

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP P.R.E.P. PROGRAM

A COMPREHENSIVE CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

What is P.R.E.P.?

In 1905, Pope St. Pius X decreed the establishment of the *Confraternity of Christian Doctrine* in every diocese and parish of the Catholic Church. Its purpose was, and is today, to promote, extend and improve education in the Catholic faith for children who do not attend Catholic school. P.R.E.P. programs are parish based, operated through the Parish Religious Education Office. This office works under the direction and guidance of the pastor, the Parish Pastoral Council, and the Archdiocesan Office of Catechetical Formation

P.R.E.P. Teachers: (P.R.E.P. Teachers are also known as “catechists”)

In addition to volunteering classroom time, catechists devote hours to lesson plans, exams, and spiritual opportunities. Receive thorough background check – PA Criminal Background and Child Abuse Clearance and receive training in the Archdiocesan Child Safety Program (Safe Environment).

Curriculum

Our P.R.E.P. program follows the same archdiocesan religion guidelines that Our Lady of Angels regional school and all other archdiocesan schools follow.

Our well-respected textbook series,

Alive In Christ

*“Alive In Christ provides a trustworthy and comprehensive presentation of the Catholic faith and has been found by the United States Catholic Bishops’ subcommittee on the Catechism to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. *Alive In Christ* presents and effectively implements the six fundamental tasks of Catechesis (See *General Directory For Catechesis*, 84 -85).”*

Mass Attendance

Our Lady of Perpetual Help P.R.E.P. Program provides children with the tools for living a life of faith. *Our influence only goes so far.* Parents and guardians are the only ones who can surround their children with a Catholic *culture.*

Because we are Catholics, we belong to something bigger than ourselves – we belong to Christ’s Body, the Church. As “belongers” of His Body we share an obligation to praise him, to love him and to serve him!

All teachers at every level of P.R.E.P. stress the *obligation* of regular weekly (Sunday) mass attendance. Our Lady of Perpetual Help P.R.E.P. Program provides *encouragement* in this central aspect of our faith. We will discuss the Gospel every week in class. As parents and guardians, you are the ones who can actually teach your children to *live* their faith. Mass attendance is a requirement for PREP families. We respectfully ask your cooperation in helping us achieve 100% mass attendance for P.R.E.P. students every week.

Parent Involvement

Parents are the primary educator of your child in almost all areas of life, including the life of faith. Being primary educators means more than simply helping your child learn their prayers. Parents should be prepared to:

- be examples of faith in action lived out within family life in the home
- ensure that the family attends Mass together on a weekly basis and participates in other parish/private devotional practices
- assist in homework assignments and test preparation
- discuss lessons with your child
- make sure your child is prepared for PREP class each week
- communicate with your child's catechist whenever necessary
- participate in PREP liturgies
- attend PREP meetings and other activities related to Sacrament preparation

Volunteers are always welcome to serve as: weekly catechists, substitute catechists, aides or office help. We also welcome parents to help the children practice for their Sacraments. If you can volunteer your time and talents to any of these roles, please speak to the Director of Religious Education, Mrs. Michele Hundermark at (610) 543-5448.

Registration

Registration takes place in the spring. Families currently enrolled in the PREP or Family Catechesis Program will receive registration information before PREP ends. Current families may re-register online through the parish website at olphmorton.org.

Full payment must accompany registration form.

Families new to the parish should contact the DRE to schedule an appointment to register. All incoming first grade and new students must submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate, as well as proof of First Eucharist and Confirmation where applicable.

Registration completed by June 30th allows for proper planning and preparation and ordering of books and supplies for the following program year.

Tuition

O.L.P.H. Parish is committed to offering quality religious education to the parish children who do not attend the Catholic school. In order to defray the direct costs associated with running the P.R.E.P. and Family Catechesis, A fee is charged for student and catechist textbooks, student and catechist's supplies and resources, catechist training, and administration. It is the goal of the parish to keep the tuition at a moderate rate.

Any family with a financial hardship is asked to contact the Religious Education office so arrangements can be made.

Sacramental Preparation

Sacrament preparation is provided for all families participating in the P.R.E.P. and Family Catechesis at O.L.P.H. Parish. The following information are the guidelines:

The General Directory for Catechesis no. 80 states:

“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch,
but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.”

Additionally the National Directory for Catechesis no. 35 states:

Some fundamental principles apply to catechesis for each of the sacraments.

