

Good Shepherd

Religious Education Program



Family Handbook

The family is important, and it is necessary for the survival of humanity. Without the family, the cultural survival of the human race would be at risk. The family whether we like it or not, is the foundation."

-Pope Francis

2016-2017

Revised 7/16

Statement of Mission

We are called by Jesus as a community of faith to love God and love one another by our acts of worship, fellowship and stewardship.

A Statement of Purpose

*Congratulations! You have selected a Roman Catholic Religious Education Program for your child in the parish of the Good Shepherd in the Diocese of Metuchen. This program will help your child grow in faith. It teaches the traditions and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, supported by Church documents, including the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, and utilizes diocesan programs to prepare and train our teachers called catechists.*

Sunday (or Vigil) Mass attendance is the most important part of our curriculum. It is your obligation, as Catholic parents, to model your faith and bring your children to weekly Sunday (or Vigil) Mass. Worshipping together as a family is what makes us Catholic. We expect families to take this responsibility very seriously.

Please sign the agreement contained in the handbook, stating that you have read the contents and agree to our policies. Please return the agreement by your child's next class. It will be kept on file in the Parish Office. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

Yours in Christ,

Father Michael G. Krull



to Religious Education

Children in our regular Rel. Ed. program, Levels 1 through 8, meet twice a month on Saturday mornings. There are sixteen sessions, meeting from September to April. Some dates are subject to change due to inclement weather.

Children in Levels 2 and 8, as well as registered 8th grade Catholic School students, will attend special sessions held on additional Saturday mornings which are necessary for Sacramental preparation.

Our regular scheduled sessions will meet downstairs in the Perth Amboy Catholic Primary School gym at 8:45 am. We invite each level (1-8) along with any parents to join our Director or guest clergy member for morning prayers followed by any important announcements. Parents are always welcomed to participate.

Each level will be excused with their catechist and aide to start class promptly.

Children will also be dismissed in Perth Amboy Catholic School Gym. The doors will not open till 11:00 am. Each child will have to be signed out by their parent or guardian.

Good Shepherd Parish
Office of Religious Education
625 Florida Grove Rd., Hopelawn, NJ 08861
Parish Office hours: Monday-Friday 9:00am – 4:00pm
ph: 732-826-4859

If you need to contact us during our Saturday Session
please call: 732-826-5747

Fr. Michael G. Krull
Pastor

Maria C. Arcelay
Director of Religious Ed.

Goodshepherd20@verizon.net

Alexandria Ferri & Lizette Barboza
Greeter/Parent/Aide

Religious Education Catechists

1L Level- Rose Lund	Aide-Joel Arcelay
1D Level-Marian De Jesus	Aide-Serina Kline
1A Level- Victoria Pagan	Aide-
2F Level-Michael Farley	Aide-Nancy Brown
2G Level-Maria Gianfrancesco	Aide-Brandon Cisneros
2A Level-Koren Zur	Aide Megan McGlynn
3rd Level-Tara Wojtech	Aide- Trisha Ponick
4th Level-Nicole Honkisz	Aide- Abigail Gulyas
5th Level-	Aide-
6th Level-	Aide-Brittney Ferri
7th Level-Martin Joyce	Aide-
8th Level-Mildred Morales	Aide-Ashley Prakash
Volunteers	

Sacramental Catechists

Michael Farley & Mildred Morales

Registration

Families are encouraged to register promptly to insure accurate number of books and sufficient Catechists.

A copy of the Baptism Certificate must be submitted for each new student. Families must be registered at Good Shepherd and actively attending Mass.

Registration Fees for 2016-17

	Discount before July 1, 2016 re-reg. only	New reg. & re-reg. after July 1
One child	\$70	\$85
Two children	\$95	\$110
Three or more children	\$125	\$145

The deadline to register your child is August 19, 2016. A \$25 late fee per child is incurred if registration forms are not received by the deadline.

Additional Sacramental Fees

- Level 2 - \$35.00*
- Level 8 - \$75.00*

***Fees include all necessary material for the program.**

A payment plan is available. Please call the office at 732-826-4859 for information or questions, or email: Goodshepherd20@verizon.net

Accountability

Children learn faith through experience, especially by watching and imitating those whom they love. Our program offers families the opportunity to model their commitment to their own faith development, while sharing in the formation of their children.

Because faith is better “caught” than “taught”, faith education at Good Shepherd Parish has come out of the classroom and into the very heart of the parish. Weekly Mass participation allows families to learn in an environment that fosters the faith and development of all its members.

