

OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH



Handbook
for
Religious Education
Program

2011-2012

OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
HANDBOOK

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If you have any questions or comments concerning the Religious Education Program or your child/ren's class, please call the Religious Education Office at 347-2071.

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VISION STATEMENT OUR LADY OF VICTORY PARISH

We, the people of Our Lady of Victory Parish, are a Christian community of the Roman Catholic Tradition.

We commit ourselves to seek, renew and rediscover our identity within the energy of past generations who have followed Jesus Christ through:

- a spirit of genuine worship,
- a commitment to quality education,
- and a dedication to works that recognize the God-given dignity of every man, woman, and child.

- ◆ Through a Spirit of Genuine Worship:

As the body of Christ, our hope "to embrace now what we know by faith but cannot yet see" is fulfilled in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of the Church's sacramental life.

- ◆ Through a Commitment to Quality Education:

As disciples of Christ whose hope is rooted in the words of scripture "He began to teach them," we avail ourselves of every opportunity to foster growth in adult faith formation and to pass on to our children and youth our values, moral teachings and creed.

- ◆ Through a dedication to works:

As followers of Christ, called to be known "by our love for one another," we bring hope to persons who may otherwise despair for lack of food, shelter, clothing, human support, companionship and dignity

PHILOSOPHY AND GOAL

The primary goal of the Religious Education Programs of Our Lady of Victory Parish is to continue the mission of Jesus by proclaiming the Word of God, celebrating the sacred mysteries and serving the people of the world.

A love of God, an awareness of God's presence in our lives and a commitment to Christian service are those values, which are strongly encouraged. Because this growth and maturity of faith is a life-long process, these efforts only supplement the faith development, which is happening within the individual and the family. Through mutual cooperation, family and parish can help all people assume their full baptismal roles in our parish community and in the church at large.

ADMISSION POLICY

Our Lady of Victory Parish will offer Religious Education Programs for all parishioners without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, and ancestry or physical/mental limitations. Our Lady of Victory Parish will maintain a commitment to serve those parishioners with special needs or circumstances that may preclude their participation in regularly scheduled programs, on an "as needed" basis. Those individuals interested should contact the DRE.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

All Catechists have attended an orientation on the Archdiocesan Child Protection Policy. This orientation reviews the Archdiocesan definition of Child Abuse and where to report if Child Abuse is suspected.

PREGNANCY POLICY

A student who is, or becomes, pregnant, and any student who is known to be the father of that student's child-to-be, may not attend Religious Education classes at Our Lady of Victory during the term of the pregnancy.

CELL PHONES/ELECTRONICS POLICY

Cell phones and all electronic gear need to be turned off before the opening prayer – and must be put away until dismissal. If a student cannot conform to this policy – the catechist will ask for the cell phone/electronic gear – and return to the student at the end of class.

POLICY FOR HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Parents who wish to home-school their child or children in religion are asked to follow the approved Guidelines established by the Our Lady of Victory Religious Education Program

GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. Parents are to meet with the Director of Religious Education (DRE) when they have decided to home-school their child or children in religion so that a plan for the child can be established and catechetical materials can be agreed upon.

2. The parents are to use textbooks and materials approved by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. These materials are available for purchase through the OLV Religious Education Office. Parents are encouraged to use materials from the Parish Library and Media Rooms as supplemental material.

3. Parents and their children are encouraged to participate in parish liturgies, prayer services, penance services and other events prepared specifically for children and their families.

4. Parents are to meet with the DRE periodically throughout the year to review the progress of their catechetical efforts and to see if any further assistance is needed.

5. Parents are encouraged to attend catechetical courses prepared for adults so that they can continue to update themselves and reflect on their own spirituality. They are encouraged (but not required) to participate in the Archdiocesan certification process as outlined in *The Ministry of the Catechist*.

6. When parents believe their child is ready to celebrate a sacrament for the first time, the pastor or DRE is to decide whether he or she is properly prepared. This will be determined by using *Growing Together: Ministry to Children* and *Growing Together: Adolescent Religious Education, a Manual for Parish and School Programs*. (These are the graded courses of study for catechetical programs in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. They have been approved by the Archdiocesan Commission on Education and promulgated by Archbishop Pilarczyk as the official content to be followed for all early childhood, elementary and high school catechesis in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.)

