

**ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION CHURCH
HOCKESSIN, DELAWARE**

**GRADES 1-8
PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
“PREP”**

**2011 - 2012
PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK**

Our program of instruction builds upon the foundation of faith that our students receive in their homes. It is, therefore, essential that every student in our PREP program attend Mass every Sunday.

Telephone contact

During office hours – 239-7100 x 18 (secretary)
x 17 (DRE)

During PREP session – 239-2387 x 19

- ❖ Please read this document in its entirety.
- ❖ Keep this Handbook in a safe place as a reference throughout the year.

ACCREDITATION/CERTIFICATION

St. Mary's PREP is accredited by the Diocese of Wilmington. PREP catechists, who are parish volunteers, are required to comply with all provisions of *For The Sake of God's Children*, attend classes, workshops and other educational programs to become certified by the diocese.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our program of religious instruction is cumulative from grades 1 through 8. Although we try to accommodate serious situations, lapses in attendance interfere with your child's understanding and participation. Poor attendance could impact sacramental candidacy.

Your child should be absent from class **only for a serious reason.**

When your child is absent:

- You should call (239-2387 x19) before class to report the absence. If you do not call, the session Principal will call to confirm absence.
- Contact the catechist for make - up work.
- The student is responsible for **completing work at home from their text that was covered during their absence.**
- An **absence note** is required when s/he returns.

**Three or more unexcused absences for which a note has not been sent and assignments have not been completed may prevent promotion to the next grade level.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Because the safety of each child is very important to us, we ask you to read and cooperate with these procedures:

1) **Arrival**

Students may be **dropped off** at the **rear entrance. However,** since lower level parking is limited, **only catechists** may park in this area.

Students could also be **dropped off** at the **front circle** to enter the building through the **garden** or the **chapel** entrance. After the first session, older children may escort the younger to class. **Ideally,** all parents should park in the front lot and walk your child to class.

Important note: The circle is a fire lane. It needs to be kept clear in case of an emergency. No parking is ever permitted in the circle or along the driveway (yellow curb)

2) **Dismissal**

During summer PREP sessions, we have 250+ children leaving the building at one time. During school year PREP sessions, we have children dismissing after dark. In both cases, we are committed to the safety of each child, and apologize for any added time or inconvenience our policies may cause you or the person picking up your child. We have made some changes this year, please read carefully:

- Children in grades 1 through 4 are to be kept in the classroom until picked up by the person indicated on the Dismissal Pickup form.
- Students in grades 5 through 8 may leave the classroom when the bell rings to "pick-up" younger siblings.
- **In June and August PREP** 7th and 8th graders who are not picking up younger siblings or younger students may exit the building on their own.
- **No student may leave the building on their own during school-year evening PREP classes.**

Some parking rules and regulations to follow:

1. Parents are to **park** in the upper lot and enter the building through the **garden** or **chapel** entrance.
2. The "**back door**" (lower lot) is locked during PREP session. It **is not a PREP exit**.
3. **Do not** park or wait in the lower lot, along the driveway or in the front circle (any place marked with a yellow curb).
4. When picking up, please arrive within five minutes of the end of the session. Parents are asked to **maintain quiet in the hallways** until classes are dismissed. Please wait until the class is over (bell) to pick up your child (ren). If class is still in session, and the classroom door is open, please respect that the teacher is still finishing a lesson, closing prayer, etc. and stand away from the doorway to avoid being a distraction to students.
5. The telephone on the Principal's desk is always available to our students should you be delayed for pick-up. If you are delayed, please call extension 19. Students who are waiting for a driver will remain in the building.

3) **Early pick-up**

If (for a serious reason) a student must be picked up before dismissal:

- the parent sends a note explaining the reason & time of pick-up
- the parent must come to the principal's desk at the scheduled time.
- the principal will then go to the classroom to call the student.