Dioceses and parishes should present sacramental catechesis that:

- Is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
- Is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- Presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit
- Is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstance of those being catechized
- Is intended for all members of the Christian community, and involves the whole community of faith
- Involves parents in the preparation of their children for the sacraments
- Is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program
- Focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals and prayers contained in the rite for each sacrament
- Enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of *mystagogia* following the sacrament.

A distinction exists between religious education and sacramental formation. In general Religious Education has a scope and sequence given over a period of months and years, continuing throughout life, and sacramental formation which is focused on a preparation of reception of particular sacraments.(e.g. Penance, Holy Communion, and Confirmation)

First Penance and First Holy Communion (2nd grade norm)

❖ Foundational Preparation

The child ordinarily should have attended a Catholic school, a parish religious education program, or a home school religious education program for at least one year prior to beginning preparation for the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. An exception to this policy may be made in such other circumstances as the Pastor deems appropriate. The Pastor is responsible for ensuring that children are properly prepared for enrollment in the Sacramental formation program by examining them on the teaching they have received and the knowledge they have acquired. [Compiled Policies nos. 3.1.(a) and 4.4.1(a)].

❖ Specific Preparation

A copy of the child's baptismal certificate must be presented to the Pastor prior to reception of First Penance and First Eucharist. [Compiled Policies no. 3.1.1(b); 1983 CIC 849.,864,889.1,912, and 988].

The Pastor, in consultation with the parents, makes the decision about the readiness of the child receiving the Sacrament of Penance. [Compiled Policies no. 4.4.1(b); 1983 CIC 914 note ("Penance before First Communion") and 988-989; *Catechism* no. 1457]. No child should be admitted to the reception of the Sacrament of Eucharist without sufficient preparation as determined by the Pastor in consultation with the parents. [Compiled Policies no. 3.1.1(d);1983 CIC c. 913 and 914.]

Sufficient time must elapse between reception of the Sacrament of First Penance and First Eucharist so that the child can distinguish between the two celebrations. Compiled Policies no 3.1.1(c).

Confirmation (7th grade norm)

The NDC states:

The revised *Rite of Confirmation* 394 indicates that Episcopal conferences may designate the appropriate age for Confirmation. In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia the practice is in the 7th grade.

❖ Foundational Preparation

Candidates for Confirmation ordinarily should have attended a Catholic school, a parish religious education program, or a home school religious education program for at least two years before enrollment in the free-standing parish Confirmation formation program. An exception to this policy may be made in such other circumstances at the Pastor deems appropriate. The Pastor is responsible for appropriately catechizing the youth by examining them on the teaching they have received and the knowledge they have acquired. [Compiled Policies no. 2.2(a); 1983 CIC c. 889.2].

❖ Specific Preparation

A copy of the child's baptismal certificate must be presented to the Pastor prior to reception of Confirmation as well as a Sponsor of Eligibility Form for every sponsor from his/her respective parish. [Compiled Policies no. 3.1.1(b); 1983 CIC 849.,864,889.1,912, and 988].

Each candidate will present himself/herself to the Pastor for the sacrament of Confirmation through an interview process.

Special Education

If you child has special needs, due to medical problems or learning disabilities, please inform the Director Of Religious Education. Every effort will be made to meet the needs of the child and family.

Hours of Instruction

Grades 1 – 6

Classes for Grades 1 through 6 are held Monday afternoons in the school building. Classes begin promptly at 4:15 pm and are dismissed at 5:30 pm.

Grades 7 – 8

Children in 7th and 8th grade have sessions 2x per month from September to May. The sessions are both catechetical and part of the youth ministry program within the parish.

Release Time For Early Dismissal

According to Penna Act 175, part of the Public School Code relating to the "release of pupils for religious instruction," upon the written request of parents, the public school shall excuse the children of such requesting for a total of not more than 36 hours per school year in order to attend classes for religious instruction. Release time form letter for

participation in sacramental retreats and rehearsals are included in the information packets for each sacrament.

When parents request release time for their children, the parents assume responsibility for the safe travel of their children from the public school to the parish property.

Attendance

Students are required to attend class every scheduled session. If a student is too sick to attend, his/her absence must be reported to the Religious Education Office (610) 543-5448. Whenever a student is absent, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to request the assignment that the student has missed. This assignment must be turned in upon returning to class along with a note from the parent explaining their child's absence. Failure to meet these requirements will result in an unexcused absence.

*****Please note*****

A student with three (3) or more unexcused absences and/or missing assignments will be required to attend an extra PREP class and the child may be required to repeat the grade level. A student who is preparing to receive a Sacrament who has an excessive number of absences may be delayed in receiving the Sacrament.