The Handbook of the Religious Education Program contains the procedures, i.e. behavioral expectations, absenteeism, emergencies, used in the Early Childhood and Monday Evening Programs and is updated each year.

CURRICULUM

Our Lady of Victory Program uses texts that are approved by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. The classes follow a scope and sequence that is in accord with the Archdiocesan Graded Course of Study.

Ages 3 - 5: *I AM SPECIAL*
Our Sunday Visitor, Inc.

Grades 1 - 8: *BLEST OUR WE! FAITH AND WORD*
RCL Benzinger

Grade 8: *WE CELEBRATE CONFIRMATION*
RCL Benzinger

A basic approach is followed in all classes to facilitate the process of associating the children's daily experiences with their Catholic tradition.

Every student in Grade 1 - 8 is expected to come to class each week prepared with:
folder,
paper or notebook,
pen or pencil,
and textbook.

Students in Grades 5 - 8 are **required** to bring a Bible to class each week. The New American Bible or the Good News Bible are recommended. Families may purchase these at local Christian bookstores or they may be ordered through the Religious Education Office.

REGISTRATION/ENROLLMENT

Religious Education Programs are open to all. Individual arrangements will be made, to the best of our ability, for any child or young adult with special needs.

Registration is held from March through May. The fee schedule is listed below.

- Participating Member \$70 per child
- Others \$100 per child

This fee helps cover the cost of textbooks, supplementary materials, supplies and the salaries of those employed in Religious Education. This fee is non-refundable but will be waived, if necessary.

DEFINITION OF A "PARTICIPATING MEMBER"

Participating members of Our Lady of Victory Parish are those who:

- ♦ share in the faith life of the parish through attendance at Our Lady of Victory Parish Community worship,
- ♦ are active ministers in liturgical roles, committee works, and activities or events of the parish,
- ♦ financially support the parish (through the envelope system).

Approved by the Parish Council - January 17, 1990

CLASS SIZE POLICY

The following ranges are established to determine class sizes for the Early Childhood and Monday Evening Programs.

3 year olds: 8-10 students

4 year olds: 10-12 students

5 year olds: 12-14 students

Grades 1-8: 15-18 students

Once classes are full for the 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds, a Waiting List will be developed. Based on the size of the Waiting List and the availability of catechists, the DRE/Coordinator will decide whether or not to open another classroom.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PERSONNEL

Director of Religious Education - The Director of Religious Education (DRE) is accountable to the Pastor and entrusted with the task of planning, implementing, and evaluating the total religious education program in the parish. This includes, but is not limited to: Early Childhood, Catholic school, Monday Evening Program, Sacramental Preparation, adult education, and students with special needs.

Early Childhood Coordinator - The Coordinator of the Early Childhood and First Grade Program is to assist the pastor, DRE, and pastoral staff in the work of religious education in the parish.

Catechists - A catechist is a person who has accepted the call of the local church to teach as Jesus did. Catechist means "one who echoes." Therefore, the catechist's ministry is to echo and re-echo the story and vision of Jesus to the community. The catechist brings the gift of self, experience, knowledge and skills. Each of the catechists in the Religious Education Program is involved in a process of certification through the Archdiocese. Each receives one credit unit for each 10-hour course completed. In this way the catechist deepens his/her level of understanding, knowledge and faith. Each catechist is also required to attend an Orientation on the Archdiocesan Decree on Child Protection.

Aides - Aides are persons who volunteer their time and energy in the classroom to help the catechist and students. They are also required to attend an Orientation on the Archdiocesan Decree on Child Protection.

Secretary - Secretary provides assistance to the DRE/Coordinator and Catechists before and during class time by unlocking and locking doors, ringing arrival and dismissal bells, making last-minute copies, running errands, scheduling media and much more.

Tutor - Tutors are persons who volunteer their time to work one-on-one with a student/students needing special attention. This is usually done within a regular classroom or a "pull-out" as needed basis. They are required to attend an orientation on the Archdiocesan Decree on Child Protection.

Volunteers - Below is a list of volunteer positions listed on the Family Information form that we ask parents to fill. Parental involvement is appreciated and needed.

