



*Mary, Mother of the Redeemer,
help us share in the work of
redemption.*

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer
Parish Religious Education Program (PREP)
Family Handbook

(Revised 8/4/23))

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This handbook acts as an agreement between Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish and the parents and their children who participate in the PREP outlined within. By enrolling your child into our program, you agree to support and abide by the provisions outlined in this handbook. Parents are therefore encouraged to discuss these provisions with their children to ensure that all parties understand the requirements and obligations of their participation in the PREP.



Mary, Mother of the Redeemer

— CATHOLIC CHURCH —

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer
Religious Education Office
1321 Upper State Road
North Wales, PA 19454
215-412-2251

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Mary, Mother of the Redeemer's PREP. We look forward to another opportunity to minister to God's children and help them and their families to know and feel His love.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia determines our curriculum for each level of PREP (Parish Religious Education Program). It is conveyed to our children by faith-filled *volunteers*, blessed with the gifts of teaching and love for children. Please support them in prayer and cooperation throughout the coming year.

Please take a few moments to review the following handbook. Upon review of this handbook, if you should have any questions, please reach out to the Religious Education Office. Our working together will ensure your child's safe and fruitful completion of another school year.

If the PREP Staff can be of any help to you or to your children during this exciting time of faith formation, please feel free to contact us at 215-412-2251.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Bull

Mrs. Lisa Bull, Director of Youth Faith Formation
Mrs. Valerie Haynos, Administrative Assistant

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

Our staff is always available to answer any questions you may have about our Religious Education Program.

Monsignor John T. Conway, Pastor

Father Mark A. Tobin, Parochial Vicar

Deacon Bernard Ekeagwu, Transitional Deacon

Mrs. Lisa Bull, Director of Youth Faith Formation 215-412-2251 ex. 508
Lbull@mmredeemer.org

Mrs. Maria Malone, Director of Adult Faith Formation 215-362-7400 ex. 118
mariamalone@mmredeemer.org

Mrs. Valerie Haynos, Administrative Assistant 215-412-2251 ex. 507
Valeriehaynos@mmredeemer.org

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish Religious Education Program is to assist parents and guardians as the primary educators in the faith formation of their children. Through the teamwork of parents and catechists, children will embrace their own faith-filled journey that is rooted in a prayerful love of God, community service and knowledge of their Catholic faith.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish affirms the teaching of the Second Vatican Council which states that parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Our catechists supplement, in a more formal way, the education in faith that occurs in the home. With your help in the following areas, together we can make your child's PREP experience positive and productive:

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Teach your child to pray in their own words as well as to learn the prayers required at their level (as well as review previous learned prayers). See: Curriculum
- Ask your child about their lesson and continue to check your email for information from our office.
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- Help your child be conscientious of assignments given to them.

- Join your child in participating in activities offered in his/her grade.
- Attend special Liturgies held during your child's PREP classes throughout the year.
- Check the MMR Parish Bulletin and website for important information regarding the PREP.

CURRICULUM

Christ, Our Life, the textbook used in our program is approved by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. There are additional textbooks by Loyola Press distributed during Sacrament years. Archdiocesan guidelines are adhered to for each grade level.

General Curriculum:

Level 1:	Creation, Jesus, Baptism
Level 2:	Trinity, Mass, Reconciliation, Eucharist
Level 3:	Trinity, God's Law, Christian Community
Level 4:	Beatitudes, Sin, Works of Mercy
Level 5:	Sacraments, Sacramentals, Liturgical Year
Level 6:	Bible, Old Testament, Jesus fulfills
Level 7:	New Testament, Confirmation
Level 8:	Church History, Jesus' Law of Love

Prayers to be learned:

Preschool & Kindergarten	Sign of the Cross, Story of Creation
Level 1:	Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace Before and After Meals
Level 2:	Simple Morning Offering, Act of Contrition, Lord Have Mercy (Mass) and other Basic Mass Responses
Level 3:	Morning Offering, Apostles Creed
Level 4-7:	Angelus, Queen of Heaven, Prayers at Mass, Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, Acts of Faith, Hope and Love, Come Holy Spirit

Final grades are recorded on the Archdiocesan Religious Education Permanent Record Cards, which are kept on file. Children in grades 2-7 will be given assessments throughout the year. Grades are also based on classroom participation, effort, and completion of assignments and conduct. Your child's catechist will indicate if a conference is necessary.

