

Parent/Student Handbook 2017-2018

St. Hugh of Grenoble Catholic Church
Parish School of Religion

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A. Philosophy

The philosophy of the St. Hugh School of Religion is based on the Church's teaching that parents are the primary educators of their children in the matters of faith. Formal religious instruction is a necessary element of, and yet supplemental to, home teaching and example. Through an enjoyable classroom and community experience, children are nurtured in the truths and teachings of the faith and are called to worship and serve Jesus as they form their Christian identity and take their place in the Christian family.

Our Religious Education program offers instruction to students from ages 4-14. It is designed for those Catholic children not attending a Catholic school. The program is not merely preparation for the reception of the sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. The Religious Education program, from the earliest years through Confirmation, is an integral part of the formation of our children and young people as they learn to live their Christian vocation as members of a Catholic faith community.

B. Living a Christian Life

Living the Catholic life is not done simply by attending Mass or Religious Education classes. The Catholic lifestyle is to be a witness to Christ every day in all that we say and do at home, at work, at school, and at play. We encourage each other to live our Christian vocation faithfully when we worship together and receive regular instruction through classes and scripture, but it is through our charity toward others-our faith in action-that we experience Jesus.

C. Role of the Parent or Guardian

The St. Hugh of Grenoble School of Religion exists to assist parents in the important responsibility of educating their children in the Catholic faith. It is essential to the child's growth and development in the Catholic faith that the parents live the life of faith in all they do. The effectiveness of the School of Religion depends on what the child receives from his or her parents on a daily basis.

One of the first things a child will learn in class is that celebrating the Eucharist on Sunday, as a family, is essential to being Catholic. Therefore, Mass attendance is taken very seriously and expected of each family enrolled in Religious Education. Learning what it means to be a participating member of a faith community also begins with the family; therefore, ***we expect each religious education family to be registered with the parish (as noted by an envelope number)***; contributing their time, talent, and treasure to it.

D. Role of the Student

Religious Obligations (to be met by each student, taking age into account):

- To participate in the Eucharistic celebration of the Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, frequently receiving our Lord in the Eucharist
- To receive the Sacrament of Penance frequently
- To try to follow the laws, norms and guidelines that inform Catholics how to love God and their neighbor, namely: the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the laws of the Church, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Academic Obligations:

- Attendance at all classes
- Completed homework
- Participation in discussions and activities
- Bringing student book and other items requested to class each time

E. Role of the Catechist

A Catechist is a person of faith who has the task of creating the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit to bring about growth in faith among believers. Catechists foster a mature faith, appropriate to the age level, through a regular, systematic presentation of the teachings of the Church. The primary mission of the Catechist is to communicate God's love to those entrusted to his or her care, by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. The tasks of the Catechist are as follows:

- To help students grow in their faith and spiritual practices
- To assist with the initiation of students into the faith community and its life, worship, symbols and practices
- To pass on the faith of the Apostles by upholding what is taught by the Catholic Church

F. Role of the Director of the School of Religion

The Director of the School of Religion at St. Hugh of Grenoble Catholic Church is delegated by the Pastor to be responsible for the development, implementation, and administration of the parish Catechetical program for children, in accordance with the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Washington. The Director has the further responsibility of implementing the principles of civil laws concerning the safety of students in accordance with the Archdiocesan Safety Guidelines. The Church is responsible to nourish the faith of all baptized persons to the degree that each individual is capable of growing. All children are able to receive religious education, taking into account any special needs regarding physical, emotional, mental or learning abilities. The Director of the School of Religion will ensure this for all children of the parish.

G. Curriculum

The book series used by the School of Religion for 2017-2018 is called Faith and Life and is published by Ignatius Press. Last year the catechists for grades PreK/K, 1, and 3 piloted the book series called Finding God, published by Loyola Press, while using Faith and Life as a resource. Both series are approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) guidelines regarding catechesis for children and meet the requirements for the Archdiocese of Washington's New Evangelization Curriculum. They both use a spiral education approach, meaning that children will be taught the essentials of the faith year after year in ways unique to each grade level. This is designed to help the students embody their faith from the earliest age, and build upon it year after year.

Each student will have take-home materials, and we encourage you to look through them on a regular basis. As mentioned earlier, the School of Religion partners with the parents and neither can form the children adequately without the other. We will help you in every way possible, and we ask that you do all you can to partner with us in this holy responsibility.

If at any time you have a question about the materials being used, please feel free to speak with your child's Catechist or the Director of the School of Religion.

H. Sacramental Preparation

As the children mature, they are formed and prepared to receive the sacraments of Penance, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. The preparation for these sacraments happens within the community of faith and begins in the very early years and includes regular attendance at Mass.

- The traditional age to receive the sacraments of First Penance and First Holy Communion is around 7/8. Children must be in a Religious Education program for two years to prepare for these sacraments.
- The traditional age for Confirmation is around 13/14. Students must be in the parish preparation program for two years.

If you have a circumstance that prevents your child from proceeding according to this schedule, please speak with the Director of the School of Religion. Each situation will be considered and handled as best for all involved.

As your child approaches the preparation years, you will receive further information regarding parental roles and responsibilities, meetings, and other items specific to the sacrament.

I. St. Hugh School of Religion Policies and Procedures

Homework

Homework is assigned by the Catechists in their best judgement. It is our hope that parents will spend time with the child as he or she completes the homework assignment.

Evaluation

On a schedule arranged by the catechist, there will be formal evaluations. A certain amount of knowledge will be expected to be retained by each student in our program. Review of each session's learnings at home is essential to the retention of the materials being presented to the student.

Those in grades three through eight will also have a formal assessment by the Archdiocese in the form of a standardized test. This will occur in October.