Room Parent - This person will help the Catechist organize classroom celebrations and will help the Catechist contact parents regarding program activities and sudden class cancellations.

Media Pick-up - Responsible for picking up videos, etc. from the Downtown Office (100 E. 8th St.) and returning to the same location the next day or so. Also responsible for picking up books from the library. *These services are needed only when requested by the Catechist.*

Photographer - Will take random photos of classes, activities and special events throughout the year.

Liturgy Planner - Will help the Catechists plan Liturgies and prayer services throughout the year.

Substitute Catechist or Aide - Will substitute in classroom as needed when Catechist or Aide cannot attend.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION/CELEBRATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY ON PROPER PREPARATION FOR RECEPTION OF SACRAMENTS

As a matter of policy, Our Lady of Victory expects that each student be properly prepared for the reception of the Sacraments.

As part of this process, each student should be given proper instruction so to build the student's faith life with Christ. This process will include a reasonable amount of preparation for each of the following Sacraments: Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

*The above Policy approved by
OLV Education Commission 12/2/92
OLV Parish Council 2/10/93*

Because parents are the primary religious educators of their children, their role in the preparation of their child for sacraments is of utmost importance. Communication between teachers and/or DRE and parents is done through written communications and scheduled Parent Meetings. Dates of these meetings vary and notification is mailed to the parents about a month in advance.

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Grade 2 students will have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with their family in a communal Penance Service during Advent. Supplemental materials are used in addition to the regular textbook.

FIRST EUCHARIST

Grade 2 students have the opportunity to receive the Eucharist for the first time in the spring of the year on a date determined by the Parish Staff. Supplemental materials are used in addition to the regular textbook. Dress code is as follows:

Girls - Dress (any color)

Veil - (optional)

Boys - Dress shirt (any color)

Tie (any color)

Dress Trousers (any color)

CONFIRMATION

This sacrament is conferred on Grade 8 students during the spring on a date designated by the Archdiocese for all those who have completed the Confirmation Program requirements. These requirements include:

1. Each candidate participates in a Kick-off celebration, SUPER SUNDAY, scheduled in October.
2. Each candidate participates in classroom preparation in the fall and winter of Grade 8.
3. Each candidate participates in two Spirit Evenings scheduled in the Fall/Winter of Grade 8.
4. Each candidate is asked to demonstrate his/her Christian maturity by performing service projects during this time.
5. Each candidate is required to attend a one-day retreat.

ACADEMIC PROCEDURES

HOMEWORK

Each catechist may assign work to be completed at home. Parents are encouraged to discuss with their children the material being covered in their child's class and to provide any necessary help in completing assignments. Parents are encouraged to remain updated on topics and information covered in their child's class. This can be done in several ways.

Ages 3 - 5: Each week a Parent Letter will be sent home containing information about the class topic and activities. It also contains suggested home activities.

Grades 1 - 6: Individual catechists send communications to parents through their children concerning lessons to be covered in class.

Grade 7 - 8: Individual catechists will communicate with parents regarding information covered in class.

COMMUNICATIONS

This handbook explains the main policies and guidelines of the Religious Education Program. Families will receive letters throughout the year concerning such matters as sacramental preparations and celebrations, Parent Meetings, special events and changes in the schedule.

Catechists may, at times, depend on their students to relay messages to parents. Parents should check weekly with their child/ren for information. Parents will receive a monthly newsletter containing activities and information important for parents.

Parental support, participation and communication with their child regarding their religious education is critical as the parent is still the primary role model and educator for their child. A parent can best guide their child to participation in the Christian community through their own active participation.

Any questions or concerns about the Religious Education Program can be directed to the DRE, Coordinator or individual catechists. They will be available after class or at any agreed upon time.

EVALUATION/TESTING

The Religious Education Program offers periodic assessments of student growth for Grades 1-8. Any tests given help catechists discern how the student may be growing cognitively (in knowledge), behaviorally (in action), and affectively (in attitude) in the subject matter presented. The test may show where more cognitive study is needed.

Progress Reports are sent home twice a year, in January and at the end of the year, for students in Grades 1 - 8. These serve as an indication of student progress and show parents where improvement is needed. This report is NOT an expression of whether or not the student is a good Christian or Catholic. This is an area that can be best assessed by parental discussion, observation and involvement.