Attendance

With two monthly sessions offered, it is imperative that your children not miss any classes. Although the Diocese of Metuchen mandates children not miss more than two sessions, we recommend, in the event of emergency or illness, that you advise us as soon as possible. This will allow your child’s teacher to prepare homework assignments accordingly.

Each of our sixteen monthly sessions offered throughout the year will build upon different aspects of our faith and will complement each other. Frequent absences will make it impossible to follow the continuity of the lessons. Perhaps more importantly, children who come only occasionally will not develop in their faith formation.

Please do not schedule doctor/dentist appointments or sport activities during our program.

Policies

Behavior

Jesus has asked us to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. As we strive to follow Jesus, we should be aware of showing respect and courtesy to each other. Parents, your encouragement and cooperation are expected in helping your children to live God's law of love especially while on church premises. Children who are unable to behave in an appropriate manner during our Parish gatherings or Sacramental Catechesis may require their parents to remain with them at all times.

Participation in our Religious Education Program at the Good Shepherd Parish is a privilege extended to our families through the prayerful dedication of staff and volunteers. If a family is unwilling to cooperate in a reasonable way with the "Code of Behavior", they may be asked to leave and other arrangements for Religious Education will be suggested.

Code of Behavior

- All members will show respect for all persons in words and actions.
- All members will conform to the attendance policy stated in this handbook.
- Members will treat the Good Shepherd Parish as their spiritual "home" and responsibly care for all church property.
- Families will support and encourage an environment of cooperation.
- Children will cooperate with the adult catechist so that a good learning environment can be maintained for all.
- Children are responsible for completing all in-class and at home assignments to the best of their ability.



Policies (con't)

Cell phones:

Students are not permitted to use cell phones during class. Cell phones must be turned off and kept out of sight for the duration of the class.

Parent use:

Please refrain from the use of cell phones during our program. Your children will follow your example as to the respect you show while you are here. Plainly speaking, it is rude to text or check emails during activities. Please silence your phone. If you must take a call please excuse yourself and step outside to do so.

Change of address/contact information:

Please notify the Parish Office if you have any changes that would hinder us getting in contact with you. If you choose to discontinue your child's instruction please notify the Parish Office.

Child Abuse Policy:

New Jersey State Statute requires that the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) be notified immediately if a catechist or other staff member suspects that a child has been abused.

Harassment and Bullying:

Any behavior of this kind will not be tolerated. It is our duty to create a self-worth environment for all children of God entrusted to our care.

Custody:

In cases where access to students by a particular parent is restricted, a copy of the court document **MUST BE ON FILE IN OUR OFFICE.**

Policies (con't)

Emergency Closing

It is extremely important that you keep your phone or email information current with our office. In the event we will need to cancel classes you will be contacted. In some cases, we may cancel classes as early as Friday prior to class. If you are unsure you may contact the Parish Office.

Crisis Management Plan

It is required by the Diocese of Metuchen that two drills are to be implemented during the school year. Our emphasis will be on evacuation and lockdown procedures.

Food Allergies

Because there are several students with severe and potential life threatening allergies to peanuts and tree nuts, the Good Shepherd Parish will make every attempt possible to maintain a “peanut free” facility. Because of the possibility of allergies or food restrictions, edible treats of any kind are not allowed.



Sacramental Catechesis

Sacramental instruction, called Catechesis, is an important part of our Religious Education program. However, the Diocese considers it to be an additional part because it requires additional preparation and time.

Reconciliation and First Communion

These two sacraments are celebrated in Level 2 during the spring at Most Holy Rosary Church. They follow the completion of a two year program, whereby the children develop in their relationship with God and their preparation to receive the Holy Eucharist.

Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated during the fall at Most Holy Rosary Church. The Sacrament is celebrated after completion of a two year process, Level 7 and 8, whereby the children experience how Catholics are called to live out the promises which were made for them in Baptism.

Community Service

Children who are preparing to receive Confirmation are responsible to seek out opportunities to share their gifts and talents in the greater community. During Level 7 and 8, students will reflect upon their service to others by completing a two-part service reflection.

The student reflection will be evaluated each year for a demonstrated increased understanding of the principles of Catholic Social teachings and our Christian call to discipleship.

Resources will be provided, but each family is encouraged to seek outreach opportunities that utilize their individual strengths.

Frequently Asked Questions

What does a Sponsor need?

A sponsor is someone who is actively involved in the spiritual formation of the Confirmation Candidate. A sponsor should be at least 16 years old, and must have received his sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation. He or she needs to be a practicing Catholic and must have a sponsor certificate from his registered parish.

