Parish of
Regina Coeli/St. Paul

4337 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY 12538
845-229-9139
www.reginacoelihydepark.com

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PARENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR Page 2

LETTER FROM FAITH FORMATION COORDINATOR Page 3

INTRODUCTION Page 4

HOW TO REACH OUR PROGRAM STAFF Page 4

FAITH FORMATION MISSION STATEMENT Page 4

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY Page 5

PROGRAM GOAL Page 5

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW Page 6

REGISTRATION INFORMATION Page 7

ATTENDANCE POLICIES Page 8

- SUNDAY & FAST (MIDDLE SCHOOL) PROGRAMS
- TARDINESS/CONTINUITY OF ATTENDANCE/EARLY DISMISSAL

CHILD SAFETY Page 9

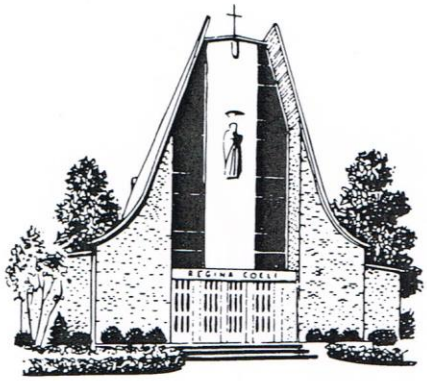
COMMUNICATION Page 9

CHILD CUSTODY Page 9

SHARING SPACES Page 10

DISCIPLINE POLICY Page 10

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN Page 10



REGINA COELI CHURCH

2 HARVEY STREET
HYDE PARK, NEW YORK 12538
WWW.REGINACOELIHYDEPARK.COM

P: (845) 229-2134
F: (845) 229-1668

Dear Parents:

I would like to this opportunity to welcome you and your family to our Religious Education Program: "Faith and Life". Working together, with our catechetical team and parish family, we hope to bring you and your children into a deep awareness of God's enduring presence and love for us. I believe the volunteers from our parish who have come forward to share their faith with our children comprise two dedicated and devoted teams which exemplify Christ's command to love and serve one another!

The task of teaching a child about the faith is an awesome responsibility and takes many people working together. As parents, you are the first teachers of your child and the most important ones. At an early age, your child learned intuitively about God, by watching you pray and go to mass. Your children have learned about charity and forgiveness by experiencing it from you. These early encounters of faith in the home and family provided the context for them to learn about the love and mercy of God. So, being the best teachers for your child's faith development means that you practice your faith: pray at home, go to Mass every Sunday and make your home a place where love and forgiveness abound.

In our faith, we are also called to be a community which provides the nurturing environment, support and opportunity to become Church; the Body of Christ on Earth! As your children begin this program year, we hope they too, become active participants in our faith community which is the parish family of Regina Coeli/St. Paul. Through a variety of activities from joining in the Mass, singing, service and Family Catechesis we will build a strong connection for all members of our parish of every age!

We have chosen and designed Catholic based curriculums which we hope will instill a desire in each of our students to know Jesus and to love and serve Him as young Catholic Christians. In addition, we want to inspire them as they journey in their relationship with Christ and fulfill the vocations to which they are and will be called.

Thank you for the faith foundation you have given to your children and for allowing us the opportunity to join with you in teaching and sharing our Catholic faith. I am looking very forward to working with you and getting to know each of your families throughout the coming year. I am

Very truly yours in Christ,

Fr. Brendan A. Fitzgerald

Fr. Brendan A. Fitzgerald
Parish Administrator

Faith Formation Program
Parish of Regina Coeli/St. Paul

Phone #: 845-229-9139
4337 Albany Post Road
Hyde Park, NY 12538
Fax: 845-229-1668
Web Site: reginacoelihydepark.com
E-mail: mrskdepew@reginacoelihp.org

LETTER FROM FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

Dear Parents:

We are excited to welcome your family to our religious education program! As parents, you were entrusted by God and the church, at your child's Baptism, with the responsibility of forming their faith, by developing their prayer lives and participating in our parish community at Mass. The parish family of Regina Coeli/St. Paul is privileged to co-partner with you in this endeavor.

As you know, we have two vibrant program experiences to offer our students this year. Our Sunday morning begins with 9:30 AM Family Mass followed by class instruction from 10:30 AM until Noon. Children will receive short music instruction on a rotating basis so that they may become familiar with the songs we sing at Mass. We will have family participation in all aspects of our Liturgy in the form of Altar Servers, greeters, ushers, gift bearers and lectors. Following Mass, our children will proceed to the school for their class instruction. We have two dates set aside for special Family Catechesis activities: in November we will hold our All Saints Celebration and during Lent we will have Living Stations of the Cross. In addition, we will have a "coffee hour" for our parents who have the time to help prepare projects and activities throughout the year.

