

# St. Mary of the Bay Parish

2018-2019

## Religious Education

## Family Handbook

St. Mary of the Bay Church

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## Our Purpose

Parents are the primary and most important teachers of our Catholic faith. The purpose of our Religious Education program is to assist you as parents in performing this sacred obligation to which you have committed yourselves.

On the day of your child's Baptism, the celebrant asked you, "What do you ask of God's Church for your child?" Your answer, "Baptism." The celebrant continued with these words:

*You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?*

And you responded, "**We do.**"

With those two small words, you committed yourselves to *train your child in the practice of the faith*...no small promise. But you willingly made that promise knowing the importance of our Catholic faith in helping children grow as good, Christian people.

We are committed to help you keep your promise.

PLEASE UNDERSTAND, we spend very little time with your children in comparison with you, or their school teachers, friends, and possibly even television and internet. Our job is to help enhance the positive Catholic Christian messages and examples you give them – we cannot hope, in the limited time we have with them, to fully teach them the Faith. But we will do our best to support your efforts in raising your children to be responsible adults who are truly people of faith.

# Our Program

St. Mary of the Bay Religious Education Program is an 8-year initiation into the truths of the Faith, the Sacraments and liturgical life of the Church, Christian living, and the way of prayer. Each year is a building block in the overall understanding and living of the four pillars of the Faith: **Creed, Worship, Moral Life and Prayer.**

It is our hope that after these years of faith formation, our youth will be well-rounded, active Roman Catholics who are prepared to live the faith Christ has given us and bring it, through work and action, to all whom they meet.

Our Catechists are faithful volunteers who give generously of their time to share their faith with your child. Because we are all partners on the journey, we hope that you will introduce yourself to your child's Catechists. In order to allow our Catechists to focus on faith formation, please direct any administrative issues to the Director.

# Registration Procedures

Registration is open to those families who are currently registered at St. Mary of the Bay Parish. A registration form must be completed each year for your child to attend Religious Education classes. Program fees should accompany the registration unless other arrangements have been made with the Pastor and/or Director. If you choose to use the online payment option, please indicate this by checking the appropriate box on the form.

The registration form, including specific registration instructions, is available online at [stmaryofthebay.org](http://stmaryofthebay.org) or at the parish office.

**Sacramental Records** – Students new to the program who were not baptized at St. Mary of the Bay, St. Jean Baptiste, or St. Casimir must provide an official record of Baptism and, if applicable, First Holy Communion from the church where the sacrament was celebrated.

**Special Needs/Allergy & Medical Information** – Please be certain to list on the registration form all medical/allergy information that we need to know about your child. Please be sure to notify us if your child’s health or allergy situation changes during the course of the year.

It is also important to note on the registration form any needs that might affect the performance of your child in class. As we are able, we will work as closely as possible with students and parents to provide suitable and effective instruction to children with special needs. However, if our volunteers are unable to effectively meet the needs of your child, we will help you find a diocesan program nearby which will provide more individualized attention.

## **Important Information**

**Confirmation Preparation** students and families will also receive (at an informational meeting) the “Confirmation Preparation Information for Families” handbook, which is a supplement to this book. Please be familiar with the requirements in both handbooks.

**Communication** – It is important that we have the most up-to-date contact information for each family. Please be sure to notify the Director during the year if any of your contact information changes. This helps us ensure that you receive mailings/emails we send during the year, and that we can quickly reach you while your child is in class if the need should arise. Pertinent information about child custody must be shared with the Director.

Important information will be sent home via email or with the students periodically. Please make it a point to read everything we send home to be sure you receive helpful and timely information.

**Cancellations/Emergency Information** – Information regarding cancellations due to inclement weather and other such emergencies will be posted on the *parish website*, [stmaryofthebay.org](http://stmaryofthebay.org) as well as on all local TV and radio stations and their websites.

**Attendance** - Our time with your child is very limited, so regular attendance is crucial in order for us to best assist you in guiding your child along the path of faith.

- Parents of students preparing for First Eucharist (Levels 1 & 2) must refer to the next section for specific attendance requirements.
- For Confirmation information, please also refer to the Confirmation Information Package.
- *If your child will be late or is ill and unable to attend class, you must call the Religious Education Office before the beginning of the class.*
- In grades 3-6, missed work will be sent home in the folder and parents are asked to complete it with their child to be sure s/he stays up-to-date on the lessons.
- Tardiness is very disruptive and disrespectful to the class. Please make every effort to have your child in class before it begins.

### **First Eucharist Level 1 & 2 Attendance/Make-up Work**

- Attendance at all scheduled classes is expected of each student.
- Attendance is also expected at First Eucharist Class Masses. The dates of these Masses are indicated in red on the Religious Education Calendar.
- An absence will be considered “Excused” if the Director of Religious Education is notified in advance of the class by a parent OR, in the event of a family emergency, as soon as possible after the class. Because of the limited number of class hours, excessive absences may impede the student’s progress in the program.
- “Unexcused Absences” are usually evidence of a lack of the family’s commitment to the program, and to the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist itself. Multiple unexcused absences or uncompleted make-up assignments may affect the student’s status in the program.
- All work missed due to ANY ABSENCE must be made up. Missed work will be sent home for completion in the student’s folder and must be returned to class the following week.
- Tardiness is very disruptive and disrespectful. Please make every effort to have your child in class/Mass before it begins.

### **Arrival & Departure – Do Not Park in Fire Lanes at Any Time**

- **Classes begin promptly at 9:00. Please plan to arrive at least 5 minutes before class starts.** Late arrivals are disruptive and repeated lateness is disrespectful to the entire class.

