



St. Mary's Parish
Religious Education Program
Parent / Student Handbook

*Go and teach all nations; and know that I
am with you always.*

Dear Parents,

As we begin our new year of Religious Education, we look forward to grow together in our faith in Jesus. The handing on of our faith to our youth is both an opportunity and a challenge in today's world.

Certainly weekend Mass is central to the life of faith of not only our children but for all of us as members of the Church. It is our hope that in spite of our busy lives, that we teach our children the importance of our commitment to weekly Mass by example.

We are so grateful to the many volunteers who have made the commitment to share our faith with your children. Faithful participation in classes each week will enable your children to come to know, love and serve the Lord as members of His Body, the Church.

Please know of our prayers for you and your families in the coming year. May our Blessed Mother watch over us and lead us to her Son.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Stephen J. Avila, V.F. , Pastor

Rev. William M. Sylvia, Parochial Vicar

Contact Information

CCD: Religious Education Grades K-7

Coordinator – Grades K, 1-2, 7 Mrs. Ellen Westlund

Coordinator – Grades 3-6 Sr. Ann William,
M. S. B. T.

Office Support - Laura Zawaski

CCD Office Location: On left side
as you enter Parish Center

St. Mary's Parish 330 Pratt Street, Mansfield MA
02048

Phone: (508) 339-4621

Website: www.st.marymans.org

Confirmation Program: Years I and II

Youth Minister Mr. Jeff Cahill

Coordinators: CY I and II Ms. Teresa Murphy
Mrs. Kathy Nickerson

Office Support Mrs. Sue Caughey

Confirmation Office Location: Down the class room
hall on the right side of the Parish Center; toward the
school building. Confirmation office is the last room on
the left

Confirmation Program Office is staffed by volunteers.
Any phone messages or emails received will be
responded to as quickly as possible.

St. Mary's Parish 330 Pratt Street, Mansfield MA
02048

Phone: (508) 339-2064

Email: Confirmation@stmarymans.org

Website: www.st.marymans.org

Fax: (508) 339-0612

Your Family Commitment

As parents you have a sacred trust! You are the primary religious educators of your children. The Religious Education that your child receives here at St. Mary's should supplement what is taught inside your home. God calls you to nurture not only the physical and mental growth of your child but also your child's spiritual well-being. This responsibility requires that you grow in faith yourselves and that you share your faith with your family. Here are some steps to deepen your relationship with God and your family:

- The Church calls us to Mass on the Lord's Day (beginning on Saturday evening, through Sunday) to strengthen us through God's Word, the sacrament of the Eucharist and the support of the community of believers to follow Christ each and every day. There is always strength in numbers. Christ called us to community so

that we may support one another on our faith journey. Attendance and participation at the Weekend Mass is a principal teaching of the Church to which these young people are making a commitment. Please support and assist your child in this commitment. Your presence there will not only support them, but, we pray will also, support you in your personal journey of faith, in your relationship with God, with one another and, finally, in your vocation as parents.

- Set aside time (15 minutes) in a quiet or private place for prayer each day.
- Read the Bible, Bible commentaries, or spiritual books. Join a bible study, a prayer group, or join with others for Family Rosary.
- Visit the Church on the first Friday of each month for Adoration of the Eucharist and listen to the Lord speak to you.
- Set aside time for family prayer each day, even if it is just grace before meals or a blessing before your children go to bed.
- Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) regularly. Practice the Lord's teaching when He said, "If you wish to be forgiven, you must forgive."
- Attend programs scheduled for adult education in our parish.

Religious Education Requirements

Registration Forms and Enrollment Fees must be filed before class begins

First Communion: This is a 2 year program (Grades 1 & 2) Regular attendance and completion of all class requirements is mandatory to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion and to proceed to Grade 3. Baptismal Certificate is Required for all students preparing to receive these two Sacraments*.

Grades 3 – 7:** Regular attendance and completion of each year is required to proceed to the next year's class.

Grades 8 & 9 – Confirmation Program: This is a two year program. Students are eligible to enter the 2 year Confirmation Program once they have successfully completed Grades 1 – 7.

*Older students seeking to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion should speak with Sister Ann for appropriate preparation and education.