Our FAST program (Faith & Service Together) for students in middle school grades 6, 7 & 8, will meet one time each month, usually on a Saturday, for an opportunity to explore and share their faith in a meaningful way. We have a creative and enjoyable program of activities, service, instruction, guest speakers and field trips with the necessary means and snacks that all teens need. Our goal is to help our young people form a lasting relationship with Christ and His church prior to their Confirmation in 8th grade.

Our mission of faith is to provide an opportunity for nurturing and forming our parishioners of all ages, in the teachings of Christ our Lord, through the study of Scripture, the Catholic Catechism and traditions of the church. We look forward to working with all of you throughout the coming school year as we commit ourselves to this opportunity to nurture and encourage the faith formation of your children.

Faithfully in Christ,
Kathie Depew
Kathie Depew
Faith Formation Coordinator

The parish family of Regina Coeli/St. Paul believes
lifelong faith formation is essential to grow in love and service to our Lord, Jesus Christ.
We welcome and encourage all children, teens and adults, to grow in knowledge of Jesus and the holy, Catholic Church
by participating in programs that deepen our faith and spirituality.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Religious Education Program for Faith Formation of the children of the Parish of Regina/St. Paul. It is our hope that this parent handbook will serve as a guide and reference regarding various aspects of our program.

HOW TO REACH OUR PROGRAM STAFF

Important Phone Numbers

Faith Formation Office		
Kathie Depew	229-9139	mrskdepew@reginacoelihp.org
Rectory Office		
Angela Garzetta	229-2134	

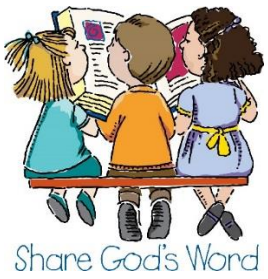
FAX: 845-229-1668
Web: www.reginacoelihydepark.com

Address

Regina Coeli Parochial School	*or*	Regina Coeli Rectory
4337 Albany Post Road		2 Harvey Street
Hyde Park, NY 12538		Hyde Park, NY 12538

FAITH FORMATION MISSION STATEMENT

The parish family of Regina Coeli/St. Paul, believes that lifelong faith formation is essential to grow in love and service of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We welcome and encourage all families; children, teens and adults to grow in knowledge of Jesus and the holy, Catholic Church by participation in a wide variety of programs designed to deepen our faith and spirituality. With lives centered on the Mass and sacraments, we find unity when we recognize Christ alive in the hearts and minds of all who are called to witness the Gospel.



PROGRAM PHILIOSPHY

Key Principles of the Faith Formation Programs at Regina Coeli/St. Paul.

1. We believe that faith formation is a lifelong process of entering into a relationship with the Holy Trinity through the intercession of our Blessed Mother.

2. We believe that parents are the first and foremost teachers of their children in the ways of faith. It is essential that parents are involved in this educational process.

3. We encourage our families to recognize God's unconditional love, compassion and forgiveness.

4. We recognize Christ alive in the hearts and minds of all who are called to witness the Gospel through the power of the Spirit.

5. We must model our faith in attitude and service to others so that our children learn what we live.

6. Respect is essential for success. We want to be successful, therefore, respect for self, our families, catechists, each other and our property is expected.

7. Sunday liturgy is the source and summit of the life of any Catholic parish. It is foundational that we gather at the Table each week to celebrate Eucharist along with our community. **Mass is not an optional choice** but rather a grace filled opportunity to join with our brothers and sisters in worshipping God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Program Goal

Our goal is to provide an opportunity for nurturing and forming our parishioners of all ages, in the teachings of Christ our Lord, through the study of Scripture, the Catholic Catechism, traditions of the church and specially selected programs designed for religious education of children.

Curriculum Overview

Our curriculum for grades 1 thru 5 will be the Faith & Life series from Ignatius Press which has been highly recommended by Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI. In addition, children will participate in the Sunday morning family Mass to help them grow in their love of Jesus, our Church and our parish family.
Students in middle school, grades 6 thru 8, will be on our FAST Team (Faith & Service Together) and will be taught using a cumulative approach of Scripture, the Catholic Catechism (YouCat version for teens), guest speakers, Lives of the Saints and curriculum based program offered by the Ignatius Press series as well as a variety of activities to inspire spiritual growth and participation in their faith community through the sacraments and service. Class sessions are pre-scheduled according to events and activities; students will attend 5 PM Mass on program dates.

