



Mother of Christ Religious Education Program

Dear Parents,

This is your copy of the Rules and Regulations Handbook for Mother of Christ Parish Religious Education Program.

In order that you might better understand the philosophy and requirements of Mother of Christ Parish Religious Education Program, it is important that you thoroughly read this handbook.

Please sign and return the slip below, which indicates that you have read and accepted the rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

Sylvia R. Lopez

Parish Coordinator of Religious Education

Mother of Christ Catholic Church

Tear here and Return to Teacher

I have read and do accept the rules and regulations as printed in the handbook.

(Each child enrolled must have their own signed form in his/her file)

Child's Name

Class

Day of week child attends

Mother's/Guardian Signature

Date

Father's/Guardian Signature

Date



Rules and Regulations Handbook

Mother of Christ Parish Religious Education Program

2023-2024

Director of Religious Education: Father Jorge A. Carvajal
Parish Vicar: Father James Arriola

Coordinator of Religious Education: Sylvia R. Lopez

14141 S.W. 26 Street
Miami, FL 33175
Telephone: 305-559-0163
Email: ccd@motherofchrist.net

Our Philosophy

We believe that everyone has the right to a Religious Education, and that it should be made readily available and accessible to all who seek it.

We recognize that Religious Education is a never ending and life long process to provide all those seeking to know their faith with the knowledge to understand the truths of our catholic faith, and God's infinite love for all.

We believe that every catholic has the responsibility to transmit their faith to everyone with whom their lives touch upon, using their God given gifts to fulfill this responsibility.

We adhere to our Lord's command to "make disciples of all men".

With this in mind, we dedicate ourselves to the mission of transmitting our faith using our knowledge, experience, values and skills combined with the most effective teaching tools available.

We commit ourselves to helping everyone discover the presence of God within their own lives and the lives of others around them, thereby helping them to establish long lasting relationships within our community.

We will work hard with our students to help them understand the mysteries of our catholic faith, and will walk hand in hand with them through the path that will lead them to our Lord.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

General Expectations

"It is expected that each family become actively involved in Mother of Christ Religious Education Program and Parish in order to model a living, conscious and active Christian faith and to reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children also agree to act in accordance with these values and attitudes."

Mass Attendance

The third of the Ten Commandments given to Moses by God is, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day."

Christians observe Sunday as a day of worship and rest in order to honor the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Before his Crucifixion, Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper when he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you. Do this in memory of me." When we celebrate the Mass, we repeat the Last Supper, as Jesus commanded us to do. In doing this, we remember his great act of love for us on the Cross – taking our sins upon himself so that we can live with him forever in heaven. Therefore, the Church teaches that we must fulfill the command of Jesus by attending Mass. **The Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2042) explains that attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is the first of the five Precepts of the Church. Willingly disobeying this precept is seriously sinful.**

All students who are registered in the Mother of Christ Office of Religious Education for Sacramental instruction are required to attend Mass every Sunday (or Saturday Evening).

Class Attendance

For your child's safety, he/she must be dropped off at the school's back door. At the end of class, the parent, or a designated person the parent has allowed to pick up their child (which is noted on the Teacher/ Student Emergency Form), must pick up from the school's back door.

If your child will be late to class, parents are to call the Office of Religious Education at (305) 559-0163 to have the door opened. **"3" tardies is equal to "1" absence. A maximum of "5" absences is allowed in a school year. (September-May)** If your child is absent, upon returning to class, they must bring a doctor's note to their teacher for their absence.

Students are not allowed to drive themselves to class, an adult must drop them off.

Custody Issues

Archdiocesan Policy

In the case of a baptized Catholic child, either parent or a legal guardian may enroll their child as a faith formation student at Mother of Christ Catholic Church Religious Education Program. In the case of a child who is **not baptized as a Catholic**, the person who enrolls the child as a faith formation student at Mother of Christ must provide either (1) written consent of the other, non-enrolling parent or legal guardian on the attached form, or (2) appropriate legal documentation at the time of enrollment of his/her sole authority to enroll the child, such as a court order. Documentation of consent of all persons who have custody rights for the child is required for religious education classes, Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for children, sacramental preparation classes, Catholic school enrollment and youth ministry activities, **if the child is not baptized as a Catholic.**

Registrations

No person the ground of race, color, or national origin is excluded otherwise subjected to discrimination in receiving services at the religious education program. Nor do we discriminate in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, sex or national origin.

