in the two year cycle--one in each of the 2 mini courses each year and one on the retreat(s) each year totaling 3 mini courses per year.
- **The Teaching Style:** We will have a lead Catechist who is a professional teacher. He/She will do all the teaching in the large group.
- **Parent Involvement:** Many parent volunteers are needed to help out at the Six week sessions. This will be a six week commitment. Parents are needed to be the small group facilitators. You will have up to 8 students in your group, and all the directions will come from the professional Catechist. There will be no teaching involved.
- **Attendance Policy/ How to make Up the Assignment:** The students must attend all the sessions. If a child misses a class he/she must complete a written make up assignment.
- **Conduct Policy:** The first time a child acts inappropriately, a verbal warning will be given to the child unless the action is severe. If that is the case, then the parent will be called immediately. At the second warning the child must call his/her parent to pick him/her up immediately.
- If a child acts inappropriately on a consistent basis the Lead Catechist or Director of Religious Education will call the parent and then the child and the parent will meet with Cathy to solve the problem.

For The Home Groups:

(See also section for Home Groups)

- **Explanation of the Program:** The students will be taught in a home with at least 5 other 7th or 8th grade students. They will be taught on a weekly basis for 90 minutes in two six week blocks for a total of 12 weeks. They will use one mini course book per 6 week session. In these two mini courses they will cover 2 books and at the retreat(s) they will cover the third book.
- **The Attendance Policy:** If a child misses a class due to sickness or other serious reason, please call the Catechist to let them know your child will be absent. The child must complete a makeup assignment for the lesson missed and turn it into his/her Catechist. If the child is absent more than 2 times in the 12 weeks the Religious Ed office

must be contacted to plan how the sessions will be made up. The final decision about the makeup work will be up to the Directors of Religious Education. If your child misses more than two sessions you and your child might have to meet with Father Ron and may be taken out of that home group.

- **The Conduct Policy:** The first time a child acts inappropriately, a verbal warning will be given to the child unless the action is severe. If that is the case, then the parent will be called immediately. At the second warning the child must call his/her parent to pick him/her up immediately.
- **Retreat Attendance Policy: The retreat is a mandatory part of the Religious Education program.** The child must attend the entire retreat time. If a child misses any or all of the retreat(s) the parent must speak with the Director of Religious Education. The Director will determine how the retreat will be made up.
- **Parent Involvement:** Please ask your Home Group Catechist how you can assist the group. Please volunteer to drive for the service project or volunteer to participate in the retreat(s) with the group or assist some other way that supports the programs.

When Families Gather:

(See also section of handbook for When Families Gather)

Explanation of the Program:

If you have a child in Grades 7 & 8 you MUST attend the Monday Night session assigned to you.

- All WFG 7th and 8th graders must complete 2 chapters in their textbook at home each month with a parent
- complete homework papers
- attend the monthly Monday Night session assigned to you.
- attend the required retreat(s)
- attend the large group assembly

For 8th graders only: attend the ACRE Assessment.

Please note there are no Sunday sessions for Junior High

Curriculum:

The students will complete 2 chapters each month at home before they come to the large group session as a preparation for the session. We will use the Our Sunday Visitor, *Call to Faith* Mini Course Curriculum. The students will complete 2 mini course books in the 7 month period, and they will complete one mini course book at the required retreat(s). The curriculum will be taught in a 2 year cycle, covering the 6 books that make up the entire JR High Curriculum.

Homework:

- The homework connects the lessons taught at home with the large group sessions.
- Each family will return their child/children's **completed** homework at each monthly session.
- All homework must be turned in to remain in the WFG program the following year

Summer Program:

(See also section of handbook for Summer Program)

Explanation of Program:

- The grade 7 and 8 program meets 9 days in the Summer for 3 hour and 10 minute sessions each day and they must attend the a Jr. High retreat(s), they must attend a penance service, and a large group session.
- For the 8th graders only, they must take the ACRE Assessment.

