

**CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF PEACE
2024 - 2025
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
FAMILY FAITH FORMATION**



PARENT HANDBOOK

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"We, the family of Our Lady of Peace, are God in the faithful, transformed into the faithful of God, to bring the heavens to the earth, to elevate the earth to the Heavens!"





At Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of training their children in the practice of the faith, teaching them to keep God's commandments as taught by Jesus and to love God and their neighbor.

A child's **remote preparation** for these sacraments begins by observing his or her parents' or guardians' behavior and priorities, and by coming to Sunday Mass and experiencing time for prayer and growing in relationship with God. Children learn by observing how the significant adult in their life responds to their own Baptismal call. No classroom textbook can provide this.



All families and students registered in the Family Faith Formation of Our Lady of Peace are responsible for knowing and following the policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM Grades 1 through 8

Our religious education program doesn't go by the age of the child but instead by where they are in their faith formation. Our program is a family catechesis-based program, *Family Faith Formation, in which both the child and the parents walk and grow in faith together.* It consists of both at-home and in-parish sessions.

Besides the overall catechetical grade appropriate faith formation curriculum, there are some benchmark prayers and/or core teachings of the church that are required to be known by each student at each different grade level. They are:

- **First Grade**
 - Sign of the Cross
 - Hail Mary
 - Prayer Before Meals
 - Bedtime Prayer
- **Second Grade**
 - Our Father
 - Act of Contrition
- **Third Grade**
 - Glory Be
 - Apostle's Creed
- **Fourth Grade**
 - The Nicene Creed
 - The Beatitudes
 - The Works of Mercy
- **Fifth Grade**
 - Holy Days of Obligation
 - The Ten Commandments
 - Fatima Prayer
- **Sixth Grade**
 - The Names of the Apostles
 - Pray the Rosary
 - Confiteor
- **Seventh Grade**
 - The Stations of the Cross
 - Hail Holy Queen
- **Eighth Grade**
 - The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit
 - The Fruits of the Holy Spirit



Families are **expected** to:

- Make weekly attendance at Mass with their children a priority. Mass is the highest form of worship and is central to who we are as Catholic Christians.
- Participate in the Family Faith Formation sessions to better prepare and therefore provide each child with a well-rounded foundation in the faith.
- Commit to attend all sessions September through April.
- Sign their family in at the beginning of each session. Catechist will also take attendance in the classroom after the family portion.
- Commit to volunteer service to our program. See the registration form for options. Volunteer for hall monitor duty at least once per year.
- Be registered members of our parish community.
- **NEW THIS YEAR:** You will need to provide your parishioner number at the time of registration. (This is your "**giving number**" which can be found under your profile in the database.)
- Support the parish financially as able with weekly envelopes or online giving.
- Work on the Family Faith Formation at-home portion of the program. This will be explained in full detail during an orientation meeting.



Frequently asked questions

- How is the Program run: Sessions are once to twice a month. Parents and children gather at OLP Gym to learn about the topic of the Faith. During the other weeks of the month, the catechetical office will offer content for parents and children to use at home.
- How many sessions and how are they split: There are a total of 23 sessions a year with an average of one session at home and two in-parish sessions per month.
- In-Parish Sessions: Sessions are held in the gym and start and end with parent and child joined activities. In the middle of the session parents remain in the gym for an adult level session, while children go to classrooms for a session (on the theme) with the catechists.
- Parent volunteer program: Each parent must volunteer at least five hours service for the in-parish events. We ask that families volunteer for hall

monitor duty at least twice per year. Some additional volunteer opportunities are needed, but not limited to co-catechists, substitute catechists, hall monitor, hospitality, donate refreshments, or even teaching a class itself.

- Dates of Meetings: Families will be provided with a calendar of events.

Communication

All communication from the Catechetical Office is sent via email beginning in August. Please add catoff@olpnp.org into your contacts. Please, inform us immediately if you realize you are not receiving email communications, or if your email address changes.



Our Journey With Jesus

REGISTRATION

The online registration process begins in the spring of each year.

For New Parishioners of OLP - Welcome!

