

OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART CHURCH

Guidelines for Parents Religious Education Program

School Office in the Rectory

120 Kings Highway / Tappan, New York 10983
(845) 365-2141 Fax: (845) 359-1410

Emails

redirector@olshtappan.com or

reschool@olshtappan.com or

readmin@olshtappan.com

Hours: 9 am to 2 pm Monday – Friday

Pastor: Reverend Francis Conka, C.O.

Religious Education Team:

Ms. Anna Vero, Director

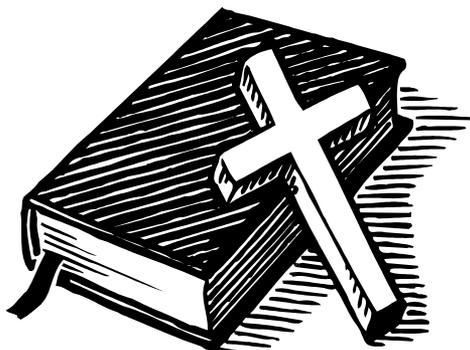
Mrs. Sarah Hunt, Mrs. Anne Swann, Assistant Directors

Parish Mass Schedule

Saturday 5 pm / Sunday 8 am, 10:30 am and 12 pm

Confessions

Saturday 4:30 pm



Dear Parents

The Catholic faith we share is a gift from God that grows and matures within the context of our family, our church and our community. Our most important responsibility is to pass this faith on to our children. Having promised God at the time of your child's Baptism, you have the primary and sacred responsibility to education your child in this faith. This gift will be a source of constant strength and will prepare your child for whatever life has in store. Plus, it will provide the pathway to an eternal life with God in Heaven. OLSH's Religious Education Program is here to assist you in this most important of all tasks.

The mission of the Religious Education Program at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is to assist you in this great responsibility. We want to help you teach your child to fall in love with Jesus by developing a true, strong and lasting relationship with God. But humans cannot develop relationships without spending time together; learning about each other, helping each other, and building trust and commitment with each other. The same is true with God. This is why in our religious education program we will stress the need for good attendance in class and at Mass. Our children need the constancy of daily prayer, weekly Mass and weekly religious education class to develop their relationship with God and strengthen their faith.

Please feel free to contact us if we can help in any way. You are most welcome to call for an appointment, stop by the Religious Education Office or send us an email.

This book is a resource for you, containing important information about the running of our program. We ask that you please observe the guidelines it contains. Also, you may visit the parish web-site at www.olshtappan.com and refer to the school calendar for additional information.

May God bless you and your family.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS CATHOLICS

It is the responsibility of every Catholic to put God first in their life. This means that they attend Mass EVERY Sunday and EVERY Holy Day of Obligation and that they live out their lives in service to God. Missing Sunday Mass is considered a grave sin and must be confessed prior to receiving the Eucharist. Our school will teach all children these important aspects of our religion - that they must attend Mass every Sunday and pray daily. Coming to religious education once per week is not just another activity that the children cram into their busy schedule. They need to understand the importance of God in their life and make religion a priority. This happens when the parents make God a priority in their lives.

RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY

Our Religious Education Program requires the active participation of families. It is important that you attend the scheduled Mandatory Parents' Meetings and the Monthly Teaching Masses as scheduled on the religious education calendar. Also, it is vital that you help your children with their religion homework, review lessons and most especially, pray together.

FAMILY CATECHESIS

Parents play a crucial role in the faith formation of their children. Hence, some of our school activities will require family participation. Attendance at the Monthly Teaching Mass is considered a family activity. In addition, each family will be required to perform a community service project – together as a family.

CANCELLATIONS

If classes need to be cancelled an email will be sent to all affected families and a message will be left on the school's answering machine (845-365-2141).

CLASS PLACEMENT

Students are expected to attend religion classes each year from grade 1 through grade 8. Any child who wishes to enter our religious education program and has not had consistent religious studies must meet with the Director to determine school placement. Some extra assistance may be needed (especially during a year in which a sacrament is received) to prepare the child. Two years of religious training is needed prior to receiving a sacrament.

HOMEWORK AND TESTING

Homework and testing will assure the knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith and practices. Please inform the Director of any accommodations needed so that your child may be taught and tested according to his/her learning style. Homework assignments are to be completed as part of the requirements for passing to the next grade. Progress reports will be sent home twice in the school year.