ASSESSMENTS

Students need proficient mastery of the required material for their grade level for promotion at the end of the year. Assessing student progress provides feedback to students, parents, and catechists alike, and allows corrective measures to be taken until proficient mastery is not attained.

The Program's goal is to help students come to know their faith and the teachings of Christ Jesus and his Church and to enable them to live their faith as a disciple of Christ Jesus. To help achieve this goal, catechists will administer various formative assessments to students over the course of each semester. Formative assessments monitor student learning and provide ongoing feedback to catechists and students in order to improve student learning. Specifically, formative assessments help students identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they and catechists can target areas that need work.

Assessments are at the discretion of the catechist, and may be formal or informal. In the event of a formal assessment, catechists will provide a minimum of one week advanced notice to students.

ATTENDANCE

The Archdiocesan Office for Catechetical Formation requires a MINIMUM of 30 hours of religious instruction per grade, per year. The faith formation received in the program is ongoing in that each session builds upon the previous session. Therefore, it is imperative that children attend their program sessions regularly. Each student may have no more than three absences in a calendar year. If an absence occurs, please notify your child's catechist via email. The program director has the authority to excuse an absence based on medical and personal needs. Such absences should be communicated via email or phone prior to the start of class.

After the third absence, the program director will contact the parents via email to notify parents that your child may be required to repeat the grade level or make up classes at the end of the PREP year with the Director of Youth Faith Formation or their appointed catechist. In extreme circumstances, dismissal from the program could result should absences continue.

Only the program director has the authority to excuse an absence based on medical and personal needs. Such absences should be communicated via email or phone prior to the start of class. A discussion and documentation may be necessary.

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For those families that have selected **Family Catechesis**, as their primary PREP education, attendance at the six predetermined Sunday classes is required. In addition, it is expected the family celebrate Sunday Mass prior to their attendance at the class. Families are only permitted to miss one Sunday class during the calendar year. Missing more than one class will make the family ineligible to participate in family catechesis for the following school year. If a class is missed, materials should be picked up from the PREP office in a timely manner. Please note: students in a sacramental year are not eligible for Family Catechesis.

ANY PARTICIPANT ACCUMULATING SIX ABSENCES MAY BE DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM. The participant may re-enroll the following school year. Upon re-enrollment, the participant will be required to repeat the previous grade level that was not completed. This proceeding may delay the reception of sacraments.

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for a period of one year will be required to make-up the missed level upon re-enrollment into the program. (e.g., a student who leaves the program for a period of one year after completing grade 2 and re-enrolls in the program when they are in 4th grade will be placed into a 3rd grade catechetical class.)

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for two or more consecutive years must fulfill the following two requirements:

1. The participant will be placed into a grade level that is one below their current grade level. (e.g., a student leaves the program after completing 2nd grade and re-enrolls when he is in 5th grade. The student has missed two consecutive years of formation. Therefore, he would be placed into the 4th grade PREP session upon re-enrollment.)
2. In addition, parents will be required to home school their child for at least one missed year in addition to their child attending sessions regularly. (e.g., using the example above, the 5th grade student who missed two consecutive years of formation would be placed into a 4th grade session, and in addition to attending his weekly catechetical sessions, his parents must also provide home schooling for the missed 3rd grade material).

NB. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia REQUIRES a minimum of two consecutive years of formation *prior* to a child receiving a sacrament. Students who leave the program following First Holy Communion and re-enroll in grade 7 in order to receive Confirmation DO NOT meet this requirement. Therefore, their reception of Confirmation will be deferred. Reception of the sacrament in 7th grade would mandate the Archdiocesan 30 hours requirement during the 7th grade level *and* participation in 6th grade weekly PREP session.

LATENESS/EARLY DISMISSAL

Sessions begin promptly at their designated times. Therefore, any student arriving after the designated starting time will be considered late. Chronic lateness will require a conference with a parent and might interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments. Class time is set for one hour and twenty minutes. Class ends with community prayer. It is very disruptive to the class if students leave early. If on the rare occasion that a student needs to leave early, a note or email from the parent must accompany the student that night. No more than two early dismissals will be permitted during the calendar year. Habitual early dismissal will require a conference with the parent and director and might interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN IS OUR UTMOST CONCERN. WE ASK EACH FAMILY TO KINDLY FOLLOW OUR DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY BELOW IN ORDER TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE.