Illness

If a student becomes sick or injured during class they should notify their teacher. If a parent needs to take a student home because of illness, the parent should come to the school office to be admitted. We have a first aid kit and basic supplies, but we are not permitted to administer medicine.

Please let us know if your child has any health issues or allergies or is taking any prescription medication.

Arrival Policy

Parents are to enter and leave the parking lot only by way of Franklin Ave. Parents may pull around to the middle doors and let the students out. An adult member of the PREP staff will be at the doors to greet the children who may go directly into their classrooms.

A note should be sent in explaining how your child is to go home; we need written permission for children to participate in a carpool with others or to walk home.

If a child has to leave early for any reason, a written note is required and the parent must come to the school office to sign the child out. **Sports is not an acceptable excuse to leave early.**

Dismissal Policy

****FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN**

Parents of student in 1st through 4th grade will be given a card with four sections.

First section is for the primary parent that picks up the child

Second Section is for the parent that occasionally does pick up.

Third Sections is for the Carpool (or Emergency pick up person)

Fourth Section is for the Office.(THIS CARD MUST BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED WITH REGISTRATION FORM)

Parents will be required to enter the building through the main office (admittance is by showing the card).

Please go directly to the child's classroom to pick up your child and then dismiss through the middle doors.

Discipline Policy

Good classroom discipline is maintained by recognizing and praising good behavior and taking corrective action when necessary. Disrespectful, disruptive or unruly conduct will not be tolerated in the P.R.E.P. program. Students who are uncooperative, rude, who bully, or who, in any way, impede the progress of the class will be corrected by the teacher. A student in need of further discipline will be taken out of the classroom and sent to the office for discipline.

Please note At the discretion of the program director, any child who is continuously disruptive will be removed from the P.R.E.P. program on school site.

Certain disciplinary infractions may incur immediate expulsion (fighting, theft, destruction of property, carrying a weapon, etc.). The program director will determine if an offense is serious enough for an expulsion.

Chewing gum or eating in the classrooms is not permitted at any time.

Teachers will work with students who are uncooperative as much as possible. Teachers may contact the parents by note or by phone. If continuous unacceptable behavior occurs, a discipline note will be mailed home. Parents are asked to sign and return the form, showing that you have read and taken note of the matter. A second discipline notice automatically sets up a meeting of parent and child with the Director of Religious Education and the teacher involved, after class the following week.

Dismissal from the program may result in cases where the parent fails to respond to the notices or if the behavior does not improve.

Dress Code

There is no specific dress code for class. Students are expected to come to class neat and clean. Appearance is conducive to learning. No make-up for the girls and no earrings for the boys are permitted. If children are attending church for a sacramental celebration or a prayer service, they should dress appropriately.

Use of Bathrooms

The children are encouraged to use the bathrooms before they come to class. Bathrooms in the school should only be used when necessary. Use of the facilities during class takes important time away from instruction.

Fire Drills

Drills for emergency evacuation are held periodically, during class time. Evacuation directions are posted in each classroom.

Cancellation of Classes

Information concerning emergency school closing/PREP class cancellation will be posted on the OLPH webpage and an email will be sent therefore an email address is essential.

1. If the parish school (OLA) is closed for an emergency/weather concern only. THERE IS NO PREP
2. If there is an early dismissal of the parish school due to an emergency or weather concern. THERE IS NO PREP

3. If OLA school is closed for a holiday or in-service day, that does not mean PREP is closed. Please refer to the PREP calendar for our schedule.
4. If there is a weather concern that begins later in the day and OLPH school is dismissed at regular time, PREP classes may be cancelled if conditions become hazardous. Please check the parish website and your email in box.

Parish Programs

As **registered members of OLPH parish**, as well as registered, participating students in the PREP program, your child may participate in parish activities such as:

Jr. Youth Ministry

Boys and girls in grades 5 – 8 are invited to join in this program. Please contact Ms. Jane Kueny call the rectory for information. (610-543-5448).

Altar Servers

Boys and girls may prepare to be Altar Servers in the Fall of 5th grade. Information will be provided by the Rectory.

CYO Sports

Boys and girls who are in good standing* with the PREP program are invited to participated in our parish sports program. Information will be sent home seasonally. If you are absent from P.R.E.P. you cannot participate in a sports activity that day. You cannot leave P.R.E.P. to participate in a CYO sport activity.

Children's Choir

Boys and girls who are in good standing with the PREP are eligible for the Children's Choir. Please Contact Mrs. Mary Lee Fairfield.

** In good standing means that you are a registered student and have no more than 3 absences for the current year and you have completed a full year classes prior to signing up or trying out for any team.