

Our Lady of Lourdes

***300 Central Avenue
Mountainside, NJ 07092***

Faith Formation Family Handbook

2022-2023



Rev. Jeivi M. Hercules, Administrator
Mrs. Fran Michetti, Director, Faith Formation
Mrs. Cynthia DiPietro, Assistant Director

Important Phone Numbers and Email Addresses

Faith Formation Office.....908-233-1777, reled@ollmountainside.org
Rectory.....908-232-1162
Fax Number.....908-232-0776
Fr. Jeivi.....jhercules@ollmountainside.org
Fran Michetti.....fmichetti@ollmountainside.org
Cindy DiPietro.....cindy@ollmountainside.org

Program Philosophy

The Catechetical Programs of Our Lady of Lourdes are based on the belief that religious education and formation is a life long process which begins with the loving touch of the parents and continues to grow and is nurtured by the many relationships in an individual's life. Therefore, we strive to support and assist parents in their role as primary catechists, that is, as the first and most important teachers of their children in the ways of our faith.

As our children live and worship in the faith community of Our Lady of Lourdes parish, they are being catechized by the praying, believing and serving members of our parish community. Our catechists share their faith experience in our Roman Catholic tradition and plan and lead activities so that our children may understand the Christian message; experience personal prayer and public worship; and participate in the Church community.

We believe that together, catechists, community members and family, journey with the children as they begin their life-long process of building a relationship with God and the Church. We believe that learning about God and sharing His love should be a wonderful experience and we treat that faith as the sacred gift it is.

Program Descriptions

Our Lady of Lourdes offers two different programs for grades 1-6:
Traditional Classroom Model (TCM) and Family Faith Formation (FFF).

The **Traditional Classroom Model (TCM)** consists of weekly instruction in a regular classroom environment with the catechist teaching the chapters in the textbook. Parents are responsible for reviewing concepts and helping children learn prayers.

The **Family Faith Formation Program (FFF)** consists of 2 required parts. First, children are primarily taught by parents at home. Assignments for each lesson will be posted in Google Classroom. Secondly, parents and children together, attend the 11:30AM Mass then have a session until 2:00PM. There are 5 "in person" family sessions.

Grades 7 and 8 will meet about 2 Sundays per month, beginning with the 9:30AM Mass followed by class until 11:45AM. Students will also be required to complete community service and a reflection.

Grade 9 Confirmation students attend 2 monthly Sunday sessions beginning at the 11:30AM Mass and ending at 1:45PM. Students are also required to complete community service, a reflection, participate in a retreat, have a Confirmation interview, and attend a Confirmation rehearsal.

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM MODEL (TCM) GRADES 1-6
2022-2023 DATES (4-5:15PM)

September 27, 28
October 11, 12
October 18, 19
October 25, 26
November 1, 2
November 15, 16
November 29, 30
December 6, 7
December 13, 14
December 20, 21
January 3, 4
January 10, 11
January 17, 18

January 24, 25
January 31, February 1
February 7, 8
February 14, 15
February 21, 22
Feb 28, March 1
March 7, 8
March 14, 15
March 21, 22
March 28, 29 (Prayer Day Gr 1)
April 11, 12
April 18, 19
April 25, 26

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION (FFF) GRADES 1-6
2022-2023 (11:30AM Mass-2:00PM)

In Person

October 2
December 11
January 8

March 5
April 16
May 21 (Make up)

GRADES 7 & 8 2022-2023 DATES
Sunday (9:30AM Mass until 11:45AM)

October 16	February 12
October 23	February 26
November 6	March 12
November 20	March 19
December 18	April 23
January 22	April 30
January 29	

GRADE 9 CONFIRMATION PREPARATION 2022-2023 DATES
Sunday (11:30AM Mass until 1:45PM)

****Important** There will be Confirmation parent/child meeting on Thursday, October 13 at 7:30PM in Pollard Hall.**

October 16	February 12
October 23	February 26
November 6	March 12
November 20	March 19
December 18	April 23
January 22	April 30
January 29	

****Confirmation Retreat: Sunday, TBA from 11:30AM Mass until 4:30PM.**

****Confirmation Mass: TBA along with a rehearsal which is the week leading up to Confirmation for Sponsors and Candidates.**

FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST EUCHARIST 2022-2023

Tues. Sept. 27, 2022, 7:00PM Parent Meeting **in person**

Sun. Oct. 9, 2022, 9:30AM Rite of Enrollment **Mass**/First Reconciliation

Fri. Oct. 21, 2022, 7:00PM Potter Family Retreat

Sat. Dec. 10, 2022, 9:30AM-12:30PM First Reconciliation Family Retreat
(Sacrament Books Due)