The DRE and Coordinator do evaluations of the catechist formally and informally throughout the school year.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM
Sunday mornings - 9:15-10:30

MONDAY EVENING PROGRAM
Monday evenings - 6:45-8

Students should report directly to their assigned classrooms upon arrival. Parents are asked to wait in designated areas for the children to be dismissed when the bell rings at the end of class. **Parents of Early Childhood students must report to the classroom to pick up their child after the 10:30 bell rings.**

The DRE/Coordinator needs to be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent or anybody other than the parent authorized to pick up a child.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENTEEISM

Parents are encouraged to see that their children are on time for class and that they attend on a weekly basis. The parent should call the Religious Education Office at 347-2071 to report a student's absence. A recorder may take your message if no one is available. Please state the reason for the absence and how homework should be sent home. All work is expected to be made up.

- For Monday Evening classes, please call before 6:30 PM.
- For Sunday Morning classes, please call before 9:00 AM.

If a student misses three classes in a row, a meeting between the student, parents, teacher and DRE will be held to determine if the child is to remain in the program.

Students are tardy if they arrive after the bell has rung. Tardiness will be recorded on the Progress Reports.

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drill procedures will be discussed and a Fire Drill will be conducted at the beginning of the year to insure student safety.

TORNADO PROCEDURES

Teachers know their designated shelter area. Notification of an alert or warning will be made by siren or intercom. Teachers and students remain in their shelter area until the “all clear” has been given.

SNOW DAYS

Early Childhood Program - A decision on cancellation of classes will be made on Saturday, if possible, and their child’s catechist or room parent will notify parents.

Monday Evening Program - There will be no Religious Education classes on days when Oak Hills has closed because of bad weather. When a change of weather warrants cancellation after a regular school day is in progress, the child’s catechist or room parent will contact parents. Make-up days are at the discretion of the DRE and/or Coordinator.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of a medical emergency, parents will be contacted. The Emergency phone number will be used if parents cannot be reached.

INCIDENT REPORT

If a student has an accident or injury, the catechist will aid the student and secure whatever help is needed. Then the catechist will prepare an Incident Report Form with all pertinent information. The parent, the Catechist and the DRE or Coordinator, will sign it. A copy will be given to the parent and one will be kept in the student's file.

CHILDREN'S WEEKLY ENVELOPES

In January, each student in Grade 2-8 will receive a box of Sunday Collection Envelopes. We ask all parents to promote the use of these envelopes. These are a simple and yet a very effective tool in helping to convey to the children the message of sharing - an important aspect of our Christian faith. By encouraging their use, parents will help build understanding and patterns of behavior on which the future of our church depends. Students in Grade 1 will receive their box at the end of the school year.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please notify the Parish Office immediately of any change of address, phone number or email.

FIELD TRIPS

A field trip may be scheduled at some time during the school year. Attendance on a field trip is not mandatory. Participation can be refused to any student whose conduct is less than satisfactory as determined by the Catechist and DRE or Coordinator. Parents must sign and return an Archdiocesan Permission Slip before the field trip.

Drivers of cars transporting students must provide a valid driver's license.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

The catechist, Coordinator and DRE are responsible for maintaining proper order during Religious Education classes. They have the authority to discipline students whose behavior is inappropriate. No corporal punishment is permitted. Students choosing not to observe these standards and behavioral expectations may be subject to expulsion from the classroom. Parents will be consulted by the DRE and/or catechist in the case of serious misconduct, constant talking, disregard of rules, or negative attitude that is detrimental to the class at large.

Students are expected to observe the following minimum standards of conduct.

- Students are expected to show respect and consideration for the catechist and other students.
- Silence should be observed in the hallways while classes are in session and in the classroom during appropriate times.
- No food, drink or chewing gum is permitted in the classrooms or hallways unless approved by the DRE, Coordinator or catechist.
- Students will respect the parish property, the materials in the classroom and materials they have been given to use.
- Students are not permitted to leave the classroom unless the catechist gives permission
- In order to insure the safety of all students, roller blades, skateboards and bicycles will not be allowed on the premises before and after classes.