It is the goal of the parish to provide religious education for every child in the parish. In the rare cases, the parish may not be able to invite a student into the program because it does not have the resources to meet the special needs of the child. In such cases, the parish will assist the parents in providing catechesis for their child, especially in preparation for the sacraments.

The pastor has the final decision in matters of admission or dismissal to the program or to the reception of a sacrament.

Parental Communication with the Religious Education Program

Persons with the concerns about a catechist should first attempt to address the concern with the catechist. Only after such attempts have failed, should the parent contact the parish Director /Coordinator of Religious Education. If the parent continues to be dissatisfied, the parent should contact the pastor. Only after such attempts have failed should the Office of Catechesis of the Archdiocese of Miami be contacted. All concerns or comments arriving at our offices will be followed up with the pastor and the parish Catechetical Leader.

Early Release of Students

A child must never be released early without the knowledge of the parent/guardian; The Coordinator of Religious Education will release the child only to the person who has placed the child in the religious education program. Any other person seeking the release of the child must have the approval of the parent with legal custody, which ordinarily shall be in writing. Please notify the office at (305) 559-0163 or ccd@motherofchrist.net if such a need arises.

DISCIPLINE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults

“Recognizing that each individual is created by God, the Archdiocese of Miami is committed to the safety and well-being of its children and vulnerable adults and implements procedures to minimize risk and barriers and to build and foster a culture of safe environment. The Archdiocese does not tolerate abuse or neglect of anyone. It will comply with all the obligations of civil and canon law; it will promote healing where it is needed, provide education, training and guidance when it is appropriate, and endeavor to prevent any abuse of minors or vulnerable adults with firm justice and mercy towards all.”

(Archdiocesan Policy)

Confidentiality

Catechists must keep confidential information entrusted to them as long as no one’s life, health or safety is at stake. In these cases, parents will be promptly notified of catechist concerns.

Conduct, whether inside or outside the Religious Education Program

A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the religious education program, that is contrary to the moral code of the Catholic Church may be asked to leave the program.

Field Trips

“**Archdiocesan policy** not only discourages field trips that extend beyond religious education program hours for elementary religious education programs but also forbids overnight field trips for elementary religious education programs.”

Field trips are privileges given to students; no student has an absolute right to a field trip. Students can be denied participation if they fail to meet academic and/or behavioral requirements.

Parents may choose **not** to have their child participate in a field trip.

Students are required to bring a parental permission slip which releases the religious education program from liability to participate in a field trip. Students who fail to submit a proper form will not be allowed to participate in the field trip. Telephone calls will not be accepted in lieu of written permission. If a child forgets to bring home the permission slip, a parent could get a copy of the form from the Religious Education Office and complete it. This form could be faxed to the religious education program. Only the completion of this form satisfies the requirement of parental permission.

Search and Seizure

Search and Seizure are strongly discouraged in parish religious education programs. In case of reasonable suspicion of dangerous materials, report this to the legal authorities, inform pastor and archdiocesan Office of Catechesis.

Reporting Physical Sexual Abuse

Archdiocesan Policy

“A Catechetical Leader who has been notified, or know, or have reasonable cause to suspect, that a child or vulnerable adult has been a victim of sexual abuse, shall immediately make any report required by law directly to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).” The parish pastor will contact the Archdiocesan Office of Catechesis and the Archdiocesan Office of Safe Environment in case of doubts about the archdiocesan policy on reporting procedures.