CALENDAR

An annual calendar is printed in this handbook. It is based on the diocesan holiday schedule and, therefore, does not reflect the schedule of any specific school or district. Please keep this calendar handy throughout the year.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

All persons in the state of Delaware, including all persons employed in the parishes of the diocese of Wilmington, are required to comply with the statutes and with the diocesan regulations in promptly reporting possible incidents of child abuse or neglect based on reasonable belief.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/DISCIPLINE

Discipline in the classroom is necessary to create an atmosphere in which each catechist can teach and each child can learn. To ensure every child's right to learn, the following policy has been adopted:

- A disruptive student will be sent to the principal for "time out"
- Should the behavior continue, the student will receive two additional classroom warnings.
- In rare cases, a parent might need to come and pick up a disruptive student.
- If disruptive behavior persists, a Problem Report will be given to the DRE who will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a time to meet and discuss the report.
- Should behavior continue to be an issue following the issuance of a Problem Report, the DRE will consult with the student, parent and catechist. Persistent unresolved problems might result in the student's transfer to another session or (in serious cases) dismissal from the program.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS

All PREP catechists are volunteers. Many are also parents of PREP students. It is important for every parent to support the catechetical

program by offering time and talent. Please contact the Religious Education Office if you are available as a substitute catechist or principal. Additionally, please let your child's catechist know how you could help in preparing materials, planning special events or offering extra help during class.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

No student, catechist, supervisor, or participant in the PREP Program shall use, possess, buy, sell, and transport to or from parish property or to or from a parish-sponsored event or be arrested or have a record of an arrest or conviction for a prior violation of the law, either (a) alcohol and drugs, prohibited by criminal statutes of the State of Delaware or (b) any hallucinating substance or (c) any written, pictorial, printed, or similar representations of nudity, explicit sexual matters, or pornographic material which are in violation of the moral standards of the Catholic Faith as practiced within the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington.

EMERGENCIES: Medical & Evacuation

A) Medical

Every attempt is made to provide a safe and healthy environment. Since accidents sometimes do occur, and children may become ill quickly, the following procedure will be followed should there be a serious medical concern:

- The principal will call home to apprise the parent of the problem.
- If there is no answer, the principal will call the contact person listed on the emergency form.
- If neither of the above parties is available and time is of the essence, the principal will call an ambulance to transport the child to a local medical facility. PREP staff will continue to call contact persons until someone is reached.

B) Fire/Evacuation

In the event of an actual fire or emergency, directions for evacuation of the building are posted in each classroom. Annual drills are conducted so that all students are familiar with this procedure.

Driveways leading to and around the building and the circle in front of church **must be kept clear so that emergency equipment always have access.**

C) First Aid

A First Aid kit is kept at the Principal's desk to deal with any minor injury that occurs during class. When first aid is administered, an

"Incident Report" will be completed, signed, and kept at the Principal's desk.

FIELD TRIPS

In the rare case that a catechist plans to take her/his class off parish property, written permission must be given by the parent/guardian. A form will be provided.

FOOD

During summer sessions, students should bring a snack and a water bottle. Eating in the classrooms should be the exception at all other times (Sunday, Monday and Tuesday).

Remember: Our education center is a "peanut free" environment.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Should a problem arise between the parent/student and the catechist, it will be brought to the attention of the DRE or PREP Secretary at the first opportunity. The catechist will provide a brief written note describing the circumstances. If needed, the Pastor's guidance will be relied upon to resolve any issues.

HOMEWORK

Regular homework assignments ensure that you and your child review the material presented. **Homework may be assigned at each session.** Parents are urged to monitor homework completion.

LATENESS

When a student arrives late for class s/he upsets the flow of the class and impairs personal progress. **Every effort** should be made for your child to arrive **on time**.

Should your child be late for class, s/he is to enter the building via the garden stairs (since other doors are locked during session). A note from the parent to the catechist should be sent and include the reason for tardiness. Lateness will be recorded on the Progress Reports.