For All:

- In the event that you have not registered as parishioners of Our Lady of Peace, please register before registering for Religious Education as you will need your giving number.
- At the time of registration, you will be asked to submit your parishioner number. This number is your envelope number or giving number.
- If you have questions about our program, contact the Parish Catechetical Office before submitting your registration and non-refundable tuition payment.

- If you are transferring, submit a letter, report card, or attendance record from your previous Religious Education Program or Catholic school indicating program participation and level completed.
- Submit copies of sacrament certificates: Baptism, First Reconciliation and First Eucharist for whichever sacrament your child has received.
- Required volunteer service from each family helps to minimize the cost of the Religious Education Program. If you choose not to volunteer, you may **opt out** by paying an **additional fee of \$200**.
- For children or siblings new to the program, submit a baptismal certificate unless baptized at OLP.

TUITION

Tuition defrays the cost of the Religious Education Program. The remaining costs are funded by the parish. Therefore, all families must be registered parishioners of Our Lady of Peace and support the parish to the best of their ability through weekly offerings with the use of envelopes at Mass or on-line giving. Never allow financial concerns to prevent you from registering for religious education. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, contact our office.

Tuition schedule

To be able to plan and order books and materials for the new year, the regular registration period will end June 30, 2024.

A late registration fee will be added to all those registering after July 1, 2024, and beyond.

Please understand that registration will close October 15, 2024.

Registration (Ending on June 30, 2024)

Grades 1 – 8	One Child	Two Children	Three or more
Tuition	\$175	\$300	\$350
Tuition With \$200 Opt-Out Fee	\$375	\$500	\$550

Tuition starting on July 1, 2024 to October 15, 2024.

Grades 1 – 8	One Child	Two Children	Three or more
Tuition	\$225	\$350	\$400
Tuition With \$150 Opt-Out Fee	\$475	\$550	\$600

Sacramental Fees

- There are additional fees to support the 2-year sacramental programs.
- Please see page 10.

CURRICULUM RESOURCES



The following resources are supplied by the catechetical office.

- Faith and Family Life Catholic Ministries, Pathways Formation Suite.
- Sacrament preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, uses Pflaum Together in Jesus.
- Sacrament preparation for Confirmation uses activities and lessons provided by the catechetical program.

Bibles

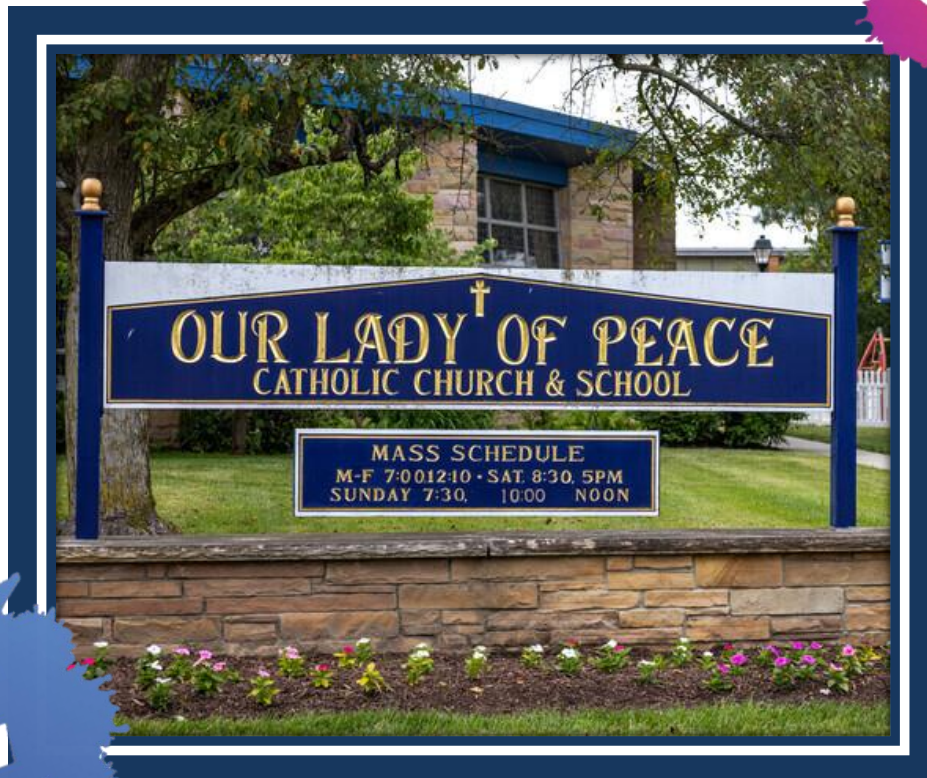
Students are presented with a Bible during their First Reconciliation and First Communion sacrament preparation year. The Bible is to be used by the child and their family throughout their religious education years. As the child gets older, each family must acquire an age-appropriate bible. All children must have a bible.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Lady of Peace has a social media account that is run by the parish. This is a space where we share photos and videos of our activities, functions, messages from the pastor, and sacraments. Parents must sign an acknowledgment during registration indicating they have read and agree to the policies expressed in the handbook. Participation in parish activities will not be permitted without a signed acknowledgement.

