

# Religious Education Handbook

## Our Lady of Mount Carmel

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# **The Home Groups Program**

**All NEW Home Groups must be approved by May 1 for the following year.**

## **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. Beginning September 2011 all existing classes will meet for 24 weeks during the school year with each session being 1 ½ hours. All new Home Groups in the 2010/2011 school year will meet these guidelines in the 2010/2011 school year. All service projects hours and field trip 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 will be opportunities during the year to do a lesson outside of the classroom. There will be three opportunities to do a tour of the stained glass windows in our church; our priests are 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. Each workshop will be offered twice, once during the week and once on a Saturday.

### **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 than 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:**

- **If you are teaching or volunteering you must take the workshop and fill out the paper work by September 1 of that school year.**
- **All volunteers must have participated in a Protecting God's Children Workshop offered by the Archdiocese, and must have completed all Safe Environment paper work 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](http://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 the Safe Environment paperwork at that time.

## **Junior High Grades 7 & 8:**

### **The Requirements for all JR High Students:**

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

### **The Curriculum:**

- We will be using the Harcourt 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 in 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 their 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. At second warning, the parent will be called to pick up their child. The Retreat Director or Religious Education Director will speak to the parent after the retreat to let the parent know how the retreat will be made up.
- **Retreat Attendance Policy:** If your child misses the retreat you must contact the Director of Religious Education. The Director will tell you how the retreat will be made up. If this retreat is not made up, the child may not get full credit for that year's curriculum.

### **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 you must 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 for the entire school year, 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 in some other way that supports the catechist. You must take Protecting God's Children and fill out all Safe Environment Paperwork.

**Registration Fee:**

There is much 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 15 and it will go up again after June 1. We strongly encourage you register your child/children early. Registration begins in late February or in the beginning of March each year. Look in the bulletin for the information.

# Home Schooling Requirements:

## Explanation of Program:

A parent teaches his/her own children at home using the curriculum for the child's appropriate grade level. The parent will teach one chapter from the textbook per week, completing all the chapters by the end of the school year. The parent will give the child's book to the Director of Religious Education periodically during the school year so that the book is checked for completed work. In addition to teaching your child at home, the child in Grades 1-6 and one parent must attend three required retreats. The children in Junior High, Grades 7 & 8, are required to attend, with a parent, all retreats and large group events. Any child in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade must take the ACRE Assessment. All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are also required to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Summit. All children being home schooled must complete one service project during the school year.

## Curriculum:

- Parents will be given the necessary curriculum resources to effectively provide catechesis in the home-school setting. The same curriculum resources are used in both the home-school setting and the parish in order to insure continuity and completeness in catechesis.
- All guidelines set by the Archdiocese of Newark must be followed.
- Parents should seek the advice and assistance of the parish staff in providing a thorough and complete catechesis for their children.

## 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.

## Certification:

- Parents who choose to home-school their children and thus elect to serve as their children's catechists must be properly prepared for this role. **Parents must take catechist certification when sessions are offered.** 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. Each workshop will be offered twice, once during the week and once on a Saturday.

## Large Group Sessions:

- One parent and child must attend the three (3) large group meetings throughout the year.

- Grades 1 -6 will attend one Advent Retreat, one Lent Retreat and one other large group assembly.
- Grades 7-8 will attend the retreat(s) and one other large group assembly.

### **Grade 5 students:**

- 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 and will be administered at the parish.

### **Grade 8 students:**

- All Grade 8 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 and will be administered at the parish.
- Participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Summit.

### **Homework:**

- Homework will need to be checked by the Religious Education office after each unit for grades 1-6 and after each book for grades 7-8.

**If all requirements are not by May 15, 2011, your child will not receive credit for the school year.**

# **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. Classes are 90 minutes and take place in our school building beginning in late September and ending in early May. There are three time options available.

## **The Curriculum:**

- We use a 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 Education answering machine. If the public schools are closed due to bad 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:**

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.

**All volunteers must take the Protecting God’s Children Workshop and fill out all Safe Environment paperwork.**

**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. Each workshop will be offered twice, once during the week and once on a Saturday.