MATERIALS/TEXTBOOKS

Your child should come to class prepared to work. Parents are asked to send your child to class with **a pencil and textbook in some kind of tote bag. Do not allow** your child/ren to bring **cell phones, hand – held games or any extra toys/distractions.**

Students are **not permitted to wear hats** in the classrooms.

The textbooks that we use are approved by the Diocese and are in conformity with The Catechism of the Catholic Church. Since these books contain much information about contemporary Catholic teaching, parents are encouraged to read the textbook with the student. The cost of your child's book is covered in your registration fee. **If your student loses a book, you will be charged \$20 for a replacement.**

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Email will be the primary form of parent communication.

This will include any session reminders, scheduling changes, parent instruction, as well as details surrounding any special events or outreach programs. On occasion, a printed newsletter or flyer may also be sent home with your child. You may also be contacted directly by your child's current catechist. Please take the time to read ALL communication sent from the Religious Education office.

Parent and family faith resources are sometimes available throughout the school year and can be found on the Principal's desk.

PARENT MEETINGS

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children. For the PREP Program to meet your family's needs, for an opportunity to grow in adult faith and for the DRE to respond to your concerns, it is essential that every family be represented at scheduled parent meetings.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP / PARTICIPATION

St. Mary's PREP is open only to registered, participating members of this parish. Our fee scale presumes that all of our families are financially supporting the parish through Sunday contribution or the direct withdrawal program. Every fall, the PREP roster is compared with the list of active contributors. In the event that regular contribution cannot be determined, a \$100 surcharge will be assessed. Continued non-compliance will result in a "non-contributing parishioner fee" for future registration. If financial or other serious problems prevent compliance, please contact the DRE.

PRINCIPALS & OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Principals and other volunteers are present at each session to help catechists with logistical details, discipline problems, first aid, safety, etc. In the event that your child is late or you need to pick up early, please report to the principal before going to your child's room.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Student progress reports will be issued two times a year. Catechist comments are intended to keep parents informed of the student's progress and cooperation.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The most important preparation for every sacrament is attendance at Mass each Sunday. St. Mary's PREP Office offers formal catechesis to prepare all parish children for sacramental reception.

Generally, candidacy for First Reconciliation (Confession) and Eucharist is offered during the second year of grade-level PREP.

Confirmation candidacy is offered to students in Ninth Grade who have completed the 8th Grade in either Catholic School or a parish Religious Education Program.

The policy of Wilmington diocese is that sacramental preparation is the responsibility of a child's parents/guardians. To aid parents in this important task, meetings are provided for parents of sacramental candidates. When a parent/guardian responds to the invitation for sacramental candidacy through registration and attendance at Parent Preparation Meetings, a student will be included among the sacramental candidates. Please note: **no student** in any grade **will be included** on the list of sacramental candidates **without parental response/ participation**.

SAFETY CONCERNS

St. Mary's PREP staff takes very seriously our responsibility to maintain a safe learning environment. In addition to the requirements presented in the Wilmington Diocese's plan: *For the Sake of God's Children (copies of which are available on the diocesan website and in the PREP office)*, we have put in place a number of precautions including:

Arrival & dismissal guidelines (+ a procedure for early pick -up)

The presence of a volunteer principal as a hall monitor.

Keeping all but one outside door locked during session. (If you need to enter the classroom area during session, please enter through the garden door, and identify yourself to the principal.)

Keeping accurate attendance records.

Phoning parents of students who are absent or late without prior notification.

Conducting annual fire drills.

Keeping the circle and driveways clear of vehicles so that emergency vehicles (if ever required) could readily assist our students.

Your cooperation is essential to the safety of all of our students.

STUDENT ATTIRE/DEMEANOR

Occasionally, PREP classes may go into the parish church for prayer and information. Accordingly, student attire should be neat and appropriate. A general rule could be that what is not acceptable in "day school" is not appropriate for PREP.

Baseball caps may not be worn in the building and chewing gum is discouraged.

