



*St. Mary of the Assumption Church  
Office of Religious Education  
99 Valley Road  
Katonah, New York 10536  
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## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **MISSION OF ST. MARY'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

We at the parish of St. Mary of the Assumption look upon religious education as a total parish experience involving not just the child, but also parents, families, catechists, clergy, and religious that form our parish community of faith. We believe that religious education is getting to know Jesus and learning what is expected of one who chooses to follow Him in the Catholic tradition. Our program reflects an integrated learning experience composed of learning, catechesis, prayer, sacramental preparation, traditional Catholic doctrine, biblical studies, liturgy, community building and other dimensions of a vibrant Church life. Through the light of faith, we hope to develop in those entrusted to our care a deeper relationship with God.

### **ADMISSION POLICY**

Families registered in our parish are encouraged to enroll their children in the Religious Education program. There is no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or disability.

## **PARENTAL ROLE**

Parents are primarily responsible for the religious development of their children. How a child prays and worships God and how he or she related to others in a Christian way, are values which children are already experiencing before they begin formal religious education in the first grade. These are values that develop from the religious environment at home.

***The Eucharist, the center of our life of faith, is the focal point of religious education and growth in faith. The main purpose of the program we offer is to reinforce a Eucharistic spirituality. It is therefore essential and expected that the children attend Mass each weekend.***

## **TASKS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The role of the religious education program is described at length in a Church document titled: General Directory for Catechesis. This document outlines six tasks of Catechesis that every catechist strives to incorporate in the lessons during the year. These six tasks are: 1) Promoting knowledge of the faith, 2) Liturgical education, 3) Moral formation, 4) Teaching to pray, 5) Education for community life, and 6) Missionary initiative. Everything that is required for participation in this parish program is related to our Mission Statement and the accomplishment of these six tasks.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

Children should arrive on time each week. If a child is consistently late, a call will made to the parents. Children in Grades 1 and 2 should be walked into the building and the parent/guardian should remain with their child until the Catechist has arrived. The door to the school will be locked at 4:35pm for the afternoon session and 6:05 pm for the evening session.

Please accompany your child to the door and come to the office if you are late.

At 5:40 dismissal, parents must wait outside for the school doors to open. Once the doors are unlocked, parents may pick up their child. If a parent is not picking up, please provide a signed note as to who has permission to get your child.

Students will not be released to anyone other than their parent if a note is not on file.

At 7:10 dismissal, students will be dismissed to the parking lot with supervision from the Coordinator and staff.

**Please do not ask to pick up your child early unless it is an emergency.** If you must pick up early, send a note ahead of time and come to the office.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular and consistent class attendance is necessary for instruction to be effective and therefore every effort should be made to avoid absences. With the exception of a family emergency, early pick up is not permitted. Please schedule all doctor, sports, and recreational activities outside of your child's class time.

Please call the office at 914-232-4648 when you know your child will be absent. **The Archdiocese of New York considers more than 4 absences per year to be unacceptable and therefore, in that instance, promotion to the next grade level may need to be reevaluated.** If your child is going to be absent due to an extended illness, please notify the office and a work packet will be sent home covering all missed work.

## SAFETY POLICY

Our School Building will be locked between 4:35 and 5:35 Monday through Wednesday and 6:05 through 7:05 on Wednesday evenings. No one will be allowed entrance to the building during class time. Only St. Mary's personnel and catechists are allowed in the hallways or bathrooms during class time. Any exception is in violation of the Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of New York.

Only a parent or legal guardian may pick up a child. If a parent cannot pick up a note must be sent in in addition to completing an "Authorization to Pick Up" form. The Archdiocese requires the person picking up to be an adult, 18 years or older (even if a sibling). Without written permission we are unable to release your child to anyone other than the parent.

## CALENDAR

A Religious Education calendar is sent to all registered families in August. It is also available on the website and copies are also available in the school Foyer.

## **WEATHER CANCELLATIONS/EMERGENCY CLOSING**

Classes are not held when the Katonah-Lewisboro School District is closed for weather related or other emergency reasons. If Religious Education classes are cancelled due to bad weather or any other emergency, all families will be sent an email.

We also notify News 12 Westchester (Channel 12 Cable TV) as well as WHUD (100.7 FM).

## **FOOD**

Please do not send your child to class with food. It is too dangerous given the number of children with food borne allergies. Please make sure your children eat their snacks before they arrive. It is totally appropriate to bring a water bottle to class, but please, no smoothies, coffee, milkshakes, etc. If these are brought into the building, we will keep them safely in the office until the end of class. Furthermore, gum chewing in the school is not permissible.

## **CATECHISTS**

Our Catechists are faith filled people who answer a call to pass on the Christian message through word and witness. All catechists have been background checked and are trained according to the Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of New York. Please contact us if you would like to answer the call to share your faith with the children of Saint Mary's.