Sat. Jan. 7, 2023, 11:00AM First Reconciliation Family Prayer
Service followed by individual confessions

Sat. Jan. 21, 2023, 11:00AM First Rec Family Prayer Service followed by individual confessions
(snow make-up)

Sun. Feb. 5, 2023, 9:30AM Rite of Enrollment **Mass**/First Eucharist

Sun. Feb. 12, 2023, 9:30AM Rite of Enrollment Mass/First Eucharist
(snow make-up)

Sat. March 11, 2023, 9:30AM-12:30PM First Eucharist Family Retreat
(Sacrament Books Due)

Sat. March 18, 2023, 9:30AM-12:30PM First Eucharist Family Retreat
(snow make-up) (Sacrament Books Due)

Sat. April 29, 2023, 12:30PM Confessions/Sacrament Preparation
Family Faith and Catholic school children

Each child will be assigned one of these dates:

May 6, 2023, 10:30AM First Holy Eucharist Mass
(Rehearsal Mon. 5/1 @ 7:15PM)

May 13, 2023, 10:30AM First Holy Eucharist Mass
(Rehearsal Mon. 5/8 @ 7:15PM)

Grade 1

“Mrs. Michetti and Mrs. DiPietro Meet and Greet”: In order to introduce children to our program, we invite 1st grade parents and children to pick up orientation materials on **Wednesday, September 14 between 6:30-7:00PM** in Pollard Hall and meet Mrs. Michetti and Mrs. DiPietro.

Family Spiritual Life/The Domestic Church

Our children’s first encounter with our faith is in the family home which is the **Domestic Church**. It is important to create a faith-filled environment filled with prayer that should include Grace before meals and prayers at bedtime. Creating a prayer corner where children can go to talk to God is helpful and can include a chair, Bible, and a Cross or religious statue. Also, in order to blend learning about faith at home as well as in the classroom, we encourage our faith formation families to follow these guidelines:

1. Ask your child what he or she learned in faith formation class, review their work, and emphasize the importance of learning about our faith.
2. Attend Mass together weekly and on Holy Days.
3. Read the parish bulletin to keep updated.
4. Say prayers together as a family, such as the Rosary.
5. Establish family Advent and Lenten traditions.
6. Attend special parish events together, such as parish picnics, Stations of the Cross, the Living Rosary, and Sunday bagels.
7. Reinforce the Corporal Works of Mercy by donating to food drives, special collections, and parish fundraisers.
8. Consider volunteering in a parish ministry such as Tend My Sheep Ministry, the men's group, or the Rosary Altar Society, become a lector, or join the choir.

Code of Behavior

Jesus taught us the Great Commandment which is to love God and our neighbors as ourselves. The children are expected to follow Jesus' teaching and show respect to the adults who volunteer in this program, as well as all the other students and their property. In addition, children need to have respect for Our Lady of Lourdes Church and school property.

*If a child misbehaves in the classroom, a warning will be given by the catechist or classroom aide.

*If the child continues with the inappropriate behavior, the Director will remove the child from the classroom.

*If an understanding about the behavior is reached, he or she will be returned to the classroom.

*If the behavior continues, the Director will call the parents.

*If a child continues to disrupt the learning environment, it will be necessary to seek an alternative method of instruction. The Administrator, Director, catechist, & parent would make this decision jointly.

General Behavior Guidelines

- No student is to enter a classroom without a teacher present.
- Hats may not be worn in the building.
- Students may not use phones or electronic devices on site. (Catechists may collect devices and return them after class).
- Inappropriate clothing may not be worn.
- Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
- No food, drink, or gum is allowed in the classrooms.**

Attendance/Absenteeism

Since the goal of our program is for our children to learn about our faith and develop a relationship with Jesus, **the expectation is for all children to attend all classes**. We understand that there are illnesses and emergencies that are out of our control.

Therefore, for safety reasons, if your child is unable to attend a faith formation class or scheduled event, we will require that you call the Faith Formation Office at 908-233-1777, and leave a message on the answering machine or send an email to reled@ollmountainside.org. **Please include your child's name, grade level, catechist's name, date of absence, and REASON FOR ABSENCE.** *We are responsible for your child during class time, so we **MUST** be notified of an absence so we know if he/she is safe!*

Traditional Classroom Model – 3 absences allowed

Family Faith – no absences- if there is an illness, must attend May 21 make-up session

7th & 8th Grade – 2 absences allowed

9th Grade – 2 absences allowed

Arrival and Dismissal:

For the Traditional Classroom Model (TCM), students are to enter through the double glass doors of Pollard Hall. All other doors of the building will remain locked. Students will remain in Pollard Hall until after opening prayer and a mini lesson. Then catechists will walk children to their classrooms. At the end of class, students will be walked back to Pollard Hall for pick up.