**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 Education 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 for some time 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 Paper Work:**

- **If you are teaching or volunteering you must take the workshop and fill out the paper work by Nov. 1 2010.**
- **All volunteers must have participated in a Protecting God's Children Workshop offered by the Archdiocese, and must have completed all Safe Environment paper work and have it on file in the Religious Education Office.**

### **Protecting God's Children workshop here at Mount Carmel:**

- Please register for one of these sessions at [www.virtusonline.org](http://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 much 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 15 and it will go up again after June 1. We strongly encourage you register your child/children early. Registration begins in late February or early March each year.

# **Jr. High Policies and Procedures**

## **APRIL 15 is the Deadline for Registration for Summer Program and When Families Gather.**

### **The Requirements for all JR 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
- Participate in one Service Project
- Attend the large group event sponsored by the Religious Education Office
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade only: Take the ACRE Assessment
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade only Participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Summit

### **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. We need small group facilitators both on the retreat(s) and for the 6 week mini courses. We need help on the retreat(s) serving the dinner and with set up and clean up.

### **Conduct Policy for all Four JR High Programs and all other JR 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 the Director of Religious Education will call the parent and then the child and the parent will meet with the Director to solve the problem.

### **The Retreat(s):**

- The retreat(s) are mandatory for all students in every JR High Model, the School Model, Summer Program, When Families Gather, Home Groups, and Home Schooled.
- 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 Ed. 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 Harcourt 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 chaperone, take attendance and help with activities. 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 the Director of Religious Education or the Lead Catechist 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 five 8<sup>th</sup> 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 six week session. In these two mini courses they will cover two 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.** If your child misses the retreat you must contact the Director of Religious Education. The Director will tell you how the retreat will be made up. If this retreat is not made up, the child may not get full credit for that year's curriculum.
- **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. You must take the Protecting God's Children workshop and fill out the Safe Environment paperwork.

### **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 Group A each month, which is always held on a Monday, and is always the first Monday evening scheduled for each month.**

- All WFG 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders must complete 2 chapters in their textbook at home each month with a parent
- complete homework papers
- attend Group A each month on a Monday Night
- attend the required retreat(s)
- attend the large group assembly
- attend a penance service

**For 8<sup>th</sup> graders only: attend the ACRE Assessment and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Summit**

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in WFG may not attend the Sunday sessions because they are taught separately and their program is only held during the Group A Monday Evening Session.

### **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 Harcourt *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 8<sup>th</sup> graders only, they must attend the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Summit and take the ACRE Assessment.

**Curriculum:**

We will use the Harcourt 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 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 the Director of Religious Education to solve the problem.

# **The Summer Program Requirements:**

**APRIL 15 is the Deadline to register for the Summer Program. One parent from each family must volunteer two full days per child in the nine day Summer Program in whatever position is needed. That parent must complete Safe Environment paperwork and hand it in with the registration form at the Religious Education Office.**

## **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 go to Bible Study, do an activity or craft to help process the lesson for that day and go to a music session which also helps to reinforce the lesson taught.
- The grade 3 – 6 program, meets 9 days in the Summer for 3 hour and 10 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 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 5<sup>th</sup> graders, they must take the ACRE Assessment.
- For the 8<sup>th</sup> graders only, they must attend the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Summit and take the ACRE Assessment.

## **Safe Environment Requirements for All Parents:**

The parent(s) from each family that will be volunteering during the Summer Program must complete the Protecting God's Children Workshop (It is a three hour workshop that you only take once) before the program begins.

**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 10 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 in order to get full credit for the year's curriculum. If a child misses any of the sessions 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.

## **Mandatory Parent Meeting in Late Spring:**

There will always be a mandatory parent meeting in the late spring for that Summer Program. At that meeting the particulars for that year's session will be explained to the parents.

## **The Curriculum:**

### **Grades 3-6:**

For Grades 3 through 6, we will use a spiral Curriculum and cover 9 chapters in the book during the summer component of the program, one each day. The text will be taught by themes and the curriculum will be broken up into a 3 year cycle. There are approximately 27 chapters in the text and each year we will cover 9 chapters that have to do with a common theme and in three years the entire curriculum will be taught.

