

**PRESENTATION B.V.M.
Parish Religious Education Program
Parent & Participant Handbook**



**LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME
AND DO NOT PREVENT THEM; FOR
THE KINGDOM OF GOD BELONGS
TO SUCH AS THESE. Luke 18: 15-17**

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The purpose of the handbook is to set forth the guidelines for those who participate in the Presentation B.V.M. Religious Education Program. 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 Parish Religious Education Program.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Parish of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a local part of the Universal Catholic Church. As such, it subscribes and teaches all that the Catholic Church holds to be true and teaches. We in this local community preach Jesus Christ Crucified and Risen and invite others by the example of our lives and our words to come to Faith in Him and be Baptized in the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. We achieve the strengthening of the Faith Community by our Celebration of Mass, the other Sacraments, prayer, missions and catechesis.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- **Parish Religious Education**

Our Program fosters the education of Faith in children/young people, Grades one through twelve which includes especially the teaching of Christian Doctrine imparted in an organic and systematic way with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian Life.

- **Sacramental Preparation**

For the baptized Catholic child, the Initiation into the Church is completed by the reception of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. Students are prepared through instruction, listening to and studying the word of God (Scripture), prayer, use of symbols and how to make proper moral choices. Preparation for Sacraments is not for a day but for a lifetime

- **Home Based Catechesis (speak to Father)**

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

I. ATTENDANCE

The faith formation received in the programs is ongoing in that each session builds upon the previous session. Therefore, it is imperative that children attend their program sessions regularly (thirty sessions).

If your child is unable to attend a session for any reason, a parent ***MUST*** complete the following procedures:

1. Call (610-642-8341) between 9:30 A.M. & 3:00 P.M. to report the absence. Please be sure to leave your child's name, grade level, and **reason for absence**. Excused absences are for illness, family travel or death of a loved one.

2. If your child will be attending the session late, you must call and notify (same) as described in # 1 above. If child will be picked up early, they must bring a note from parent stating time and who will be picking them up.
3. If your child fails to report to a session and no phone call is received, then the absence will be recorded as unexcused unless a doctor's note is provided upon returning to the program. **Excused absences are for illness or emergencies.**
4. After the third unexcused absence the program director will contact the parents by (phone/mail) to notify parents that the child may be required to repeat the grade level and that dismissal from the program could result should unexcused absences continue.
5. **ANY PARTICIPANT ACCUMULATING SIX UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL 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.
6. Extended absences due to illness require a doctor's note upon return to the program. In addition, parents should be in regular contact with their child's catechist in an effort to obtain assignments and keep their child's formation up-to-date when possible.

II. LATENESS

Sessions begin promptly at their designated times. Therefore, any participant arriving after the designated starting time will be considered late. It is strongly recommended that children arrive at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled class time. Chronic lateness will require a conference with a parent and might interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments.

III. ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Participants should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of a program. and follow these procedures:

Wednesday afternoon participants gather in schoolyard. At 3:45 P.M., participants go to Church for community prayer, then directly to Class by 4 P.M. In case of inclement weather students may go directly to their classrooms. Your child may bring a snack to eat in schoolyard before Church on Wednesdays. **Please do not send anything with Nuts/Peanuts, as some children have allergies.** We do not permit glass bottles or anything that can break in the schoolyard. No eating in Church.

Doors to school and Parish Center are kept locked once classes begin.
Sunday classes, grades 6 to 12 take place in the Parish Center promptly at 10:30 AM.

Dismissal for Wednesday classes is 5:05 P.M. At dismissal, to insure the safety of your child, the children will be dismissed to the fenced area of the schoolyard. They may not run through the parking lot. They are to remain inside the fenced area until parents arrive for pick-up. This is most important. **Your child/children may not leave on their own unless you sign and return the WALKERS RELEASE.** Regarding dismissal on Sundays, please let us know if your child has parental permission to go directly to the 11:30 AM Mass after PREP.