Grade 1 Our Heavenly Father: The students are introduced to the Holy Trinity through studying the development of salvation history and presentations on God the Father, the life of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Students are also introduced to God's plan and their participation in God's family, which includes Mary, the angels and saints. Emphasis of the curriculum is for students to grow to know, love and trust God.

Grade 2 Jesus Our Life: Students are prepared for the Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion through studying the development of salvation history. As students learn about God's plan of love and mercy they begin to understand that these sacraments are God's gift to us and that they, too, are part of God's loving plan. Special emphasis is given to preparation for and reception of these sacraments as well as learning about the Mass.

Grade 3 Our Life with Jesus: Through studying the development of salvation history, students become immersed in the life of Jesus and develop a deeper understanding of God's loving plan and of how they are a part of His plan.

Grade 4 Jesus our Guide: Through studying the development of salvation history, students come to a better understanding of God, His plan for man and our relationship with God. Students develop a better understanding of their purpose and goal in life and a deeper appreciation for the Church as the very means that God has given us on our pilgrimage to heaven.

Grade 5 Credo: I Believe: Through studying the Creed and the development of salvation history, students are immersed in the Profession of Faith. They develop a deeper understanding of each component of the Creed as it is part of salvation.

Grade 6 Following Christ: Students learn about their Christian life of love, the law of God, their human frailty in following that law and the means that God gives them to follow His law especially through graces received in the Holy Mass. By focusing the study of salvation history on typology in the Passover Feast and the Last Supper, the students are brought to a deeper understanding of the Eucharist. The 6th grade concludes with a study of the last things in light of God's mercy and our hope for heaven.

Grade 7 The Life in the Church: Student's learn about God's loving gift of revelation through creation, the prophets, the Incarnation and the Church. Grace is understood as being central to our relationship with God because it unites us with Him and allows us to share in His eternal life. We place special emphasis on the role of grace in the seven sacraments and in developing the virtues.

Grade 8 Our Life in the Church: In preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, we cover the history of the Church – it's founding by Christ, its birth and life in the Holy Spirit, the marks of one true Church, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the saints and the role of religious communities in Church history. Also covered is the structure & hierarchy of the Church, Magisterium, clergy, religious and laity. Students come to know and love the Church as Christ's Body, to better understand the nature of their life in the Church and to respond to the teaching of the Magisterium as the sure voice of Jesus, strengthening their lives in the Church and leading them to discern their specific vocations and to live lives of Christian holiness in the world today.

Registration

Registration for all Faith Formation programs is ongoing for new families joining our parish or entering religious education for the first time. New students must provide Baptismal Certificate at the time of registration. All new and returning students must have completed registration packets.

Students entering our program from another parish can have previous records forwarded to our program office.

Students entering 2nd (First Communion) and 8th (Confirmation) grade must have attended religion classes for the years prior to receiving their sacraments. Students will be placed in grade according to religion class year completed, not necessarily academic school grade, in order to be prepared to receive their sacraments.

Registration for returning families occurs in the Spring, prior to the conclusion of our program year. Re-registration forms will be available on our web site. If you do not have access to a computer, a packet will be mailed to you. Information and reminders will be on-going at the appropriate time.

Please notify the office if you move or change any of the following information:

Home, work or cell phone numbers, address, e-mail address, emergency contact information, medical issues or special needs

Fees: 1st Child $125, 2nd Child $85 *($210 Total),* 3rd Child $50 *($260 Total)*
Sacrament Fees: $25 First Communion
$50 Confirmation

Please make checks payable to **Regina Coeli** with a note in the memo line: **Faith Formation**

Calendar

Our calendar outlines the elementary school and the middle school program called FAST *(Faith & Service Together).* Sunday sessions are indicated by green boxes, the FAST program has red boxes and our special events are shown in blue.

Attendance Policy

Weekly Attendance:

Children in grades K – 5 are expected to attend 9:30 AM Family Mass at Regina Coeli followed by class instruction in the school. **An occasional exception** will be made for dropping a student off at 10:30 AM particularly on those dates that older siblings and family members participated in the middle school program on Saturday. Students may not be left unattended at the school. Parents are asked to escort children to their classrooms.

If you know in advance that your child will be absent on a specific date or an unanticipated absence occurs, **please send an e-mail to the Faith Formation office** @ mrskdepew@reginacoelihp.org . Please include child's name, date absent and reason why in your note. It is expected that the parent will obtain the missed work from the teacher so that students don't fall behind or miss important instruction. If more than 4 classes are missed, it will be necessary for the parents to meet with the Pastor and Faith Formation Coordinator to determine a course of action.

