



# P R E P

arish religious education program

## Parent Handbook

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Dear St. Mary Magdalen families,

Welcome to a new year of faith formation. It is a privilege to join with you as catechists in the promise to bring the children up in the faith. We know you take this charge seriously, for it establishes the moral, ethical and religious ground on which our children rely as they grow into faith-filled adults. We, your catechetical staff, priests and deacons, also accept this charge with joy and gratitude to God, and we pledge to you that we will do our very best to support and collaborate with you as set about passing on our faith to our children.

You have an excellent and deeply committed team serving as catechists and aides this year. But we succeed this year without your collaboration. The General Directory for Catechesis In Plain English states, "Parents are the primary educators in the faith. Together with them...all members of the family also play a role in the formation of young members...The family passes on human values in the Christian tradition, and it awakens a sense of God in its young members. It teaches the first tentative steps of prayer, it forms the moral conscience, and it teaches human love as a reflection of Divine love."

Joining together in this holy work, guided by the fire of the Holy Spirit, we cannot fail. It will be a great year! On behalf of your catechetical team, we thank you.

In Christ's abundant love,

*Fr. Charlie*



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ." (*Catechesis in Our Time* 5)

As disciples of Christ we are all called to continuous conversion. We grow in a deeper knowledge, understanding, and relationship with our Lord throughout the various stages of our lives. The faith formation of children is only the beginning of this journey. Our goal is to work with the parents and guardians whom the Church recognizes as the primary and principle educators of their children.

God the Father has revealed Himself to His people slowly and in stages throughout time. Catechesis, handing on the faith, follows this Divine model by teaching and forming our children slowly and in stages. Continuous formation in the faith is directed not only to the children, but also to youth, adults and the Christian community as a whole. Our religious education program reaches out to all peoples as all grow, live and celebrate in the life of Christ.



# GENERAL POLICIES

## ☞Arrival & Supervision☞

We are happy that your children join us weekly for faith formation. As your children are welcomed in our community, their safety is our first concern. We ask you to please not leave children without parental or adult supervision. All students will gather together in the church prior to class. **You are asked to escort your children into the church and join us in our opening liturgy, as you are the most important models of prayer.**

## ☞Attendance☞

Our classroom time is relatively brief in comparison to the year. **Regular attendance is expected.** Children will only be allowed five (5) excused absences. If there is a special circumstance that will prevent your child from attending class, please call Larann Wilson at the Religious Education Office (407-834-2211).

## ☞Tardiness☞

Sessions begin in the church and children are to arrive time in order to participate. Late arrival is discouraged, as it is disruptive. If your child must be late for any reason, please escort your child to church or school breezeway (a hall monitor will escort him/her to the classroom). It is imperative that **your child not be left without catechist or parental supervision.**

## ☞Textbooks☞

The Religious Education textbook is an integral tool in the classroom and it is essential that it be brought to class each week. The textbook is accompanied with a plastic envelope for catechist/parent communication, homework and other important materials. Replacements for lost textbooks are available at a cost of \$15.00



We are able to provide bilingual (Spanish/English) textbooks for families with children in grades K-5. These books contain the same material as the English book. If your family would benefit from having a bilingual book, please speak with the Religious Education Office. For further resources for your family, refer to [www.webelieveweb.com](http://www.webelieveweb.com). This website offers supplemental resources and activities.

## ☞"Project Disciple"☞

The text for grades K - 5 includes a "Project Disciple" page with each lesson. You should review the day's lesson with your child and help them complete the "Project Disciple". The page is brief and usually can be completed in less than 15 minutes. The "Sharing Faith with My Family" should be signed and returned to class the following week.



## ☞ Parental Visitation of Classes ☞

Due to the limited time we have with the children and distractions to classroom activities, we are unable to accommodate parental visitation of the classroom. If there is a special need, please contact the Steward for Children and Family Ministries and she will explain Diocesan Guidelines and the process for fingerprinting.

## ☞ Children/Youth Visits ☞

Due to safety and liability concerns, no unregistered child will be admitted to a catechist's class unless they have prior written permission from the Steward for Children and Family Ministries. If your child would like to bring a guest to class, please **contact Larann at least 24 hours in advance.**

## ☞ Special Needs ☞

We encourage parents to maintain an open line of communication between themselves and their child's catechist. If you have any questions or special concerns, please speak with your child's catechist before it becomes a problem. We are dedicated to providing your child with the best Religious Education possible. To do this we need your input and suggestions.

## ☞ Testing ☞

Knowledge of faith sets a foundation for knowing the person of Jesus and living for Him. Reviews and tests for grades 2-5 will be given twice per year and sent home. Please refer to the grade's syllabus to reinforce the weekly lessons at home. Visit [www.webelieveweb.com](http://www.webelieveweb.com) for other activities.



## ☞ Restroom Use ☞

Due to the limited time we have with the children and disruption to classroom activities, restroom breaks are discouraged during classtime. If possible, please have your child use the restroom prior to coming to class. **Please be assured that no child will be denied the use of the restroom in an urgent situation.**

## ☞ Snacks & Celebrations ☞

Class snacks and celebrations will be arranged at the discretion of individual catechists at specified times of the year. If your child's catechist chooses to have snacks, your participation is encouraged. Strict guidelines will be forwarded as a precaution to food allergies. Food will be consumed in the school picnic area or cafeteria.



## ☞ Severe Weather Warning or Watch ☞

In the event of a hurricane warning or watch, we will continue to follow the school cancellation guidelines of the Seminole County Public Schools.

## ☞ Dismissal ☞

Catechists are committed to ending class punctually and we ask that parents please pick up their children at the scheduled time. Children are dismissed to parents in their classrooms. **If any of our young people have not been picked up within 15 minutes of dismissal they will be brought to the Parish Office.**

## ☞ Early Dismissal ☞

Early dismissal from class on a regular basis is not permitted, as it disrupts class learning. However, if an extraordinary circumstance requires your child to leave early, a note must be sent to the Steward for Children and Family Ministries. In addition, an Early Dismissal Form needs to be completed in church prior to class. (For your convenience you may also contact the Religious Education Office at 407-831-1212 before 3:00PM on Wednesday.) A Hall Monitor will bring your child to you.

**NO CHILD WILL BE DISMISSED TO MEET PARENTS IN THE PARKING LOT.**



## ☞ Classroom Etiquette & Expectations ☞

In order to develop their maximum potential, our young people must be provided an atmosphere conducive to learning. Each young person must contribute toward maintaining this atmosphere by recognizing and respecting the right of others to learn and the right of the catechist to proclaim God's word without interference from young people who wish to disrupt the class by unacceptable behavior.

Since the catechist represents the guardian in the classroom, there has to be a genuine unity of purpose between parents and catechist. With this in mind our young people will be expected to:

1. Maintain respect in speech, attitude, and action towards others.
2. Know and comply with the general Religious Education procedures and with the procedures set by the individual catechist.
3. Refrain from disrupting classes by disregarding classroom procedures.
4. Refrain from bringing toys, games, or other items not approved by their catechist