Holy Virgin Martyrs Religious Education
4157 ATLANTIC AVENUE
SCHILLER PARK, IL 60176
847-671-6429
RELIGIOUSEDCOORDINATOR@OUTLOOK.COM

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Rev. Robert Schultz – Pastor

Ms. Zerlina Kirchen – Coordinator of Lifelong Faith Formation

Religious Education Mission Statement

We are dedicated to providing a Catholic Foundation for our student's lives by creating an atmosphere that encourages a positive learning environment in which our students can apply their faith to their daily lives and live out their calling to be disciples of Christ.

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CLASS TIMES:

Religious Education classes meet September – April twice a month either Saturday Mornings from 9:00 – 11:30 or Tuesday evenings from 6:00 – 8:00pm at the Wagner Street entrance of the religious education building. Special Sacraments classes meet one Saturday each month from October – April from 9:00 – 11:00am in the religious education building. Please refer to the Religious Education Calendar for the scheduled class dates.

HOMESCHOOL LESSONS:

Homeschool lessons begin in October. One lesson is sent out each week with an eAssessment link to show that the child has completed the lesson. There are three lessons sent per month. The fourth week no lesson is sent, however a progress report email will be sent to the parent letting you know how your child is doing with their homeschool lessons.

SPECIAL SACRAMENTS – SACRAMENTAL PREPARATIONS CLASS:

Students in third grade and higher, who need to make the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion will be enrolled in the Special Sacraments Preparation Class in their second consecutive year in the Religious Education Program. This class is designed to be a separate class that will prepare the student to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. (Please see sacramental eligibility section for more information).

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING:

The Archdiocese of Chicago mandates that all Religious Education Programs conduct Safe Environment training for their students. This training usually takes place on a class day during class.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL:

Safety is our number one Priority. Parents are expected to drop off and pick up their child(ren) at the religious education building's Wagner Street entrance. All parents must enter and exit the parking lot through the correct entrances. The entrance of the parking lot is located near the Wagner street entrance of the religious education building and the exit of the parking lot is located by the church. All parents need to park in the lot and come into the school to drop off and pick up their child(ren). Students will not be allowed to leave the building or cross the street without a parent/guardian. In addition, if someone other than the parent is picking up the child, please inform them of this policy, and you must inform the Religious Education office who will be picking up your child(ren) so we know. All students who walk home will be released from the Atlantic Street entrance. If your child(ren) are allowed to walk home, please check the "YES" box on the registration form. If your child(ren) is not usually allowed to walk home but an occasion arises in which you want your child(ren) to walk home, you must notify the Religious Education office in writing the day you want your child(ren) to walk home.

EARLY RELEASE OF STUDENTS

If you would like your child(ren) released early from class, please inform the Religious Education Coordinator when you bring your student to class. You must enter the building and sign an early release form when you come to pick up your child(ren). Students will not be allowed to leave the building without a parent or other authorized adult.

VISITORS

All Visitors, guests, and parents who will be on premises during a class must enter the building through the Wagner Street entrance and report immediately to the Religious Education office where they will sign in on the visitors log and be issued a visitors badge. Before leaving the building all visitors must report to the Religious Education office where they will sign out of the visitors log and return their badge to the Religious Education coordinator.

CLASS CANCELLATION:

If the Religious Education Program must close due to inclement weather conditions, each family will be notified by phone and an Email of the closing, and the coordinator will update the Religious Education voicemail, web page, and Facebook page to reflect this information. Parents will also be notified if there is to be a class added to make up for the class that was cancelled.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

If your student is unable to attend class please call the Religious Education office and let us know your child(ren) will be absent. ANY ABSENCES IN EXCESS OF FOUR DURING THE COURSE OF THE YEAR MAY RESULT IN YOUR CHILD(REN) NOT BEING PROMOTED TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL. This is due to your student not meeting the required amount of classes that is in accordance with the Archdiocese of Chicago. If your student is absent more than four times, because of legitimate reasons, it is the parents/guardians responsibility to contact the Religious Education Coordinator to make arrangements for your child(ren) to make up the classes and/or material covered. Failure to do so will result in your child not being promoted to the next grade level; as well as your child(ren) being ineligible to receive their Sacrament. If your child is absent on their regular Tuesday class, they CANNOT attend class on Saturday to make up for their absence and vice versa.

CLASS WORK AND GRADE LEVEL REQUIREMENTS:

The Religious Education class requirements are a crucial component to fostering your child's religious education and students are required to take an active role in their faith formation. The participation requirements include:

- Regular attendance (see attendance policy)
- Classroom participation
- Knowledge of prayers
- Completion of all Mass and service hours
- Completion of all classroom lessons and assignments
- Completion of all homework assignments
- Participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent
- Participation in any special activities within the program
    - Teaching Mass, church tours, Seder meal, prayer services etc.
- Any Sacramental requirements, if applicable (see Sacramental eligibility section)

Consistent incomplete work or failure to meet grade level requirements will prohibit your child(ren) from being promoted to the next grade level; as well as your child(ren) being ineligible to receive their Sacrament.