## **SUBSTITUTES**

From time to time, you may be called upon to help with your child's class in the rare event the teacher cannot make it to class. Please consider that we will put a lesson together for you. It would be greatly appreciated if every parent would consider doing for one day what the catechist does for the entire school year. If you would like to volunteer as a sub, please call the office at 914-232-4648.

## **DRESS CODE**

Children are expected to be dressed appropriately, reflecting the dignity of our who we are as Catholics and what we believe here at Saint Mary's. No short skirts, short shorts, low cut tops, short dresses, tight clothing, etc. Discretion will be left up to the Coordinator and the Pastor as to what is acceptable.

Any child who is dressed inappropriately will be asked to stay in the office until she/he can be picked up.

**Cleats are not allowed in the school. Please wear shoes or sneakers.**

## **REGISTRATION AND TUITION**

Registration takes place each spring for the following year. All families who are currently enrolled will automatically be sent a registration packet in May. This allows us adequate time to prepare classes and seek out volunteers for the program. If you have a child entering first grade and you wish to enroll them in our program, we will need a copy of their Baptismal certificate. The Religious Education program runs on a budget which is funded in part from tuition and in part from a subsidy from the parish. Tuition for grades 1-8 is paid each spring at the time of registration, for the following year. There is an additional fee for Sacramental expenses if you have a child in second or eighth grade. No tuition refunds will be offered after August 15<sup>th</sup>. A \$75 cancellation fee will apply.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Please inform the Coordinator at registration if your child has any special needs or medical conditions. There is a space on the registration form where you are asked to list this information. For children who have special education needs and need to be homeschooled, please supply us with a copy of your child's IEP form.

## **CELL PHONES**

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices by the child is not permitted during class time. A cell phone may be on the child for emergency purposes but must be turned off during class time. At the Catechists discretion, the cell phone may be collected and placed on his/her desk until the end of class when the students may take them back. Students in need of contacting a parent must ask the Catechist's permission to go to the Religious Education Office to place the call. No Child or parent is permitted to record, take photographs, video, etc. of any child classmate, Catechist, staff or any person while in our program. If a child is caught doing so, they will be immediately removed from the classroom and the parent will come to pick up their child.

## **MASS ATTENDANCE**

It is expected that all children registered in our Religious Education Program attend Mass each weekend and Holy Days of Obligation.

Students in the Sacramental Preparation Years, Grades 2 (First Holy Communion) and Grade 8 (Confirmation) are required to submit a monthly Mass attendance Log which will be reviewed by the Pastor.

Students who are not attending Mass regularly and not submitting the attendance Logs will not be deemed prepared to receive the Sacrament and will be called in to meet with the Pastor and the Coordinator.

### **Saint Mary's Mass Schedule**

**Main Church: Saturday 5:15; Sunday at 7:30 am, 9 am, 11 am**

**Saint Matthias: Sunday at 10:30**

**DISCIPLINE**

We aim to transmit the Christian message with excellence and love.

To do this, we understand that there needs to be an atmosphere of mutual respect and preparedness in each class. Students should arrive on time with their textbook, writing utensil and folder if applicable. They should be prepared to participate to the best of their ability.

Our basic expectations are as follows:

1. Being respectful of the other students in the class in word and action
2. Listening to the lesson prepared by the Catechist without interrupting, talking back or carrying on side conversations with other students.
3. Raising one's hand when wanting to say something or answer a question.
4. Remaining in one's seat and not walking around without permission.
5. Not bringing toys, balls or any other distractions into the classroom.
6. Keeping one's mask on at all times.
7. Respecting the property of Saint Mary's School (desks, chairs, classrooms, bathrooms, etc.)
8. Turning off and not using cell phones or any electronic equipment in the class. If a child is using a phone during class time, it will be brought down to the office and parents must come to the office to pick it up.

We have the right to remove a child from a class if we believe that the student cannot behave and/or is seriously inhibiting the learning of the others in the group.

Consultation with the student, his or her parent or guardian, the Coordinator of the Program and the Pastor may be necessary to determine the best option for all involved.

Verbal abuse by the student or the catechist will not be tolerated. If a child speaks in a manner disrespectful to the teacher and to the class, the parent will be asked to

attend class and sit together with his or her child. A parent who has a concern about behavior in a child's class should contact the Coordinator.

### **PARISH STAFF**

Father Mark Vaillancourt, Pastor

Maggie Kenyon, Coordinator of Religious Education

E mail Address: [smaryrek@gmail.com](mailto:smaryrek@gmail.com)

Phone: (914) 232-4648

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Mondays**

**4:30 to 5:40**

**Tuesdays**

**4:30 to 5:40**

**Wednesdays**

**4:30 to 5:40**

**6:00 to 7:15**