Wednesday Parents: Please drive slowly and cautiously in the parking lot. Do not enter the schoolyard through the driveway between the School and Parish Center since students cross that area and may not be seen, especially when it gets dark. Enter through the driveway closest to Church. Do not drive along the fenced area where children will be waiting. Park your car and walk over to the fenced area. Please give the DRE the name & grade of your child. This will help insure a safe dismissal.

If anyone other than a parent/guardian or Emergency Contact (listed on registration form) has permission to pick up your child from PREP, we need to have their information and parental consent in writing.

IV. ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

The faith formation provided in our program involves incremental learning. That is each year builds upon the learning of the previous year. **Therefore, it is essential that participants remain enrolled consistently, year to year from Level one to eight.**

Policy for Children who leave program (see following example):

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for a period of one year will be required to make-up the missed year upon re-enrollment into the program. (e.g., a student who leaves the program for a period of one year after completing level 3 and re-enrolls in the program when they are in grade 5 will be placed into the 4th level.)

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 day school grade level.
2. For example, a student who leaves the program after completing level 3 and re-enrolls when he is in 6th grade:
 - The parent is required to provide home based catechesis for level 4.
 - Upon completion of level 4, the child is accepted into level 5 to continue his/her faith formation.
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V. NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

It is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the Parish with the latest, most up to date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. Presentation B.V.M. will request these documents in the beginning of the year. If either the Custody Order or Custody Agreement changes during the course of the year, it remains the responsibility of both biological parents to provide that document to the Parish immediately.

Our program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment 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 and latest 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.

VI. DISCIPLINE

The Parish Religious Education Program offered by Presentation B.V.M. is designed to assist parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behavior that are in accord with Catholic Church teaching. The program has **NO TOLERANCE** for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional or psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment. Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and will not be tolerated in any form.

These categories do not cover every possible situation. The parish determines what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, both in and out of the classroom, in the school community generally, and outside the school community where such improper behavior affects the school community.

Conduct by children or parents/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the Parish is grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to, immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

In addition, in the case of threats of violence or harassment, in any form, including oral, written, or electronic, by a child against any member of the school community, the child, if suspended

but not dismissed, may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to school.

In the event a participant engages in any of the above listed behaviors or any other inappropriate conduct, and has failed to respond to a catechist's attempt to stop or correct the behavior, action may be taken at the discretion of the Pastor or Director of Religious Education.

1. First Incident: The student will be removed from the session and the parent or guardian will be immediately notified by the Program Director. The Program Director will schedule a conference with the parents/guardians, student, and catechist to discuss the matter.
2. Second Incident: The student will be removed from the session and suspended from the program for a period of one session. The parents/guardians will be immediately notified by the Program Director and required to pick up their child. Prior to returning the program the Program Director will schedule a conference with the parents, student, and catechist to further discuss the matter.
3. Third Incident: The student 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, student, 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 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.

However, Presentation B.V.M. reserves the right to supersede the foregoing course of action depending on the particular circumstances of any situation.

VII. CONTRABAND

BRINGING CONTRABAND TO PROGRAM SESSIONS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED AND WILL BE CONFISCATED AND RETURNED TO PARENTS ONLY! Depending on the contraband confiscated, the proper legal authorities could be notified.

1. Items considered contraband include, but are not limited to, gum, food, beverages, toys, electronic games, beepers, walk-mans, weapons, drugs, & alcohol and tobacco products.
2. It is unlawful for minors to be in the possession of alcohol or tobacco products. Participants found to be in the possession of such products may be immediately suspended from the program. Depending on the contraband confiscated, the proper legal authorities could be notified.

VIIa. SEARCH & SEIZURE

It is the policy of the Parish Religious Education Program of Presentation to respect the privacy of its participants. However, in the event that a student is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his/her possession or is believed to be a threat to himself/herself or others, the director will be notified immediately. The director will conduct a search with an adult staff member as a witness. Refusal on the part of the student to cooperate will result in the parents/guardians being contacted and asked to assist with the search. Parental refusal to cooperate will result in the student's immediate dismissal from the program.