Pictures

Our parish will, at different times, post our bulletins, website and social media pictures of the catechetical program, teachers, and students. These pictures will **only** be used on our social media platforms and bulletins. In the event that a parent wishes for their child not to be shown, please send an email to the catechetical office asking to not be used. But please be aware that for those children not participating in these pictures, they will be asked to step aside while the pictures are being taken.



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Allergies/Epi-Pen Policy

Our parish hall and gym host many parish-wide events and we are unable to guarantee the safety of children with life-threatening food allergies. Therefore, parents of children requiring an Epi-Pen should read and consent to the Archdiocesan Epi-Pen Policy as provided by the Parish Catechetical Office.

Archdiocesan Epi-Pen Policy

Pursuant to the Archdiocese of Newark's policy regarding the administration of epinephrine by means of an auto-injector mechanism (Epi-Pen Policy), the parent or guardian of children participating in the Family Faith Formation Program is responsible for providing and administering an Epi-Pen in an emergency situation.

If a child requires an Epi-Pen, parents are required to let the catechetical staff know so the proper forms can be completed and returned to the Catechetical Office. All forms must be on file prior to their child's participation in the Family Faith Formation program.

1. Complete the Epinephrine Administration Consent Form, Option C, Administration by Parent/Guardian of the child
2. Epinephrine Administration – Physician Form
3. FARE - Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan



Attendance and Family Participation

At orientation, each family will be given a Faith and Family Formation parent book which must be brought to each session. Faithful attendance is expected September through May. If a family is absent more than four (4) times in a year, the child's ability to move on to the next grade for the following year is put into jeopardy. If a child is absent more than three (3) times, the Parish Catechetical Leader will check in with parents. A parent will sign in for their family at the beginning of each session. Attendance will also be taken by each catechist in the classrooms. At least one parent **must** be present in the gym during the entire session. NOTE: We will not be accepting waivers this year as parents are to be taking part in the sessions

Attendance for CYO Program

Faithful attendance in our Religious Education Program is expected from September through May.

- If a family is absent three times, the child's ability to participate in CYO is in jeopardy.
- If the absences reach five (5) sessions, the child will no longer be able to participate in CYO during the present year.
- If seven (7) or more absences happen in a given year, the child will not be able to participate in CYO for the following year.

Behavior

Appropriate behavior and common courtesy are presumed and expected from our families. We encourage families to work in a cooperative and respectful manner in the shared space. If a warning to the child about behavior does not work, a parent must sit in on the next lesson. If the inappropriate behavior continues, the parent must remain in the classroom, or the child may have to be removed from the program.

Cell Phones and Electronic Items

The use of electronic devices and cell phones (including text messaging, photo taking and video recording) are not permitted during sessions. Please silence your devices and put them completely away. Catechists may choose to keep the phones in a designated area in the classroom. For the students that do not put the phone away or choose to use them during the session, the phone will be put in a basket and given back at the end of the session.

Emergency Closings

In the case of cancellation, we notify parents by email. You may call the Parish Catechetical Office at (908)464-8156 to listen to the message to hear about cancellations. In addition, check the parish website, www.olpnp.org, for information.