Parents and guardians should understand that Florida State law requires a teacher or administrator who has reasonable suspicion that sexual or physical abuse has occurred to report this to the Division of Children and Family Services. The

teacher or administrator who fails to fulfill this responsibility can be charged with sexual or physical abuse, because the silence contributes to the crime.

Harassment

“The Archdiocese of Miami religious education programs are committed to providing a safe, Christian, healthy and respectful environment that is free of discrimination. In keeping with this commitment, our parish will not tolerate harassment of employee or volunteers or students occurring in the religious education program or at religious education program-sponsored events.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, and/or visual, that is based on a person’s protected status, such as sex, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital status, veteran status, citizenship status or other protected group status. The Archdiocesan religious education programs will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects tangible job benefits, that interferes unreasonably with an individual’s work performance, or that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.”

Cooperation with Legal Authorities

It is the practice of the religious education program to cooperate with any local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers that contact the religious education program in the course of any criminal investigation. The religious education program will attempt to notify the parents of any student sought to be interviewed in the course of a criminal investigation on the religious education program premises, unless directed by an investigator or law enforcement officer to the contrary, which is usually the case in investigations involving sexual or physical abuse. The religious education program will attempt as well to have a representative present during such an interview, unless this is not permitted by the investigators, which is often the case in investigations involving sexual or physical abuse.

Student Withdrawal

The Catholic Church considers the parents to be the primary catechists of their children. The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the religious education program. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child, if desired, the religious education program administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken. As part of this partnership, parents are expected to pay tuition that is charged for the Religious Education Program.

Substance Abuse Policy

All Archdiocesan religious education programs are committed to a drug free environment. Any student selling drugs on religious education program property or at religious education program functions are to be immediately expelled. All Archdiocesan procedures must be followed when it comes to child safety.

Weapons Policy

Weapons are not permitted anywhere on religious education program grounds. Students who bring weapons on religious education program grounds, who are in possession of weapons, or who threaten others with weapons or items used as weapons will be expelled from the religious education program.

Anti-bullying Policy

Please refer to the Archdiocesan Anti-bullying Policy

HEALTH ISSUES AND PROCEDURES

Medication Procedures

The administering of medicine to a child outside the doctor's office or a health institution is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to religious education program personnel except under unusual circumstances. Only when absolutely necessary is the religious education program willing to accept responsibility for administering medications, and then under the following guidelines:

- The religious education program will never administer/dispense medicines (Including "over the counter drugs") to students without specific authorization by both a licensed physician and the parent of the student. An "Authorization for Medication" form must be completed and submitted by the parent. The name of the medication and dosage must be indicated on this form.
- All medication must be brought to the office with a parent's authorization.
- Only prescription medication can be brought to religious education program and must be stored in a religious education program office; no over-the-counter medication is allowed, unless a doctor's written authorization is submitted.
- Prescription medication must be in the original bottle, which must be labeled and must have the exact dosage.
- The religious education program will not dispense medication, so students are responsible for their own medication.
- All medications will remain in a secure location. (By exception, students who are asthmatic may carry a prescribed inhaler with them during the religious education program day.) A written log will be kept of dispensed medication.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION RECORDS

Student Records Retention

The following records are kept in the official file of the student: sacramental records, health records and an emergency information sheet. Only the contents of the official file will be forwarded to a new religious education program.

Use of Student Pictures and Video

The religious education program reserves the right to use student pictures in publications. Any parent who wishes to opt out must notify the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education in writing prior to the beginning of the religious education program year. A release form can be found in the Mother of Christ Office of Religious Education.

Emergency Information

The policy of the religious education program with regard to program closings in cases of emergencies is to follow Public Schools decisions in the county in which the religious education program is located. Parents should listen to broadcasts and keep their children home on days when the local public schools are closed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY AND DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'S RIGHT TO AMEND

"Since situations can arise that were not foreseen at the time of writing this Handbook, the religious education program reserves the right to initiate, change or modify the policies as needed. Parents and students will be notified of any amendments.

The Coordinator of Religious Education and/or Pastor is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rules for just cause at his/her discretion."