Curriculum:

We will use the Our Sunday Visitor curriculum and cover two books during the summer program. They will be taught together and will be split up into small groups for discussions and activities based on the teaching each day. The 7th and 8th graders will attend the opening Prayer service in the church each day. They will also do an art project or have an activity that reinforces the concepts each day and music as well.

Conduct Policy:

The first time a child acts inappropriately, a verbal warning will be given to the child unless the action is severe. If that is the case, then the parent will be called immediately. At the second warning the child must call his/her parent to pick him/her up immediately.

If a child acts inappropriately on a consistent basis the Lead Catechist or Director of Religious Education will call the parent and then the child and the parent will meet with Cathy to solve the problem.

When Families Gather

APRIL 14 is the Deadline to Register for WFG Program

Explanation of the Program:

There are two programs Grades 1-6 and Grades 7 & 8.

For Grades 1 - 6

There are four major components to this program.

- the three lessons that are completed at home with a parent each month as preparation for the large group session
- complete homework papers
- the large group monthly session
- the large group assembly

For Grades 7 & 8

If you have a child in Grades 7 & 8 you MUST attend on the Monday evening that you are assigned as we hire a Catechist to teach this program on a specific Monday evening each month. Please note there are no Sunday sessions for Jr. High

- All WFG 7th and 8th graders must complete 2 chapters in their textbook at home each month with a parent
- complete homework papers
- attend the Monday night session assigned to them
- attend the required retreat(s)
- attend the large group assembly

For 8th graders only: attend the ACRE Assessment.

The 7th and 8th graders in WFG may not attend the Sunday sessions because they are taught separately and their program is only held on certain Monday nights.

How to Sign Up:

Each year there will be a limited number of families allowed to participate in the Program. It is most effective to meet with no more than 50 families at each of the 5 large group monthly sessions. Therefore, there will usually be a lottery system for new families to get into the program each year. If your family is currently in WFG, your family will be accepted into the program if you register by April 14 and all requirements were met for the year you are currently enrolled.

The Curriculum:

For Grades 1 -6

For Grades 3 through 6, we will use Our Sunday Visitor Text: *Call to Faith*. We will cover the Seven Units during the school year. There are 3 chapters in each unit. The students will cover all 3 chapters in a Unit and then complete the Unit Test at home with a parent before each monthly large group session. **You must keep to this schedule as this will allow you to cover all of the material that corresponds with each monthly large group Session.**

Home work:

- The homework connects the lessons taught at home with the large group sessions.
- Each family will return their child/children's **completed** homework, (which is the Unit Test), at each monthly session.
- All homework must be turned in by May 15 of that school year to remain in the WFG program the following year.

For Grades 7& 8

The students will complete 2 chapters each month at home before they come to the large group session as a preparation for the session. We will use Our Sunday Visitor, *Call to Faith* Mini Course Curriculum. The students will complete 2 mini course books in the 7 month period, and they will complete one mini course book at the required retreat(s). The curriculum will be taught in a 2 year cycle, covering the 6 books that make up the entire Junior High Curriculum.

Homework:

- The homework connects the lessons taught at home with the large group sessions.
- Each family will return their child/children's **completed** homework at each monthly session.
- All homework must be turned in to remain in the WFG program the following year.

Dates and times of the monthly large group meetings:

For grades 1 - 6:

Each family is expected to attend **their assigned** large group session per month.

Currently, there are 5 large group sessions each month. We have 3 Monday night sessions from 6:30 – 8:30PM and two Sunday morning sessions from 10:30AM-12:15PM. The Sunday sessions will always start directly after the 9:30AM children's mass so that the families may attend mass and then attend WFG. Approximately 50 families will be assigned to each session. If your children are in grades one through sixth only, then the sessions will be assigned according to the first letter of the child's/children's last name.

For Families with a 7th or 8th grader:

If you have a seventh or eighth grader in this Program then your family will attend the Monday Night session assigned to you, as there is a separate program for Junior High students which is always on a Monday night.