Cell phones are unnecessary and a serious distraction during PREP. The construction of the building makes a good cell signal very rare. Should a student need to make a phone call, the phone at the principal's desk is always available. Therefore, student cell phones may not be brought to PREP.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Behavioral/ Learning

If your child has any specific behavioral or learning problems (e.g. ADHD, dyslexia) please let the DRE and/or catechist know how we can accommodate these differences. Such information will be kept strictly confidential.

Additionally, if your child has any specific talents/abilities please let the DRE and/or catechist know so that we can affirm these. Should your child receive any special awards: academic, athletic or other, please let the DRE know so that we can make note in the Family Newsletter.

Medical

Upon registration and from time to time, please inform the PREP Office of any special medicines, prescriptions, allergies, medical impairments, special diets, or similar special information and medications required by your child. Additionally, the parent /guardian should advise the catechist on the first day/night of PREP of any special medical needs that their children may have so that we can respond appropriately.

No medication will be administered to a child during her/his class.

TELEPHONE

During PREP session, dial 239-7100, **extension 19**, to reach the session Principal. At other times, you can reach the **Religious Education Office**, call at above number, using

- ✓ extension **18 for Mrs. Sandy Fiscella** (PREP Secretary)
- ✓ extension **17 for Mrs. Sheila Meara** (DRE)

WEATHER CANCELLATION

Generally, St. Mary's PREP calendar is based on the parish office calendar. In the event of snow or other weather considerations, PREP classes are automatically cancelled whenever the RED CLAY SCHOOL DISTRICT closes its schools for inclement weather. Bad weather might also force cancellation of PREP on a Sunday or after the school day is over. In both cases, **announcements of the cancellations will be made on the following radio stations: WDEL (1150 AM) WILM (1450 AM) and WJBR (99.5FM), posted on the parish website, and placed on extensions 17, 18 and 19.**

Calendar June 2011 – 12

June 20 – 24 session 9:00 – noon

27 - 29 session 9:00 – noon

**29 11 AM MASS – Ss. Peter & Paul
Progress Report #1 Sent Home**

Sept. 18 session 8:45 –10:15 am

November 6 session 8:45 –10:15 am

January 8 session 8:45 –10:15 am

**March 4 session 8:45 –10:15 am
Progress Report #2 Sent Home**

First Sunday of Advent: November 27, 2011

Ash Wednesday: February 22, 2012

Easter: April 8, 2012

Calendar August 2011 – 12

August 1 - 5 session 9:00 – noon

8 – 10 session 9:00 – noon

**10 11am MASS St. Lawrence
Progress Report #1 Sent Home**

October 2 session 8:45 –10:15 am

December 4 session 8:45 –10:15 am

February 5 session 8:45 –10:15 am

March 11 session 8:45 –10:15 am

Progress Report #2 Sent Home

First Sunday of Advent: November 27, 2011

Ash Wednesday: February 22, 2012

Easter: April 8, 2012

Calendar Monday 2011-2012

5:15 p.m to 6:30 p.m.

September 19, 26

October 3, 17, 24

November 7, 14, 21, 28

December 5, 12, 19

January 9, 23, 30

February 6, 13, 27

March 5, 12, 19, 26

April 2, 16

No Classes on:

Oct. 10 – Columbus Day

Oct. 31 - Halloween

Dec. 26 & Jan. 2 – Christmas Holiday

Jan. 16 – Martin Luther King Day

Feb. 20 – President's Day

Apr. 9 – Spring Break

Classes end April 16

First Sunday of Advent: November 27, 2011

Ash Wednesday: February 22, 2012

Easter: April 8, 2012

Calendar Tuesday 2011 – 2012

6:30 p.m to 7:30 p.m.

September 20, 27

October 4, 11, 18, 25

November 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

December 6, 13, 20

January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

February 7, 14, 21, 28

March 6, 13, 20, 27

April 3, 17

No Classes on:

Dec. 27 – Christmas Holiday

April 10 - Easter Break

Classes end April 17

First Sunday of Advent: November 27, 2011

Ash Wednesday: February 22, 2012

Easter: April 8, 2012