Progress Reports

The students will receive a progress Report from their Catechist twice a year; in December and April. The purpose of this Progress Report is to communicate with our families how their children demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and practice of our Catholic faith as evidenced in their homework, classwork, and classroom participation. A copy of their final progress report will be kept in their family records file in the Director's office.

Retention

Students who do not satisfactorily complete the course of study at each grade level or do not attend the required number of Catechetical sessions may be retained and required to repeat the level. This is at the discretion of the Director of the School of Religion in consultation with the Catechist and the Pastor.

Textbooks

Textbooks are furnished to all students enrolled in the Religious Education program. It is our hope that the books will be properly safeguarded. The Catechist will distribute the books on the first day of class. The student is to inscribe their name and the name of the Catechist on the front inside cover of the book. Books are to be brought to class for each session. If a book is lost or damaged, a new one must be purchased immediately. The cost to replace the text book is \$20.00. Each student will also receive an activity book, for use by the student. This book may be written in. If lost, the cost to replace it is \$10.00.

Attendance

Your child's regular attendance at Religious Education classes is extremely important. If your child is going to miss a class, please contact the Director of the School of Religion at shreligioused4@gmail.com or 301-542-7140. Absence from more than four sessions in one Catechetical year may be reason

to repeat the grade level. This decision will be made by the Director of the School of Religion in consultation with the Catechist and the Pastor.

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Students must arrive at the school gym *with a parent or guardian* immediately following the 9:30 Mass, usually between 10:30 and 10:45am, each Sunday that class is held. The Children and families gather for prayer and announcements before the children are dismissed with their Catechist to the classrooms.

Please pick up your children from the school gym or lobby. Classes are dismissed at 12:30 pm. Thank you.

Student Transfer/Early Withdrawal

If a student leaves the program before the completion of the Catechetical year or is transferring to another parish at the end of the Catechetical year, please advise the Director of the School of Religion so that we may say our proper “goodbyes.”

Cancellation of Class

In case of inclement weather, cancellations will be announced by 7am Sunday morning via email. If you do not have internet access from home, please contact the Director at 301-542-7140 or call another family in the School of Religion.

For evening classes or activities during the week, we follow the Prince George’s County Public Schools announcements.

If it is sleeting or raining ice on a Sunday morning, the School of Religion will be closed.

Student Behavior and Discipline

Every student that attends the Parish School of Religion is expected to cooperate in creating a pleasant, Christian atmosphere. The behavior expected of students is a combination of common courtesy and safety regulations.

The following types of conduct are inappropriate:

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|--|-------------------------------|
| Fighting | Defiance of Staff |
| Profanity | Intimidation/Bullying |
| Possession of illicit substance | Possession of dangerous items |
| Possession of tobacco or alcohol | Cheating |
| Chewing Gum | Habitual Tardiness/Absence |
| Inappropriate dress | Damage/Vandalism of property |
| Leaving the building | |
| Refusal to complete homework or participate in class discussions | |

The discipline given will be dependent upon the nature of the misbehavior and parents/guardians will be notified. In the case of vandalism or destruction of

school property, parents will be expected to pay for the repair/replacement of what was damaged. Any misbehavior involving illegal substances, items or behaviors will be brought to the attention of the Pastor to guide the course of any further action.

Registration Procedures

New Students

Registration dates will be published in the parish bulletin in the summer.

Requirements:

- Completed registration forms
- Baptismal certificate and other sacramental records if sacraments were administered at a different parish
- Records of attendance in previous Religious Education program
- Payment of tuition and fees
- Family photo for the Religious Ed Photo Directory (optional)

Returning Students

- Re-registration form
- payment of tuition and fees

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fees are used for educational materials, supplies and activities throughout the catechetical year. The balance of funds needed to maintain our program is provided by the parish budget.

2017-2018 Tuition

One Child - \$75; Two Children - \$125; Three or more Children - \$150
Books/Materials - \$30 per child enrolled

Sacramental Prep Fee

1st Penance and 1st Holy Communion - \$25 per child

Confirmation - \$50 per child

This fee covers the cost of extra materials and retreats.

J. Safety

Fire Drills

At least once per semester a fire drill will take place during Religious Education. Students will be instructed as to the procedures before the drill is to take place.

Medical Emergency Procedures

Parents will complete medical emergency information for each enrolled child. The information is needed to inform us of each child's allergies, special health concerns and emergence contact information. All

information will be updated annually and used only for the proper care of your children.

If a child is involved in a **minor accident:**

The student will be brought to the Director of the School of Religion and if needed, minor treatment will be given – cleansing, bandaging, etc. The parent will be notified upon pick-up.

If there is a **more serious accident or illness:**

The parent will be notified immediately, and 911 will be called. The Pastor will be informed and appropriate documentation made.

Safe Environment Program

Circle of Grace is the safe environment program for children and youth, introduced in the Archdiocese of Washington and adopted by our parish School of Religion in the 2013-2014 Catechetical year. The goal of the program is to help children and youth understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help when needed through their relationships with trusted adults. A summary of the key concepts of **Circle of Grace** will go home with each family on the first day of classes after a brief demonstration lesson. Additional handouts will go home throughout the year. You may review the lessons, ask questions, or get additional information by contacting the Director of the School of Religion.

After reading the Parent/Student Handbook for 2017-18, please print, sign, and return this form. Thank you.

Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the St. Hugh of Grenoble School of Religion Parent Handbook, 2017-18.

I agree to abide by the policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.

I agree to support the ministry of the School of Religion and the Parish of St. Hugh in my children's spiritual formation to the best of my ability, through regular Mass attendance, regular attendance at Sunday classes and full participation in any sacramental preparation program if applicable.

Parents' Name/s (please print)

Parents' Signature

Date _____