ARRIVAL

Please do not drop off children more than 10 minutes prior to class time. We *cannot* have children unattended in the building for any period of time. You may use the circle driveway in the front of the school to drop off your child. You must remain in the car. There is to be no parking in this circle. ***THE SIDE DOORS WILL REMAIN LOCKED AT ALL TIMES DURING DROP OFF AND CLASS. PLEASE USE THE FRONT DOORS FOR ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL. THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN IS OUR UTMOST CONCERN.***

DISMISSAL

We will have two dismissal locations that will be divided based on last name. We ask parents to remain in the cars at all times during the dismissal process for a smooth dismissal. Students will be supervised during dismissal by our staff, catechists and aides. To assist with the process, we ask that all families place a sign in the front window of their car displaying the family last name.

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LAST NAME A – L

Families whose last names begin with A – L should enter the campus from the traffic light on Upper State Road. Cars will then proceed to the circle in front of the building for pickup. Please form one line of cars only and remain in your car the entire time. Please have your name displayed on the windshield for the staff member. Once your child (ren) are safely in the car, **please wait for the car in front of you to leave before exiting.** We ask that you do not jump the line in the left lane.

LAST NAME M – Z

Families whose last names begin with M – Z should enter the campus through the Church entrance on Upper State Road. Cars will then proceed through the Church parking lot and turn left at the aisle just past the festival shed. Proceed forward to enter the upper circle. Please line up on the circle with the passenger side of the car on the curbside. Please have your family name displayed in the windshield for the staff member. Once your child (ren) are safely in the car, **please wait for the car in front of you to leave before exiting.** We ask that you do not jump the line in the left lane.

PLEASE NOTE

If you are in a car pool situation, please make sure your child knows which car line they should be reporting to that day. For example: If your child's last name is Jones but Mrs. Smith is picking up the child, the child should be told to go to the M – Z car line that day.

<h2>SACRAMENT REQUIREMENTS</h2>
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Sacraments can be received only when the following criteria are met:

- the student has had two (2) years of religious instruction prior to receiving the Sacrament
- the family is registered in the parish
- the family participates at Sunday Mass
- the parent(s) and candidate **MUST** participate in the required **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES** (All meetings, retreats and practices).

COMMUNICATION

Along with this handbook, you have received a Calendar of Events for this school year. Please plan ahead by putting the dates that concern your child and your family on your calendars now. All dates, including the Sacraments, have been scheduled. Please note: Due to the Liturgical calendar, PREP classes have been modified or canceled as to invite families to attend Mass with the PREP community on selected Tuesday or Wednesday evenings. These dates have been noted on the PREP calendar and a reminder will be communicated by the office as they arise.

Blackboard Connect: In order to be more environmentally friendly and cost conscious we will be going “paperless” as much as possible this year. All information from the PREP office will be sent to you via email. All weather related closings would be announced through this Blackboard Connect system. If we do not have your email and emergency phone information please call our office as soon as possible so we can update our records.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Our program abides by the policies and procedures as set forth by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and other program related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order.

If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

BEHAVIOR

Respectful behavior toward staff, catechists and classmates is required at all times. Parents are urged to remind their children that the time they spend in PREP is just as important to their development as the time they spend in their other classes at school. Rules that apply in school, apply in PREP. Students who consistently disrupt the classroom environment will be disciplined accordingly. Each teacher, at his/her discretion, may choose to follow the procedure outlined below:

- At the first occurrence of a situation in which a student is disruptive to the point that he/she must be removed from the classroom, the child will be sent to the office, and the office will notify the parent of the situation before the next class.
- At the second occurrence of the situation described above, parents of the student will be notified of the situation and asked to pick-up their child. The student and parent will meet with the director before being re-admitted to class. At this time, a discussion will occur concerning the need for a parent to attend classes with his/her child until the behavior problem has been resolved.
- At the third occurrence in which the student is disruptive to the point that he/she must be removed from the classroom, the participant will be removed from the session and dismissed from the program. The parents or guardians will be immediately notified by the program director and required to pick up their child. Following a conference with the program director, parents, participant, and catechist, the parents will be provided with the option of having their child repeat his or her current grade level the following school year, attend each class session with his/her child or opting to complete the current year's material by home-schooling their child. In either case, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made.