REGISTRATION

Registration dates and times are published in the parish bulletin and in the religious education school calendar. Your family must be registered in our parish prior to your children attending religious education classes. Desired class days are given on a first-come-first-served basis. Any child who is transferring from another parish must have their Permanent Record Card forwarded to the Religious Education office.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

As Catholics it is our responsibility to teach our children our faith. For this reason you send your child to religious education classes. Consistent attendance ensures that children get the most from their religious education. It is important that you give God and your child's religious education their rightful place among all the priorities in your child's life. In order for children to receive an adequate level of religious education they should not be absent from class and/or Monthly Teaching Mass more than **4 times during any school year**. Excessive absences may require a conference with the pastor, completion of additional assignments or, in severe cases, the child being asked to repeat the school year.

There are several ways to 'make up' for excessive absences.

- ❖ We offer several **ADDITIONAL classes** per year. All children are welcome to attend however those with excessive absences will be asked to attend. The schedule for these extra classes will be in the school calendar.
- ❖ If your child cannot attend the **Monthly Teaching Mass** at OLSH, you may attend a Mass at any Catholic Church that same weekend and complete the Monthly Teaching Mass Make-Up Work-sheet which can be found on our website.

Attendance will be recorded both for scheduled classes and for any Mass during the Monthly Teaching Mass Weekend. If a child does not attend their regular scheduled class or a mass on a Monthly Teaching Mass weekend it will be recorded as an absence.

A summary of your child's attendance will be emailed to all families periodically throughout the year. Please review this carefully and inform the Director within 60 days of any discrepancies. If notification is received after 60 days we may not be able to determine if an error was made and we may only be able to put a note in the file indicating that the attendance for a particular date is questioned by the parent.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

The New York Archdioceses requires all children to be taught how to be safe in our environment. Age appropriate training will be done during class time as per the school calendar. If a parent does NOT want their child to attend this training, they must "OPT-OUT" not less than one week before the scheduled class by sending in a note to the Director.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATIONS

No medication can be administered, distributed or taken on school property or during our school programs. Minor first aid will be provided, but in all other circumstances the parents, the emergency contact or 911 will be called. If an exception needs to be made, the parent must make a written request and provide complete directions. The Religious Education Director will respond to the request.

FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM

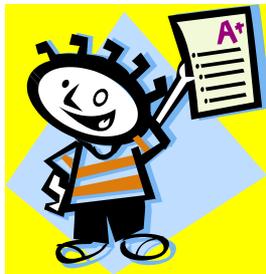
Having parties and sharing food is a welcome addition to our class activities. However we must ensure that ALL children are safe. If there is a student in your child's class who has food allergies you will be asked to not send in **any** food with your child to

class. If you know that he/she gets hungry please give them a snack BEFORE they enter our religious education school.

- ❖ If your child has eaten anything containing peanuts/nuts before coming to their religious education class, please make sure they wash their hands and face thoroughly.
- ❖ The only food which will be allowed in the classroom will be that which is supervised by the teacher (i.e. for parties, etc.) In these cases, the teacher will coordinate with the parent of the child with the allergy to ensure only food the child can consume safely are served.

HOME STUDY

A home study program is one in which children are instructed at home by their own parents. This type of instruction is allowed in very limited circumstances as the interaction of the children in the class is an important part of learning. A parent must make an appointment with the Pastor to discuss this option.



FIELD TRIPS

If a field trip is planned, the Parish-Sponsored Trip Form must be completed by the parent of every student who will participate. Phone calls will not be accepted in lieu of written permission forms.

CHURCH OFFERTORY ENVELOPES

It is important that all children learn that they are to share and support their Church each week. The amount contributed is not important. They may use the offertory envelopes which are available the first day of class or they may just put a gift in the basket.

CARPOOLING

The school must be notified if there are any restrictions regarding the dismissal of your child.

FIRE DRILLS and LOCK DOWN DRILLS

For the safety of the children, fire drills and a lock down drill are scheduled periodically.

VISITORS and DISMISSAL FROM BUILDING

No unauthorized persons are allowed in the school while classes are taking place. Once classes begin all doors are locked however, for safety reasons, they can be opened from the inside.