BUILDING SECURITY AND SAFETY

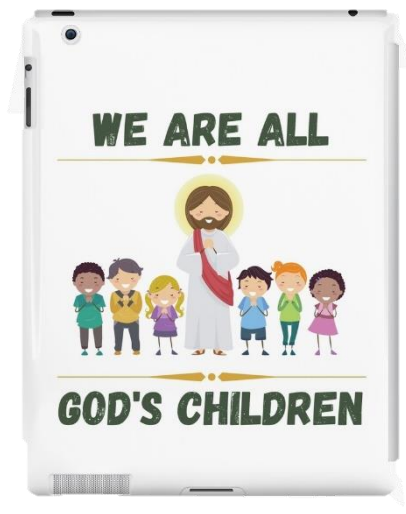
- Never allow children to run or play in the parking lot.
- For the safety of our children, everyone must enter and exit the building through the **Parish Hall doors only**.
- Families and volunteers (students and adults) are required to sign in upon entering the building using the Parish Hall entrance.
- There will be **no waivers this year**. All parents must sign their family in.
- No one should open any outside doors of the building except for emergencies.
- Always observe the 10 mph speed limit in the parking lot.

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

Consistent with Archdiocesan policy and local legal code, the Parish Catechetical Office staff and volunteers have a moral and legal obligation to report all suspected child abuse to authorities to ensure the welfare of a child.

All staff, catechists, and monthly dedicated volunteers are required to:

- Acknowledge receipt of and compliance with the Archdiocesan Policy Regarding Conduct with Minors.
- Provide satisfactory results of a criminal background check.
- Participate in the "Protecting God's Children" training program.



EMPOWERING GOD'S CHILDREN

In an ongoing effort to assist in the monumental mission of protecting young people, the Archdiocese of Newark has developed the Empowering God's Children Program in which parents present a safety lesson to their children that includes a grade-appropriate video component along with a hands-on activity. The material is designed to better equip children to know their rights, recognize their boundaries, and empower them to protect themselves when safe adults are not immediately available—and ultimately be safer from people who might want to harm them.

We are required by the Archdiocese of Newark to receive a response for each student registered in our programs. Parents who complete the program will sign the Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement or the Parent/Guardian Selection if they choose not to participate.



SACRAMENT PROGRAM

" We, the family of Our Lady of Peace, are God in the faithful, transformed into the faithful of God, to bring the heavens to the earth, to elevate the earth to the Heavens!"



Following our parish mission statement, sacrament preparation is designed to help each child and their family to grow in relationship with Jesus, prepare young learners' hearts and minds for the graces received in the sacraments and become actively involved in the life of the parish.

The sacrament policies of the Archdiocese of Newark state that:

- Your family should be registered in the parish in which your child receives the sacraments.
- The immediate preparation period of catechesis for sacraments should be parish-based; it should involve both Catholic school and public school students in a coordinated and unified fashion.
- Sacrament preparation takes place in conjunction with your child's grade-level faith formation in the parish Religious Education Program or Catholic school. (See "Sacramental Preparation" section below for more details)

The Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation are celebrations of the OLP parish community. Sacrament preparation is coordinated and administered by the Catechetical Office in collaboration with parents, catechists, the Academy of OLP teachers, and our Youth Ministry.



SACRAMENT PREPARATION

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Our First Reconciliation and First Eucharist program is a two-year program that works hand in hand with our regular catechetical program.

A sacramental preparation fee of \$150 will be due during Sacramental Registration in the fall to defray the cost of materials and retreats. (This is separate from the Family Faith Formation registration fees.)

Confirmation

A candidate must have experienced ongoing religious education in grades one through eight either in a Catholic school or parish religious education program. If formal religious education has lapsed, the student must demonstrate grade-specific knowledge of the Catholic faith. Families new to the parish should contact the Parish Catechetical Office.

In recognition of an adolescent's faith maturity, the preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation generally begins in eighth grade (Level I) and takes place over two years, within the student's community of peers, and is led by Catechetical Office and our Youth Ministry staff. The Rite of Confirmation typically takes place during the Easter Season of the second preparation year (Level II).

Information regarding our two-year Confirmation program is given during a meeting held in the fall prior to the start of Confirmation Level I.

A sacramental fee of \$175 will be due when registering for Confirmation Level I in early fall to defray the cost of materials and retreat.

jesus loves you