Agenda for the Monthly Sessions for Grades 1 - 6:

- **Monday night sessions:**
 - 6:30PM Pizza
 - 7:00PM Opening Prayer
 - 7:10PM Teaching and small or large group activity to process the lesson
- **Sunday morning sessions:**
 - 10:30AM Bagels
 - 10:45AM Opening Prayer
 - 10:55AM Teaching and small or large Group activity to process the lesson
- **Junior High Monday night sessions:**
 - 6:30PM Pizza
 - 7:00PM Junior High Program

Pizza and drinks:

We ask each family to bring the drinks for their family. We will supply the Pizza.

Clean Up:

Each family may be assigned several sessions for clean-up.

Absences and How to Make Up a Session:

Every family must attend their assigned seven monthly sessions and the closing mass in May. If a family misses a large group session more than one month, they must make it up by participating in a parish or Diocesan function approved by Cathy Hunt. If a family misses more than one session and does not make it up in an approved event by Cathy Hunt, they may not be permitted to be in the program for the following year.

Families will not be permitted to switch their sessions. This will allow us to have the same number of participants for each of the sessions.

Snow and Inclement Weather Cancellations:

If school is closed or let out early then we are closed. If it begins to snow in the afternoon there will be a message on the machine in the Religious Education office and you will be sent an email if we are going to cancel.

Mass Attendance:

It is very important that we all attend Mass on a regular basis here at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

The children's mass is Sunday at 9:30AM.

The other weekend masses: Saturday 5:30PM

Sunday 8:00AM, 11:00AM, 12:30PM, and 6:30PM Spanish Mass 3:00PM

Lenten Penance Service:

The March large group sessions are always held in the church because we will have a Reconciliation service. After the service the family members in Grades 2 and older have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We do **not** have Sunday sessions during this month. All families scheduled to attend on Sundays will be assigned one of the Monday nights for the March session. The kindergarten and first graders will not have to attend the monthly session this month as they have not received the Sacrament of Reconciliation yet.

ACRE Assessment for grades 5 and 8:

All grade 5 and 8 students will be required to take the ACRE assessment.

The ACRE assessment will be administered during the months of February or March.

Closing Mass in May:

The closing Mass will take place on a Monday evening in May. All families enrolled in When Families Gather must participate in this Mass.

The Summer Program

APRIL 14 is the Deadline to register for the Summer Program

Explanation of the Program:

- This program is for students going into grades 3 – 8. There are two separate programs-- one for grades 3 – 6 and one for grades 7 and 8. In both programs, one parent from each family must volunteer two full days per child during the nine day program.
- During the summer program the children will participate in a prayer service with one of our priests, they will be taught a lesson in a classroom setting, they will have an activity or craft to help process the lesson for that day and a music session which also helps to reinforce the lesson being taught.
- The grade 3 – 6 program meets 9 days in the summer for 3 hour and 15 minute sessions each day, three mini retreats during the School year
- The grade 7 and 8 program meets 9 days in the summer for 3 hour and 15 minute sessions each day and they must attend the Junior High retreat(s), a penance service, and a large group session.
- For the 8th graders only, they must take the ACRE Assessment.

Safe Environment Requirements for All Parent Volunteers:

1. **Complete the Protecting God's Children Workshop (It is a three hour workshop that you only take once) by June 15**
2. **Complete safe environment paperwork and hand in with your registration at the Religious Education Office.**

Dates of the Program:

This program meets for approximately 35 hours during the year.

- There are 9 consecutive 3 hour and 15 minute sessions (excluding weekends, July 4 and possibly the day before or after July 4th) during the summer and 3 two hour sessions during the school year.
- A child must attend all the sessions for the full time requirement in order to get full credit for the year's curriculum.

Mandatory Parent Meeting in Late Spring:

There will always be a mandatory parent meeting in the late spring for that summer's nine day program. At that meeting the particulars for that year's session will be explained to the parents. If a parent misses the mandatory parent meeting that family may be eliminated from the Summer Program for that school year.