SACRAMENTAL ELIGIBILITY:

In order for your child to be eligible to receive a Sacrament in the Religious Education Program, the following requirements must be met:

- Two years consecutive attendance in the program.
- All tuition and fees *paid in full* by the first class in March.
- Completion of all class work and homework assignments by their due date.
- Completion of all Mass and service hours by their due date.
- Completion of any other Sacramental requirements by their due dates.

FAILURE TO MEET ANY OF THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL RESULT IN YOUR CHILD NOT MAKING THEIR SACRAMENT.

MASS HOURS:

We encourage our students to actively participate in their faith through Mass attendance. Students are required to attend a certain number of Masses per grade level per year; these Mass hours are not accumulated. Masses can be attended here or at ***another Catholic Church***. To get credit for their Mass attendance, students must get their bulletin signed at the parish they attended. The bulletin can be signed by a priest, a deacon, or someone else who served at the Mass (Lector, Communion Minister, Usher, Organist etc.), or a catechist or the Religious Education Coordinator. Only one bulletin may be turned in per weekend with the exception of Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. If you turn in a more than one bulletin per weekend only one will be counted towards your requirements.

Masses that count towards Mass hours:

- Saturday Evening Masses
- All Sunday Masses – including family Masses
- Holy Day Masses (All Saints, Christmas, etc.)

Masses that DO NOT count towards Mass hours:

- Weekday or Saturday Morning Masses
- Weddings
- Funerals or memorial Masses

SERVICE HOURS:

Service hours are earned by the students for completing acts of service where the student does not receive payment for their assistance to help the community, family, household (outside of normal chores or duties specified by the parents/guardians), parish, school, etc. Students are required to complete a specified number of hours per grade level per year, these hours are not accumulated. Students must complete a service hour form for each act of service completed and submit it to their teacher for approval and to receive credit for the hour(s). Please make sure to read the service hour form for what activities count as acts of service, and make sure to read the information sent home with your student for service hour opportunities that are offered from the Religious Education Program.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS

All parents, students, visitors, and Religious Education staff must abide by any federal, state, local and/or Archdiocesan health and safety protocols while they are on premises for religious education classes, events, sacraments, liturgies, etc. Any health and safety protocols will be issued to families and Religious Education staff in writing as soon as is practical.

MEDICATION

Except in extraordinary circumstances, which must be approved by the Religious Education Coordinator, the Religious Education Program or personnel will not maintain, supervise the taking of, or administer medication. If your child(ren) needs to bring a medication to class (an inhaler, epi pen, etc.) a doctor's note stating your child(ren) needs to bring this medication with them needs to be submitted to the Religious Education Office to be put in the child's file.

DRESS CODE:

Students are expected to dress appropriately for class. While parents and students have the responsibility of following the dress code, the Religious Education Program will not permit immodest clothing. Any student who dresses inappropriately will be removed from the class, and asked to make appropriate changes to their clothing/appearance. Parents/Guardians will be notified of any dress code violations. Clothing that is NOT acceptable:

- Any clothing with pictures or writing that implies or is vulgar, obscene, or advertises alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or is sexual in connotation.
- Sunglasses, or head coverings including: hats, hoodies with the hood on, bandannas, sweatbands.
- Ripped jeans, pajamas, halter or bare midriff tops, spaghetti – strap tank tops, and miniskirts.

BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE:

Students are expected to arrive on time and ready to work and to act in a respectful manner to their teachers as well as their fellow students. Students are not permitted to use their cell phones during class or at Mass. In addition the students should not chew gum in class or church. Any student misconduct will be handled in the following way:

1st Offense	The teacher will bring the incident of misconduct to the attention of the coordinator.
2nd Offense	The coordinator will speak with the student and the teacher and bring the incident of misconduct to the attention of the parent/guardian and the pastor.
3rd Offense	The parent/guardian will be notified and will be required to meet with the coordinator.
Any Further Offense	The student will be removed from the class and the parents/guardians will be required to meet with the coordinator and the pastor.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

We reserve the right to inspect all desks, lockers and other parish supplied enclosures. In addition we reserve the right to inspect a participant's personal property when there is a reasonable belief that the individual is violating the rules, regulations, and policies of the Religious Education Program.

CELL PHONES

Students are permitted to bring cell phones to religious education, however, except in the case of an emergency their cell phones should not be used during class time.

WEAPONS

For the safety of our students and staff no weapons are permitted on the premises, this includes but is not limited to slingshots, baseball bats, knives, and guns.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FINANCIAL POLICY:

No child will be withheld from the Religious Education Program due to the inability to meet the required tuition fee. The Religious Education Coordinator and the Pastor must be notified of financial difficulties at the time of registration. The Religious Education Coordinator and the Pastor can make arrangements on an individual basis as deemed appropriate.