### **Grades 7 and 8:**

#### **See Jr High Program Guidelines for more detailed explanation.**

For grades 7 and 8 we will use the Harcourt curriculum and cover two books during the summer program. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be taught together and they will be split up into small groups for discussions and activities based on the teaching each day. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 10 minutes per day) per child in the role that is assigned to them during the 9 day summer Program. That parent must have taken Protecting God's Children and completed all the required Safe Environment paperwork.

### **The volunteer positions are:**

#### **Catechists, Jr. High Facilitators, Bible Study Leaders, Child Care, Art program, classroom aid, hall monitors, traffic duty and 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 5:10PM on the days they are volunteering.

**We need volunteers to step up for the position of Catechists, Jr. High Facilitators, Bible Study Leaders, and 2 Art Program Coordinators. Mandatory volunteer positions are Child Care, Art Program helpers, classroom aid, hall monitors, traffic duty and office help.**

You will be assigned where we need the help so please note that you may not be working with your own child. On the registration form you will be asked what days you are unable to work.

### **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 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.

### **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 Director of Religious Education to solve 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 to 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.

### **Extra Fees for Summer Program:**

There will be a \$20.00 project fee per child for all of the creative projects planned. This is due when you hand in your registration form.

### **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. It will be scheduled for sometime during late February or early March.

**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

# **When Families Gather Requirements:**

## **APRIL 15 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 three major components to this program.

- the two 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 two hour session

### **For Grades 7 & 8**

**If you have a child in Grades 7 & 8 you MUST attend Group A each month, which is always held on a Monday, and is always the first Monday evening scheduled for each month.**

- All WFG 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders must complete 2 chapters in their textbook at home each month with a parent
- complete homework papers
- attend Group A each month on a Monday Night
- attend the required retreat(s)
- attend the large group assembly

**For 8<sup>th</sup> graders only: attend the ACRE Assessment and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Summit**

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in WFG may not attend the Sunday sessions because they are taught separately and their program is only held during the Group A Monday Evening Session.

### **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 registered by **April 15** and all requirements were met for the year you are currently enrolled.

## **The Curriculum: For Grades 1 -6**

Each school year we will emphasize a particular theme and over 3 years we will cover the entire curriculum. The parent will teach by themes. This will allow you to teach all of your children in grades 1-6, at the same time. They might be in a different chapter in their book from their brother or sister. However, they will be learning the same theme. The schedule of themes and chapters to be completed at home in the textbook will be included in your parent packet that you will receive at the beginning of the year parent meeting in September. 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 at each monthly session.
- All homework must be turned in 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 the Harcourt *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

## **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 lets out, 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 grade only, then the sessions will be assigned according to the first letter of the child's/children's last name. On the registration form you will mark whether you want to be in the Sunday session or Monday session. Please note that

if you have a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader in the program you will automatically be in Group A and meet on Monday night.

**For Families with a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grader:**

If you have a seventh or eighth grader in this program then your family will attend the session that has a separate program for Jr. High students which is Group A, which is the First Monday Night scheduled.

**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

**Jr. High Monday Night Sessions GROUP A:**

6:30PM Pizza  
7:00PM Jr High Program

**Monday Night session-- pizza and drinks:**

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

**Sunday Morning session—bagels and drinks:**

You may be asked to donate part of the breakfast one time during the year.

**Set Up and Clean Up:**

Each family may be assigned several sessions for set up and 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 the Director of Religious Education. If a family misses more than one session they may not be permitted to be in the program for the following year.

**Families will not be permitted to switch their sessions unless there is an emergency.** This will allow us to have approximately 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 have a separate session in another room for the March sessions.

**ACRE Assessment for grades 5 and 8:**

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

The ACRE assessment will be administered at several times in late February/ 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.

# Requirements for the 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 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. We divide the children into four groups according to the first letter of the child's last name. 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 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 them yourself 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.

### Dress Code:

There is no dress code for the First Reconciliation Service.

## **Inclement Weather:**

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.**

## **First Eucharist Requirements:**

### **Explanation of how we prepare the children for this Sacrament:**

- 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.
- 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 you are going to give your child a bouquet of flowers, we request that the flowers are not given to 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.
  1. You have 2 options for preparing your child to receive the sacrament:
  2. 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 their 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 5:00PM on the Tuesday or Wednesday of the week of your child's celebration of First Eucharist. **This practice is mandatory.**