VIIb. CELL PHONES, PAGERS, & SPECIAL NOTES:

We realize that devices such as pagers and 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 must be turned off during catechetical sessions. If a student brings a pager or cell phone to the program and it becomes a problem then the device will be taken from the student and must be picked up by a parent/guardian.

VIII. ASSIGNMENTS

Every catechist in the program assigns some take-home assignment in the form of written work, activities, or study sheets. To help the students better understand and give them time to reflect on what was taught in class, catechists will send home Prayer cards with traditional Catholic Prayers, study sheets on the monthly lives of the Saints, the Seasons of the Liturgical Year, weekly lessons on the Bible, Chapter Review for Assessment and study sheets in preparation for students making the Sacraments. As those primarily responsible for the faith formation of their children, it is expected that parents will supervise the review of this material and the completion of the assignments. Although Faith Formation includes an academic nature, faith must also be experienced, witnessed and lived.

If your child has missed two or more consecutive classes, please contact the catechist for make-up work.

IX. SERVICE INITIATIVES

From time to time, catechists may invite participants to engage in service activities as a means of deepening the formation process. These activities will take place outside the scope of the regular catechetical sessions. In the event that a catechist elects such an option, he or she will provide the participants with a detailed list of suggested activities as well as permission and release forms.

X. WORKBOOKS

Every participant is assigned a workbook at the beginning of the year. The workbooks are left in the classroom and are given to the students on the last day of school.

XI. SACRAMENTS

PARTICIPANTS EXHIBITING CHRONIC ABSENCES (3 or more unexcused absences), LATENESS, OR WHO ARE A PERSISTENT DISCIPLINE PROBLEM MAY HAVE THEIR RECEPTION OF RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, AND/OR CONFIRMATION DEFERRED UNTIL THE FOLLOWING YEAR OR LATER.

Preparation for the reception of a sacrament is a time of prayerful reflection and discernment. A participant's desire to receive the sacrament is reflected in his or her positive attitude toward the preparation process. Thus proper attendance and behavior are expected.

There will be sacrament meetings for the Parents (at least one parent must attend) in preparation for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist and Confirmation. Father Montero will conduct the first half of the meeting for Parents and the Catechists and D.R.E. will present the second part so that we can give all the necessary information parents will need to know about the Sacrament Day itself and how these events in their children's lives are part of a lifelong journey of faith.

. Archdiocesan policy requires that a child receive the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) in the parish that their family is registered.

XII. TUITION

Tuition is a necessary and required part of the religious education program to ensure the most current and best catechetical resources.

Tuition for thirty sessions is \$100 per child and is due by September 1. After September 1st, tuition is \$150 per child.

The Sacramental Fee for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist is \$40 per child and for Confirmation, \$40 per child.

In the event that your child is dismissed from the program due to excessive absences, lateness, problem behavior, or for any other reason for dismissal, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made to the family.

XIII. SNOW EMERGENCY & CANCELLATIONS

In the event of severe inclement weather, our communication policy: SNOW CODE:1148
KYWNewsradio1060AM/www.kyw1060.com or call KYW Newsradio School Closing Line
(215-925-1060)

The name of your school will also be scrolled across the bottom of the screen on television
Stations CBS 3 and CW Philly 57

XIV. COMMUNICATION

1. Calendar

Parents are provided with a yearly calendar at the beginning of the program year. *This calendar is subject to change during the course of the year.* Parents will be notified of changes. (Email, phone Sunday Church Bulletin, or mail.

2. Parish Contact Information

Parents should feel free to contact the program director regarding any concerns or problems that may develop during the course of the year. The program director may be contacted using any of the means listed below:

Parish Center: Monday to Thursday, 9:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. (610-642-8341)

jmoretto@presbvm.org

Parish fax: 610-896-1970

Direct communication with your child's catechist is also a necessary component of the catechetical process. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's catechist to discuss any concerns or information that will enhance the learning experience. Call the program director to make arrangements to meet or speak with your child's catechist.

Contact Information: same as stated above #2.

FINAL NOTE

The program director reserves the right to amend this handbook. In the event of any such amendment, parents will be given prompt notification of the changes made.