

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

103 S. Center St.

Orange, NJ 07050

Religious Education Handbook

2016-2017

Personnel

Fr. Bernard Mary, Pastor
Fr. Martin de Porres, Parochial Vicar
Br. Daniel Kolbe, Dir. Religious Education and RCIA
Ms. Karen Fajardo, Assistant Coordinator
Br. John Timothy, Youth Minister

Contact Information

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Program Philosophy

The Catechetical Programs of Our Lady of Mount Carmel are based on the belief that religious education and formation is a lifelong 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 Mount Carmel Parish, they are being catechized by 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 lifelong 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.

GRADES K-6 DATES

Classes begin September 18th 2016
Classes end June 18th 2017.

Classes are from 10:30am to 11:40am on Sunday.
There are classes every Sunday except for the dates listed below.

No classes on:

- November 20th
- December 25th
- January 1st
- April 9th
- April 16th
- May 21st

GRADES 7-12 DATES

Classes begin September 22nd, 2016
Classes end June 15th, 2017.

Classes are from 6:30pm to 8:00pm on Thursday.
Mandatory NET Retreat on April 29th, 2017 (10am-10pm)
There are classes every Thursday except for the dates listed below.

No classes on:

- November 24th
- December 29th
- January 5th
- April 20th

Adult Catechesis

Parents are required to attend adult catechism classes as well. Every Sunday at the same time the children go to class, parents will meet in the School basement. As your children grow in faith, you as a parent will have the same opportunity.

Confirmation Dates

Confirmation Retreat is April 29th, 2017 (NET Ret.), 10am-10pm. The Confirmation Mass is at Saint Joseph's Church in East Orange is June 4, 2017 at 4pm.

First Communion Dates

First Reconciliation May 6th, 2017 (10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm)
First Reconciliation May 27th, 2017 (10am-12pm and 2pm-4pm)
First Communion Retreat is June 10th, 2017
First Communion is June 18th, 2017 at 10am Mass.

Family Spiritual Life

In order to blend learning about faith at home as well as in the classroom, we encourage our religious education families to follow these guidelines:

1. Please feed your children before sending them to class. Many children on Sunday arrive to class at 10:30am without a good breakfast!
2. Ask your child what he or she learned in class, review their work, and emphasize the importance of learning about our faith.
3. Make sure your child has done their homework and readings for the next class.
4. Attend Mass together every Sunday and on Holy Days.

5. Read the text notes sent by the parish, parish bulletin and web site to keep updated.
6. Pray together daily.
7. Establish family Advent, Christmas, Lenten and Easter traditions.
8. Attend special parish events together.
9. Reinforce the Corporal Works of Mercy by donating to food drives, special collections, and parish fundraisers.
10. Once your child has received the Sacrament of Reconciliation, take your child to confession on a regular basis.
11. Consider volunteering in a parish ministry.
12. Parents must attend adult catechism classes so that they can grow in faith along with their children.

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 Mount Carmel property.

- ✓ If a child misbehaves in the classroom, a warning will be given by the Catechist or classroom aid.
- ✓ If the child continues with the inappropriate behavior, he or she will be sent to the Parish Office.
- ✓ If an understanding about the behavior is reached, he or she will be returned to the classroom.
- ✓ If the behavior continues, the DRE will call the parents.
- ✓ If a child continues to disrupt the learning environment after all of these measures, it will be necessary to seek an alternative method of instruction. The Pastor, DRE, Catechist, and parent would make this decision jointly.

General Behavior Guidelines

- No student is to enter a classroom without a teacher or parent present. If the teacher has not arrived the parent should wait until the teacher arrives.
- Hats and bandannas may not be worn in the building.
- Students may not use cell phones or other electronic devices during class (Catechists may collect devices and return after class).
- Inappropriate or revealing clothing may not be worn.
- Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
- **No food or drink is allowed in the classrooms or hallways.**

Attendance/Absenteeism

For safety reasons, if your child is unable to attend a religious education class the parish must be notified in one of the following three ways. You must always include your child's name and grade level.

- Call the Religious Education Office at 862-250-5333 and leave a message on voicemail
- Respond to text message class reminder sent by the parish.
- Send an email to olmc.dre@gmail.com.

For all levels only 3 absences will be allowed. Every absence after the 3rd the teacher will assign extra homework to be done during the week. If the child will be receiving a sacrament (1st communion, confirmation), 3 or more absences can be a reason for the child not to receive the sacrament this year.

Please note that for all programs, if your child arrives late or leaves early 3 times, that will equal 1 absence.

Arrival and Dismissal

For Sunday and Thursday classes parents will drop off their children at the classrooms. Parents will pick up their children at the classroom at the end of class. If someone other than parents will be picking up the child a release form will need to be filled out by the parents ahead of time.

- If you need to pick up your child early, a parent must come to the Parish Office and your child will be brought to the Parish Office to sign out before leaving.
- Nobody is allowed in the building while classes are in session except the teachers and students. If you need to contact your child during classes please go to the Parish Office and request to see your child.

Emergency Closings

Sunday and Thursday classes can be canceled at the discretion of the Coordinator and the Pastor.

All emergency closings will be posted on our website www.olmcorange.com and you will receive a text message from the parish.

Homework

Students in all grades will be expected to learn and memorize prayers and doctrine based on grade level. The material will be sent home for parents to work on with their children. There will be testing in class to be sure children are learning the material. If your child is having trouble learning/memorizing the prayers and doctrine, please contact the Coordinator to discuss an alternate plan.

Sacraments

All children should be baptized to participate in Religious Education classes. If your child is not baptized please contact the Parish Office to request that your child be baptized as soon as possible.

Preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist are offered starting in the 3rd Grade. If we decide that your child isn't ready this year they will be asked to wait another year.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is offered in 9th grade. If we decide that your child isn't ready this year they will be asked to wait another year. Our Confirmation preparation program begins in the 7th grade. In order for children to be prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is necessary to complete religious education classes for **all** grades 7-9. All students making Confirmation will also be required to attend a Confirmation retreat, Confirmation rehearsal, and complete community service.

Mass Attendance

Students and parents are required to attend Sunday Mass. Get a Mass attendance coupon from the Parish Office before Mass and then put it into the collection basket.

Rights

This handbook is primarily a means of communications. It is meant to provide you the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how we intend to go about our work.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catechetical Program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified in writing if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.

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.

Examples:

- A child cannot be threatened or intimidated in any way such as being removed from a team because of absence due to religious affiliation/responsibility.
- A child cannot be mocked or ridiculed for religious conviction.
- The reason a child is not present, arriving late, or leaving early cannot be pointed out or discussed with students or staff.
- Other penalties such as benching, extra laps, or any kind of punishment because of absence, late arrival or early dismissal due to the student's religious practices or responsibilities are also violations of the law.

Notes