Families that are in financial hardship and who have agreed to pastoral intervention as well as agreeing to a written payment plan must adhere to that plan. Failure to do so will result in the consequences in the unpaid tuition section.

TUITION:

Tuition rates are set by the Religious Education Program and are based on the number of children a family is enrolling in the Religious Education Program as well as that family's parishioner status.

PAID IN FULL DISCOUNT:

Any family who pays the entire tuition and any fees due at the time of registration will receive a $15.00 discount on their tuition.

MONTHLY PAYMENT PLAN:

Tuition should be paid in full at the time of registration. If you cannot pay in full you can choose to pay the tuition with our monthly payment plan. A $15.00 Payment Plan fee will be added to the tuition cost. A $75.00 NON – REFUNDABLE deposit and any Sacramental fees are due at the time of registration. The balance is then paid in monthly installments starting in October with the entire balance being paid in full on the first class of March.

RETURNED CHECK FEE

Families will be subject to a $40 Fee for each payment made by check that is returned to the Religious Education program for insufficient funds.

PARISHIONER STATUS:

To be considered a Registered Parishioner family you must already be registered with the parish at the time of registration. If at the time of registration, you are not already registered with the parish, you will be considered a Non-Registered Parishioner family.

SACRAMENTAL FEES:

If your child(ren) are receiving a Sacrament this year, then you will have to pay a Sacramental Fee for each child receiving a Sacrament. This amount is due at the time of registration.

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

Payments can be made by cash, checks payable to HOLY VIRGIN MARTYRS PARISH, or by credit card. Please note there is a 3% fee added for all credit card transactions.
Payments may be submitted by:

- Bringing the payment to the Religious Education office on a class day
- Send payment by mail to:

  Holy Virgin Martyrs Religious Education Program
  4157 Atlantic Ave
  Schiller Park, IL 60176

UNPAID TUITION POLICY:

Any unpaid tuition from the previous program year MUST BE PAID IN FULL AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION. All tuition for the current program year MUST BE PAID BY THE FIRST CLASS IN MARCH. Any unpaid balance in tuition after this date can and will result in the following:

- Your child(ren) being ineligible to receive their sacrament this year
- Your child(ren) being unable to enroll in our program next year
- Your child(ren)'s records will not be released until the amount is paid in full
- Your unpaid tuition balance may be sent to a collection agency.

If your family is having financial difficulty please contact the Religious Education Coordinator.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY:

Tuition reimbursement will be issued in entirety prior to the Religious Education start date for students transferring to another parish, delaying enrollment in a Religious Education Program, or for personal reasons. Tuition reimbursements requested ***AFTER*** the Religious Education start date will be returned on a pro-rated class basis minus the non-refundable registration deposit of $75, cost of books, and pro-rated classes that were attended. Furthermore, if a student enrolled in a sacramental preparation class (2nd Grade, 8th Grade, and Special Sacraments) and fails to meet the Sacramental requirements, they will ***NOT*** be eligible for a refund. ***NO REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN AFTER JANUARY 1ST.***

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FUNDRAISING POLICY:

Families who have committed to participating in a Religious Education Fundraising Event, acknowledge that they are responsible for all monetary or unsold goods at the end of that event.
Any family who fails to return any money or unsold goods will receive a past due fundraising event statement, IN WHICH ANY EXISTING UNPAID BALANCES WILL BE ASSED TO THE FAMILY'S CURRENT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TUITION. Failure to pay this amount or any other tuition will result in the consequences explained in the unpaid tuition section.

CUSTODY ISSUES

If parents are divorced or separated, the Religious Education Program presumes that both parents have access to the children unless one parent can provide evidence that he or she has the sole right.
If there are other custody arrangements a copy of such arrangements must be on file in the Religious Education office.

PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS:

The Religious Education program encourages parents/guardians to take an active role in their child(ren)'s religious education by:

- Making sure you bring your child(ren) to class on time.
- Notify the Religious Education office when your child(ren) will be absent (see attendance policy).
- Attend our monthly family Masses with your child(ren).
- Notify the Religious Education office of any changes to your address, phone numbers, Email, child(ren)'s medical conditions, learning disabilities, or any changes to your child(ren)'s emergency contact information.
- Read all information that is sent home with your child(ren) or that is mailed to you so that you will know what is going on in the Religious Education Program and the Parish.
- Attend any parent meetings that apply to you, and if you are unable to attend, you are required to contact the Religious Education Coordinator to find out what information you have missed.
- Attend events within the Religious Education Program.
- Regularly attending Sunday Mass.
- Volunteering your time and talents to one of our parish ministries.
- Volunteering your time and talents within the Religious Education Program as a Catechist or an aide.
- Attending events being held within the parish.

CHANGES TO THE HANDBOOK

Statements in this handbook are subject to change with or without notice. The Religious Education Program will attempt to keep you informed of all changes as soon as practical; however, some changes might be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:

If you have any questions or concerns about anything in this handbook, please contact the Religious Education office by phone: 847-671-6429 or by Email: religiousedcoordinator@outlook.com.