The Curriculum:

Grades 3-6:

For Grades 3 through 6, we will use the Our Sunday Visitor Text, *Call to Faith*. We will cover the Seven Units and the Seasonal lessons and Celebrations in the 9 day program. There are 3 chapters in each unit. The students will cover all 3 chapters in a Unit each day during the first 7 days of the program. They will cover the Seasonal Lessons and Celebrations during the last 2 days of the program.

Grades 7 and 8:

For Grades 7 and 8 we will use the Our Sunday Visitor curriculum and cover two books during the Summer Program. The 7th and 8th graders will be taught together and they will be split up into small groups for discussions and activities based on the teaching each day. The 7th and 8th graders will attend the opening Prayer service in the church each day. They will also do an art project or have an activity that reinforces the concepts each day. They will go to music as well.

Parent Volunteers:

One parent from each family must volunteer at least 2 full days (3 hours and 15 minutes per day) per child in the role that is assigned to them during the 9 day summer Program. If a parent does not complete their volunteer commitment that was assigned to them, their child/ren may not be allowed to participate in the Summer Program for the following School Year.

The volunteer positions are:

Catechists, Jr. High Facilitators, Child Care, Art program, Classroom Aide, Hall Monitors, Traffic Duty, Office Help.

All parents are assigned different duties during the two-week session. Each family will be assigned 2 days per child. The parent must arrive at 2:00PM and stay until 5:15PM on the days they are volunteering.

We need volunteers to step up for the position of Catechists, Jr. High Facilitators, and Art Program Coordinators.

You will be assigned where we need the help so please note that you may not be working with your own child.

What if someone else is going to pick up my child?

You must put in writing who will be picking up your child and bring that note to the Religious Education office.

Attendance Policy:

- Children must attend all nine summer sessions for the full 3 hour and 15 minute time period, and the school year retreats in order for this to count as their school year requirements. The children cannot miss any time for any reason other than serious illness and must have a doctor's note.
- If a child misses any or part of a session, due to serious illness or family emergency, the family and the Director of Religious Education will work together to make up the work following the guidelines of the Archdiocese.
- However, if a child misses any session or part of a session for any other reason other than illness or family emergency, such as a death in the family, that child may not get credit for attending the Summer Program and may have to start over during the school year in a different program in order to fulfill the requirements for that school year.

Conduct Policy:

The first time a child acts inappropriately, a verbal warning will be given to the child unless the action is severe. If that is the case, then the parent will be called immediately. At the second warning the child must call his/her parent to pick him/her up immediately.

If a child acts inappropriately on a consistent basis the Lead Catechist or Director of Religious Education will call the parent and then the child and the parent will meet with Cathy to resolve the problem.

Allergies and special medical or educational needs:

If your child has any special needs that you did not already list on the registration form please put in writing and drop off at the Religious Education Office.

Registration Fee:

There is a registration fee that will be listed on the registration form. The cost will be adjusted each year.

Grade 5 and 8 students only

All Grade 5 and Grade 8 Students will be required to take the ACRE Assessment mandated by the Diocese.

Mass Attendance

It is very important that we all attend Mass on a regular basis here at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church.

The children's mass is Sunday at 9:30AM.

The other weekend masses: Saturday 5:30PM

Sunday 8:00AM, 11:00AM, 12:30PM, and 6:30PM Spanish Mass 3:00PM

Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

First Reconciliation Requirements:

Explanation of how we prepare the children for this Sacrament:

This Sacrament is celebrated in December and January of 2nd grade. The families are invited to a Reconciliation Service on a Saturday, after the service the children will each receive their first Reconciliation with one of our priests. The families are invited to go to Reconciliation as well if they choose.

Traditionally, the children receive this Sacrament in the second grade. However, all children must have completed one year of religious instruction prior to preparing for this sacrament.