Property must be cared for and used properly. Please remind your child that they are sharing space with other students. Materials for PREP students are supplied. Therefore, there is no need for PREP students to use other students' supplies and materials. Defacement of desks and other parish property will result in necessary restitution.

DRESS CODE

All students are required to dress in an appropriate manner that supports a modest dress code. No apparel should have writing that goes against Catholic values. Shorts should be of an appropriate length. No tank tops or midriff showing tops are acceptable. No hats during class time or while in church. The director has the final decision concerning appropriate dress.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

We realize that electronic devices such as cell phones have become a necessary tool in keeping communications open with children, especially for working parents. However, it is the policy of this program that such devices may not be used during class time. If a child brings a cell phone to the program, the device must be turned off and left in the child's backpack.

BULLYING POLICY

A safe, secure and respectful educational environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards and build appropriate relationships with others. Mary, Mother of the Redeemer PREP refuses to accept any behaviors that hinder or undermine such an environment. Therefore, acts of harassment, hazing, intimidation and bullying (including cyber bullying and the like) are unacceptable behaviors and are prohibited in our programs. The religious education program personnel cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under their direct supervision. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the religious education program and the rights and welfare of the students and is within the control of the religious education program in its normal operations, it is Mary, Mother of the Redeemer PREP's intent to prevent bullying and thus, will take action to investigate, respond, discipline and remediate any acts of bullying. Administration and the catechetical staff are to demonstrate appropriate behavior by treating others with civility and respect, and being aware of and not tolerating harassment, intimidation, hazing and bullying, etc. If incidents do occur, students should be able to report and know that the inappropriate behavior will be dealt with promptly and effectively. There will be no retaliation against a victim, reporter or witness.

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Policy

Bullying involves actions or words against another for the purpose of inflicting physical or emotional harm or discomfort or damage to a person's reputation that is intimidating or threatening and affects the learning and school environments. The following describes types of bullying but is not an exhaustive list.

- Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, or throwing something
- Getting another person to hit or harm another student
- Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks or threatening in person or by other means
- Demeaning and making another the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating (bullying), extorting or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip

If the bully is threatening harm, a student should tell a catechist, adult volunteers and/or the Program Director immediately so that action can be taken to remediate the situation. Parents and the Pastor will be notified of the situation, and Law Enforcement Officials will be contacted if warranted (e.g., someone threatened with a weapon, terroristic threats, etc.).

TUITION

Tuition is a necessary and required part of our PREP program and ensures that our program can provide children with the most current and best resources for their formational needs.

Tuition is due in full at the time of registration. However, being sensitive to the needs of our families, other payment options are available upon request. Anyone who cannot pay their tuition in full at the time of registration or who has difficulty making payment due to hardship should contact the parish business manager to discuss the matter and to make other arrangements.

Families may not register for the upcoming school year if there is any back tuition due. All fees must be paid prior to registration. Class selection and time will not be guaranteed unless all registration fees are paid or other arrangements for payment have been made.

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

At the time of registration, parents and guardians will select a day their child(ren) will be attending class for the upcoming school year. Families may not switch this selection once classes have begun.

The program director will select the individual classes. Parents/guardians may request student placement in classes with friends/family prior to August 31. Please note, the program director will consider the request but cannot guarantee that the request will be honored.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Please notify the Director of Youth Faith Formation of any allergies, conditions, special learning needs that your child might have so that we are able to provide a safe and positive learning experience for him/her. These allergies, conditions and special learning needs should be noted on registration form.

CANCELLATIONS

In the event of severely inclement weather or large snowfall, PREP classes will be cancelled for that evening. MMR PREP follows the North Penn School District. If the MMR Day School is cancelled for inclement weather, the PREP classes will be cancelled that evening as well. Our Blackboard Connect system will be implemented in the case of school closings. *If possible*, cancellations will also be posted on the MMR parish website (www.mmredeemer.org).

FINAL NOTE

The Parish Pastor or Director of Youth Faith Formation reserves the right to amend this handbook for just cause. In the event of any such amendment, parents receive prompt notification of the changes made.

"God, send your angels to bless these children: Michael from the East to make them strong; Gabriel from the West to make them wise; Raphael from the South to make them warm, loving, and caring; a Guardian Angel from the North to protect each child always. Bless these children, angels dear, from whom God's love commits us here."

Adapted from Praying with Jesus, Arthur Zannoni