What if my Child didn't receive his Sacraments?

Families of children in grades three and up who have been baptized but have not yet received any formal religious education, as well as those who have not been baptized should contact the Parish Office for information on how to proceed.

Are you interested in Youth Ministry?

Students in Levels 7 and 8 are invited to join the Youth Ministry. This is a group of middle and high school students who meet on Sundays, once a month, to socialize, pray, and work in service to the community.

Who can sign Mass Attendance forms?

Our Mass Attendance forms are created for our students to familiarize themselves with our Priests and Deacons. There will be times when they are very busy greeting parishioners, so it is perfectly acceptable to have a Catechist or the Director sign your child's form or the bulletin.

How can I Volunteer?

All of our Religious Education team members and catechists are volunteers. We are most grateful for their dedication and the amount of time and preparation they offer to this ministry. We happily invite you to help as well, as catechists, classroom aides, and greeters.

The Diocese of Metuchen requires fingerprinting and background checks, the cost of which is reimbursed by our parish, for all those who are over 18 who regularly come in contact with children. Volunteers are also required to attend a no charge session of Virtus "Protecting God's Children". Please call the Parish Office at 732-826-4859 if you are interested in this important ministry.

Curriculum

Worship

Family worship at Mass is the most important part of our curriculum. As the primary and principal educators of your children, it is important that you are devoted to your faith. Please worship with your children at weekend Liturgy. Let them see young and old alike at Mass in community prayer and celebration. Remember that they cannot bring themselves, so you, who are their greatest influence, must show them the way.

Our Curriculum

In each level, parents are asked to help your child to learn the following:

Level 1: Sign of the Cross/Our Father/ Hail Mary/Glory Be; Introduction to the Bible

Level 2: All of the above plus: Act of Contrition; Introduction to the Sacraments, especially preparation for Reconciliation and First Communion

Level 3: All of the above plus: The Apostles' Creed and The Rosary, and a deeper understanding of the Parables

Level 4: All of the above plus: an understanding of the Ten Commandments and the Mass

Level 5: All of the above plus: an understanding of the Paschal Mystery and an introduction to the Beatitudes

Level 6: All of the above plus: the Mysteries of the Rosary, and living the Ten Commandments

Level 7: All of the above plus: Studying the Life of Jesus, understanding the Trinity, and discovering Jesus in the Scriptures

Level 8: Learning more of the Gospels, the New and Old Testament, and preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation

Family Life Education

As mandated by our Diocese, our program will now include Family Life Education in levels 5 through 8. We have an additional text, published by RCL-Benzinger. There will be no exemptions from the Family Life Program. This program specifically addresses four needs of today's developing young Catholics:

- Young people need skills and knowledge of family living now, and for the future when they, too, may become mature Catholic parents.
- Young people need to understand their own physical, emotional and spiritual development.
- Young people need to develop a Catholic Christian understanding of, and reverence for, sexuality.
- Young people need to interact with others outside the family, in a respectful manner and thereby take their responsible place in society.



Level 2 - Reconciliation & First Communion

10/22/2016 - Parent Reconciliation Meeting
10/22/16, 1/14 & 2/28/17 Reconciliation Specials
2/25/17 - Reconciliation
3/11/17 - First Communion Parent Meeting
3/11, 3/25 & 4/1 /17 - First Communion Specials
5/5/17 - First Communion Practice
5/6/17 - First Communion

Level 8 - Confirmation

10/29/16 - Parent Confirmation Meeting (Children will be present)

1/28, 2/25, 3/11, 3/25, 5/13 & 6/17 of 2017 Confirmation Special Sessions

3/28/17 - Teen Outreach (Wednesday)

The dates below have not been determined. You will be notified by mail during the summer of 2017.

Fall 2017- Confirmation Retreat (MHR)
Fall 2017 - Reconciliation prior to Confirmation
Fall 2017 - Confirmation Interviews (Parish Office)
Fall 2017 - Confirmation Practice (MHR)
Fall 2017 - Confirmation date

All Sacramental Specials are mandatory.

Good Shepherd Religious Education Program

I have received a copy of the Good Shepherd Family Handbook. Furthermore, I have read this booklet with my child and understand the guidelines and rules outlined in the handbook and agree to abide by them on behalf of my child/children.

Parent Signature:

Student(s) Signature & Level:

Date: _____

Please print this page and return it with your child on their next scheduled session, September 24, 2016.