- ❖ Any child arriving late must ring the bell and a staff person will open the door and escort the child to class.
- ❖ If any child needs to be dismissed early, a written request must be given to the Director at the beginning of class. Then the parent who picks up the child must ring the bell and come to the office to sign the child out early.
- ❖ Children will be dismissed into the care of the parent. If a parent needs to entrust another individual with their child, the Director must be notified in writing beforehand. In addition, the Director must be informed in writing by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent as far as these relate to our program.

- ❖ All visitors must ring the school door bell and a religious education staff person will answer.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Religious education classes take place in an atmosphere of learning and Christian respect. All students are expected to be respectful to the catechist, their fellow students and parish property. Normal discipline problems will be handled by the catechist in the classroom and if necessary, by the Director/Assistant Director in the office. Repetition of such behavior will require a conference with the parents and possible removal from the program.

All students are expected to:

- ❖ exhibit the Gospel values of charity, kindness, honesty, respect, obedience to authority, etc.
- ❖ attend class on their scheduled day/time
- ❖ attend Mass each Sunday & all Holy Days of Obligation
- ❖ be on time, prepared & appropriately dressed
- ❖ miss no more than 4 classes and/or Monthly Teaching Masses
- ❖ NOT use cell phones, video games, text messaging, etc. during class time
- ❖ wait in hall before class until catechist arrives.



SACRAMENTS

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Religious Education Program prepares children for a life-long relationship with Jesus.

- ❖ **Baptism:** We expect all children to be baptized prior to enrolling in our school for the first time. A copy of the baptismal certificate must be provided at initial registration. If your child has not been baptized please see the Director as soon as possible so arrangements can be made.
- ❖ **Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Prior to receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist for the first time our second graders prepare and receive God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Our First Confession (or Reconciliation) celebration takes place on a Saturday prior to First Holy Communion as indicated in our school calendar.
- ❖ **First Holy Communion:** In the second grade we prepare our children to receive Jesus for the first time in the Holy Eucharist. This is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus and is the cornerstone of a lifelong and ongoing relationship with God. At least two years of formal religious education are necessary before receiving this sacrament. Parental participation is vital for the children's understanding of this sacrament. In order to enable parents to help their children prepare it is important that they attend the First Holy Communion Mandatory Parents' Meeting as scheduled in the school calendar. Valuable insights on explaining this sacrament to your young child and details on preparation and dress requirements will be provided.



Rehearsals: First Holy Communion will be celebrated on a Saturday in May, as announced in the school calendar. It is very important that all children attend the scheduled rehearsals which are held during the week just prior to the ceremony.

Dress: Details on the appropriate dress for the First Holy Communion ceremony will be provided at the Mandatory Parents' Meeting. In general, girls should wear a white dress, white veil, white shoes and white tights or socks. Boys should wear a dark suit, white dress shirt, white tie and dark dress shoes.



- ❖ **Confirmation:** Confirmation is the sacrament in which those who have been baptized become adults in the Church and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Students receive their Confirmation in the spring of the 8th grade. Preparation for this sacrament is a family obligation and is very comprehensive. Parental participation is vital in preparing our young adults to become adults in

the Church. Two Mandatory Confirmation Meetings, one in the fall and one in the winter, will help parents lead their children through the spiritual, as well as the educational, preparation necessary for receiving this sacrament. These meetings will be announced in the school calendar.

To assist parents in the spiritual preparation of their children, each child will choose a sponsor who will act as a spiritual guide and support system and help him/her on this spiritual journey to adulthood. This person should be someone who has a strong spiritual life and is willing to share their faith with the candidate for Confirmation. To be eligible to be a **sponsor** the person must:

- be at least 16 years old;
- be a role model in the Catholic faith;
- not be the biological parents;
- obtain a written statement from the pastor of his/her parish affirming that he/she is qualified to be a sponsor

The Confirmation Program at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church includes the following:

- regular participation in Sunday Mass and in religion classes with no more than **4 absences**
- completion of 15 hours of community service
- participation at the Confirmation retreat, Spirit Day and the Confirmation Commitment Mass
- completion of all written assignments: a saint report, sponsor report, letter to the pastor, etc.
- passing the Confirmation Test

Rehearsals: Confirmation is generally celebrated during Easter time and is announced in the school calendar. It is very important that all candidates attend the scheduled rehearsals held during the week before the ceremony.