- Students in grades 1 through 6 must be brought to the classroom each week by a parent and met at the classroom after class by a parent. Please use the door in the parking lot.
- *If someone other than a parent will be picking up a child, the child's Teacher or the Director must be notified before class.*
- Early Dismissal is permitted in emergencies and exceptional circumstances. Please contact the Director or bring a note to the Catechist on the day the early dismissal is requested.

## Behavioral Issues

We seldom have issues with unacceptable behavior in our classrooms. However, should a child be consistently disruptive the following protocol will normally be followed:

- First incident – A gentle warning will be issued to the student and the Director will be notified.
- Second incident – The Director will discuss the incident with the child and send home an *Incident Report*.
- Third incident – The Director will send home an *Incident Report* and a conference will be held with the parent(s).

Further incidents may require that the student withdraw from the program. We will try to assist the family in finding an appropriate alternative program.

## Expectations of Parents and Students

(also refer to Important Information section)

- We expect students to be in attendance, arrive on time, and stay through the end of class.
- As your child's primary catechist, it is important that you are faithful and worship with your children at a weekend Mass. Class does not take the place of Mass attendance.
- Prayer – We will pray with your children during class each week. But we do not have the time to help them memorize prayers. Please help by spending time in prayer with your child each day. It is most important that they understand that prayer is talking to and listening to God.
- **The Folder** - Be sure your child brings his/her folder to class each week (we will provide the folders). We will send home flyers, newsletters, etc. in this folder. Often students will bring home unfinished activities and other worksheets done during class. Please take the time to go over the sheets, ask questions, discuss the topics of the week, and even finish any incomplete worksheets. Any work being returned to class should be sent via the folder. Refer to "Attendance" sections regarding work missed due to absence. (continued)

## Expectations of Parents and Students (continued)

- Our catechists are dedicated volunteers who give generously of their time. We expect that all students will treat all our volunteers and other students with respect.
- Electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class.
- Students are expected to dress respectfully for class and attendance at Mass.
- Students should come to class prepared to participate and with any materials required (folders, books, etc. as applicable).
- Students are expected to respect church property. Parents will be responsible for any damages incurred.
- We will do all we can to help students understand and appreciate our faith. However, we cannot allow repeated disruptions to a class. Please refer to **Behavioral Issues** section.

## Safe Environment

Our parish has a program for the safe environment education of children and young people supported and mandated by Bishop Thomas Tobin of the Diocese of Providence. This program is called *Circle of Grace*. It is meant to supplement and be integrated into the programs and curricula for the formation of children and young people in our schools and religious education programs. *Circle of Grace* aims to equip our children and young people by arming them with essential knowledge and skills grounded in the richness of our faith. This program helps children and young people to understand their own (and others') dignity in mind, body and spirit.

All volunteers who work with children, and employees are subject to Background Criminal Investigations and attend Safe Environment training.

# Prayers

## **Sign of the Cross**

(while blessing yourself)  
In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done on earth  
as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

## **Hail Mary**

Hail Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee!  
Blessed art thou among women,  
and blessed is the fruit  
of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.

## **Glory Prayer (Doxology)**

Glory to the Father,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen.

## **Act of Contrition**

My God,  
I am sorry for my sins  
with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more,  
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ  
suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.  
Amen.

## **Daily Prayer to Your Guardian Angel**

Angel of God  
My guardian dear,  
To Whom His love  
Commits me here,  
Ever this day  
Be at my side,  
To light and guard,  
To rule and guide.  
Amen.

## **Grace Before Meals**

Bless us, O Lord,  
and these your gifts,  
which we are about to receive  
from your goodness.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**First Eucharist Levels 1 & 2\***  
**and Grades 3, 4, 5, 6**  
**2018-2019**  
**Religious Education Calendar**  
**St. Mary of the Bay**

**Sundays 9:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.**  
**In the Classrooms at**  
**St. Mary of the Bay Church**

September 23	January 6
September 30	January 13
October 7 – No Class	January 20
October 14	January 27
October 21	February 3
October 28	February 10
November 4	February 17 –No Class
November 11	February 24
November 18	March 3 (Ash Weds. 3/6)
November 25 – No Class	March 10
December 2 (Advent begins)	March 17—No Class
December 9	March 24
December 16	March 31
December 23 – No Class	April 7
December 30—No Class	April 14
	April 21—Easter, No Class
	April 28

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**  
**for First Eucharist Levels 1 & 2 Families**

- *On the dates printed in red above, First Eucharist Students in both levels are required to attend 10:30 mass with their teachers and class. Families are encouraged to sit with the group.*
- First Penance will be celebrated on Saturday, January 19 at 10am at St. Mary of the Bay. (No class on January 20 for First Eucharist Level 2 students only.)
- First Eucharist will be celebrated on SATURDAY, May 4 at 10am at St. Mary of the Bay.

**Confirmation Preparation**  
**2018-2019**  
**Religious Education Calendar**  
**St. Mary of the Bay**

- All classes will meet at St. Mary of the Bay at 9 am on Sunday, followed by Mass together at 10:30.
- Level 1 Students will meet in Classroom 1, St. Mary of the Bay Hall.
- Level 2 Students will meet on the second floor of the Parish House (St. Mary of the Bay Rectory).

**Mandatory Parent Meetings**  
**At St. Mary of the Bay Hall**

- Level 1—Sunday, October 28 at 9:15 am (during class)
- Level 2—Sunday, November 4 at 9:15 am (during class)

**Class Schedule**

**All dates below apply to Confirmation Levels 1 & 2**

September 30  
October 14  
October 28  
November 4  
November 18  
December 2  
December 16

January 6  
January 20  
January 27 RETREAT in Newport\*  
February 10  
February 24  
March 10  
March 24  
April 14  
April 28

**Dates for Confirmation (and rehearsal) will be provided as soon as possible.**  
**\* 12 to 5 at Jesus Saviour Parish. More information will be provided.**