Children who are not registered in the program are not allowed to attend classroom sessions as per diocese guidelines, however, ALL children are invited to attend our Family Catechesis events which are held in November and during Lent.

FAST Team Attendance Policy:

It is expected that students in grades 6 - 8 will attend extended class sessions one day per month as described on our calendar. Optional activities are available and intended for fellowship as well as formation of our young people but are not mandatory. Nine established class sessions are provided as well as 2 sessions of Family Catechesis. It is hoped that our students will attend all sessions as each has been specifically designed with a theme and activities important to their faith formation. Since we do understand that occasions arise which might conflict with our program, a student may miss up to 2 sessions but may be asked to do make-up work or participate in a different activity. If you know in advance or an unanticipated absence occurs, **kindly inform the Faith Formation office** @ mrskdepew@reginacoelihp.org including name, date of absence and reason.

Tardiness

Tardiness distracts the class and interrupts the learning process. Parents are encouraged to make every effort have their children on time for the beginning of Mass, class sessions and programs.

Continuity in Attendance

Faith Formation is lifelong. Children need to be enrolled in the religious education program every year and not be removed after the celebration of a sacrament. If a child does not attend the program the year prior to beginning sacrament preparation, the child may be placed in a review program for a year prior to beginning sacrament preparation.

Early Dismissal

A note must be brought to the office, prior to class, the day an early dismissal is necessary. This will be forwarded to the catechist. Students must be picked up at the office. No child will be permitted to wait outside along to be picked up.

Keeping Children & Youth Safe
Safe Environment Program

Fire and emergency drills will be conducted as prescribed by the Catechetical Office for our diocese. In addition, crisis safety management, intruder lock down, weather hazard or other threat will be handled following procedures established by our school, should they become necessary. Security will be present at the main door/hallway and other areas before and during class times for all programs. No student will be released without parent's written instruction, personal identification and prior parent authorization.

All catechetical and security team members are instructed in identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse as prescribed by the Arch-diocese of NY.

Communication

Announcements regarding parents meetings, special events, deadlines, etc. will be communicated to parents through the following ways: Sunday bulletin, E-mails, Website, flyers sent home

Progress Reports will be sent home twice a year for each child in our elementary program. These will come in January and June. Reports will contain record of attendance, mastery of curriculum and appropriateness of behavior.

FAST Team members will be monitored throughout each event by our catechetical team. This will include: attendance, participation and cooperation. Should any concerns arise, parents will be informed following the session. A Program review will be submitted to parents in January and will take the place of a progress report. At the conclusion of our program year a final review will be sent home, outlining each students' attendance and acknowledgement of participation.

Parents may contact the Faith Formation office at 229-9139 any time to discuss any issue or ask a question.

CELL PHONES ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE ELEMENTARY or FAST PROGRAM.

If a child must carry a cell phone, it will be collected, put into a labeled bag and stored in a lock box with our security staff until the end of class when it can be retrieved.

Custody

If parents are divorced or separated, the Faith Formation Program presumes that parents have joint custody unless one parent provides documentation that he or she has sole custody. It is important for parents to agree on custody issues so that conflicts do not arise that affect the child's participation in our program. These and any personal issues may be discussed with the pastor or coordinator so that we can support your efforts on behalf of your child.

Sharing Space

It is important that the students respect the property of others. The Religious Education Program shares classroom space at Regina Coeli School. Everyone who uses the space must respect it and the other students who use it during the week. While the RE students are in the classrooms they will be using the desks of the daily school children. Nothing in the desk is to be touched. RE students are supplied with pencils, crayons, etc., so there is no need to borrow or use anything that does not belong to them. Any items damaged, destroyed or missing will be repaired or replaced at the student's expense.

Disciplinary Policy

Students are expected to respect all property and buildings on the parish grounds. Our policy is based on the concept of respect: respect shown when others are speaking, respect to ALL catechists and students alike, and respect of the materials and property used. Good conduct, cooperation, attention and courtesy are expected in their classroom. Students who fail to meet these behavior expectations will be subject to the following procedure:

> The first incident will result in a reminder from the Catechist to the student. The second will result in the student being sent to the office and work being completed there. The third will result in a call to the parents and requesting that the parent be a part of the next class.
>
> If the above doesn't meet with success, the parents will be asked to home school the child who in turn will meet with the coordinator every three (3) weeks. While this may seem rigid, it is difficult to accomplish what we need to do in our session when the catechist has to spend much of the time with disciplinary matters.

Other Programs and Opportunities for Children

Altar Servers - 4th grade and up
Contemporary Choir - 4th grade and up
Volunteer with parents at Coeli Fest
or the Dutchess County Fair 10 yrs and up
High School Youth Group
Lector - following Confirmation