Family Faith Formation (FFF) – Families can sit anywhere in the church for Mass, then congregate at the front of the Church at the end of Mass. Families should sit together.

7th, 8th, & 9th Graders can sit anywhere in the church during Mass. When Mass is over the children come to the front of the church to sit in the assigned pew for his/her class.

Emergency Closings

The Administrator and Director will make the determination of canceling in-person classes or retreats based on the weather or other extenuating circumstances. An email will be sent out to alert families of closures as soon as decisions are made.

Homework

Students in all grades and programs will be expected to learn and memorize prayers and doctrine based on their grade level.

Traditional Classroom Model (TCM)– Parents should review lessons with children after class. Individual teachers may assign homework to their students.

Family Faith Formation (FFF) – Each student will complete assignments and assessments posted on Google Classroom. Each month will cover one unit in the book and students are expected to have all work completed by the end of the month.

Grades 7 and 8 – Students will be required to complete 10 hours of community service for Our Lady of Lourdes. Any other community service needs to be approved by the director. A community service reflection assignment will also be required.

Grade 9 – Students will be required to complete 10 hours of community service here at Our Lady of Lourdes. Any other community service needs to be approved by the director. A community service reflection assignment will also be required.

Sacraments

All children must be Baptized to participate in the Faith Formation program. If your child was not Baptized at Our Lady of Lourdes, a copy of your child's Baptismal certificate must be provided. Preparation for the **Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist** is a two year process that begins in 1st grade. The children will receive the Sacraments in 2nd grade. If your child is in 2nd grade, a separate handbook will be provided on the details of these two Sacraments. As part of the sacrament preparation, 1st and 2nd graders are required to learn the following prayers and concepts:

Grade 1: The Sign of the Cross
 Hail Mary
 Our Father
 Glory Be

Grade 2: Act of Contrition
 Ten Commandments
 The Greatest Commandments
 The Liturgy of the Word
 The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The **Sacrament of Confirmation** takes place in the Spring of 9th grade. After completing our elementary program for grades 1-6, students enter our Pre-Confirmation Program for Grades 7 and 8. The immediate Confirmation preparation takes place in Grade 9. Grade 9 classes run two Sundays a month beginning at the 11:30AM Mass, followed by a session that runs until 1:45PM. All students making Confirmation will also be required to participate in a Confirmation retreat, attend a Confirmation rehearsal, and complete community service with a reflection assignment and have a Confirmation interview.

Grades 1-6 Curriculum

Grades 1-6 Family Faith and Traditional Classroom Model use the book *Alive in Christ* by Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Company. The curriculum is centered around the themes of *Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Church, Morality, Sacraments, and The Kingdom of God.*

Grades 7-8-9 Curriculum

Grade 7: Uses *Alive in Christ Faith Guidebooks* by Our Sunday Visitor, and focuses on the themes of the *Sacraments and the Holy Trinity.*

Grade 8: Uses *Alive in Christ Faith Guidebooks* by Our Sunday Visitor, and focuses on *Morality and the Church.*

Grade 9: Includes the immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation by using the Book *Chosen*, by Ascension Press.

Please note

*In order to be prepared for all Sacraments, Faith Formation is a continuous process from grades 1-9. We do not allow the skipping of grades. If you leave our program and return at a later time, you must have a letter of proof that your child completed faith formation at another parish. If not, your child will be placed in the grade where he/she left off.

Emergency Forms/Health Info/Epi Pens

Please be sure all the information on your emergency form is current throughout the year and provide us with updates, as needed. It is extremely important to tell us all necessary health information, especially if your child has a **special need or uses an **Epi Pen**. For Epi Pen users, a form provided from the Archdiocese must be filled out by the parent and pediatrician to be kept on file in the Faith Formation Office. The complete Archdiocese of Newark Epi Pen policy is posted in the Emergency Procedures manual in the Faith Formation Office, and we must follow the guidelines.

Faith Formation vs. Sports/Other Activities

Children have a right to attend Faith Formation over other sports and activities without being penalized. It is the law: \ *U.S. Supreme Court Case Zorach vs. Clauson 1956 Ruling: ***It is a child's constitutional right to attend a church event or religious instruction at a parochial school even if this should disrupt a public school schedule.*** *Public school schedule* has been interpreted by the law to include sporting events, band competitions, school plays, and the practices aforementioned and any other event sponsored by public school systems or those municipal programs open to public school students. ***Any type of punishment by aforementioned events for leaving early, arriving late or missing an event is not permitted and is in violation of the law.***