The Parent Meeting:

In October there will be a **mandatory** parent meeting. At this meeting the preparation schedule for this sacrament will be explained in detail. We offer two meeting times, one during the day and one in the evening. One parent from each family should attend one of these two meetings.

- You will receive the schedule of events for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist **including the date your child will receive each Sacrament.**
- You will receive your child's First Reconciliation Book. It is broken up into 6 chapters. You have 2 options for preparing your child to receive the Sacrament:
 1. You may prepare at home by teaching the material in each chapter. We will show you how to do that at the parent meeting.
 2. You can attend the 3 optional immediate preparation sessions on Tuesday Evenings from 7:15PM – 8:15PM in October/November in the Parish Center and the Director of Religious Education will teach the material. One parent must attend each session with your child. She will cover 2 chapters each session. If you miss a session you would cover that material at home.

Date for Celebration of First Reconciliation:

Each family will be assigned a date and time for your child to receive the sacrament of First Reconciliation. We usually schedule two First Reconciliation services on a Saturday in December and two First Reconciliation Services on a Saturday in January. The children will be grouped according to the first letter of their last name.

There is no dress code for the First Reconciliation Service.

If it is snowing that morning you may call the Religious Education office to see if it is cancelled. There will be a message on the answering machine. If the message does not say anything about it being cancelled then it is still on. We will also try to send you an email that morning if it is

cancelled due to weather. If First Reconciliation is postponed due to snow, we will reschedule it and notify you by email.

Sacrament Fee:

There is a Sacrament Fee of \$100.00. This covers both First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. This fee should be paid when you register your child for Second Grade.

Information about the Sacrament of First Eucharist:

Celebration of First Eucharist:

- The children will celebrate the sacrament of First Eucharist on a Saturday in late April or early May. Each celebration will have a group of 30--35 children at a time. We usually have two celebrations on each Saturday, one at 10:00AM and one at 12:00PM. Each child will be assigned a date and time to receive the Sacrament of First Eucharist.
- You will receive your child's date at the First Reconciliation Meeting in October so that you have plenty of time to prepare for the day.
- If you need to change your date, you should call the Switching coordinator and he/she will do her best to switch you with a family that would like your date. Please be kind and patient with him/her, as they are doing you a favor. Their phone number or email address will be listed on your schedule. He/she will contact you when they have made the switch. If you have a friend that is willing to switch with you, you still need to call the coordinator as soon as possible to let her know of the switch.
- All switches must take place through the coordinator. We ask that you do not make switches at the last minute.

Suggested Dress Code for First Eucharist:

Girls: White dress, veil or flowers in hair, gloves can be worn while processing into the church and out of the church but not when they are going to receive their First Eucharist. If children are to be receiving a bouquet of flowers, we request that they do not receive them until after the Mass.

Boys: Any color suit, jacket and tie with dress pants. No sneakers.

Schedule of Events leading up to First Eucharist:

Parent Meeting:

In February there will be a **mandatory** parent meeting. At this meeting the preparation schedule for this Sacrament will be explained in detail. We offer two meeting times, one during the day and one in the evening. One parent from each family should attend one of these two meetings.

- You will receive schedule of events for First Eucharist
- You will receive your child's First Eucharist Book. It is broken up into 6 chapters. You have 2 options for preparing your child to receive the Sacrament:

- You may prepare at home by teaching the material in each chapter. We will show you how to do that at the parent meeting.
- You can attend the 3 optional immediate preparation sessions on Tuesday Evenings from 7:15PM – 8:15PM in February/March in the Parish Center and the Director of Religious Education will teach the material. One parent must attend each session with your child. She will cover 2 chapters each session. If you miss a session you would cover that material at home.

First Eucharist Retreat:

There will be a three hour **mandatory** retreat for your child and one parent on a Saturday in late February or in March.

First Eucharist Practice:

Practice will take place in the Church from 4:00PM to 5:30PM on the Tuesday or Wednesday of the week of your child's celebration of First Eucharist. **This practice is mandatory.**