**Text Book will be carried over from Grade 7 to Grade 8

Class Schedule

Unless otherwise announced Classes are held as follows:

Kindergarten -	Sunday Morning 10:30 – 11:30
1st Grade-	Saturday Morning 9:00 – 10:00

2nd Grade Sunday Morning 9:30 – 10:15

First Penance is held in January; A parent meeting will be held in advance; First Communion Masses are held on the first 2 weekends of May.

3rd Grade Alternating Saturdays 10:30 – 12:00 noon

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated during Advent.

4th Grade Alternating Saturdays 10:30 – 12:00 noon

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated during Lent.

5th Grade Monday afternoon 3:15 – 4:15

There are teaching Masses during the Monday afternoon sessions during November.

6th Grade Wednesday evening 7:00 – 8:00

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated during Advent.

7th Grade Thursday evening 7:00 – 8:00

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated during Lent.

CYI (Grade 8) Tuesday evening 7:00 – 8:00

A Saturday afternoon retreat is held in February

CYII (Grade 9) Two Monday evenings/month 7:00 – 8:30

A Saturday afternoon retreat is held in October. Students will be Confirmed during the Spring. Students will be assigned to attend a Class Mass on a Sunday which will be scheduled during the class year.

All formal classes are held on St. Mary's Parish Property.

There are no off-site, satellite class groups allowed.

Appropriate Dress

How students dress affects attitude and behavior. Although there is no dress code for Religious Education classes, the intent for the few guidelines we include in this section is to keep students safe and focused on their classes. To that end, we ask parents to consider the following as they monitor their children's and teen's dress:

- Students should dress in a manner that sends a message of respect of themselves and others.
- Hats and hoodies should not be worn in the building except for medical reasons.
- Students should dress modestly.
- Clothing with reference to cigarettes or alcohol or any inappropriate language are not allowed

Arrival, Departure, and Safety

For each class session, there are approximately 200 students arriving and departing in cars at the same time. We ask parents to arrive at the Parish Center early enough so that students can exit their cars and walk to the classroom in time for a prompt start to the class. Parents please walk your younger children into the building and escort them to class. It is imperative that you and your child are always alert when coming to or from class. Please stress parking lot safety to all students.

After class, teachers should remain with students until each one is dismissed to their parent (or designated driver). If a parent has not arrived in a timely manner after class, please bring the student to the Office.

If a parent needs to have a student dismissed early from class, a note to that effect must be sent to the teacher. The note must then be sent to the Office where it will remain on file for the remainder of the year. Students are not allowed to be dismissed early without a parent note.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected. Students are deprived of learning great lessons about our faith and Christ when they are absent. However, illnesses and emergencies arise. If you know in advance that your child will miss a class, please inform the teacher so that make-up work can be completed. If your child misses a class unexpectedly he / she is expected to receive make-up work from the teacher upon

returning and have it completed by the next class. All make-up work must be finished by the end of the year in order to be properly prepared for the next grade level. Students are expected to bring books to class.

Please note: The parents of any student who has missed more than five classes (three for CYII) and / or has not completed the make-up work given by the teacher must meet with the Coordinator of Religious Education prior to the child's return to class.

Attendance at Sunday Mass and all Holy Days of Obligation are expected and required of all students. Please review the Parish Bulletin and Web site for Mass Schedules.

Behavior

Christian behavior is expected from everyone. All members of the St. Mary's Religious Education program have the responsibility to conduct themselves with respect for the rights and property of others. In the event that a student does not follow class rules, the teacher will work with the child and his / her parent to resolve the concern. If resolution is not possible and the student continues to be disruptive he or she will be asked to go to the Office. Students can be picked up there by their parents when the class is over. While such behavior is not frequent, it does occur. It is our goal to see that all students are successful. To this end, if a student exhibits persistent behavioral issues, the program directors will conference with the student and parent (s) to create a plan for success.

If there is ever an issue with your child, their classroom, any classmate, or their teacher, please be prompt in alerting the Religious Education Staff so that we may help address the situation. Please do not allow issues to continue for more than two class sessions.

Students are expected to keep their text books orderly and complete and care for these books with due respect. Students are required to bring their text books to every class except when noted.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

The use of electronic media devices (CD players, MP3 players, radios, video game players, and any other electronic media devices) and electronic communication devices (cellular phones and other communication devices) are prohibited during St. Mary's Religious Education classes. Electronic media devices should be turned off and secured upon entering the building, before the start of class until exiting the building at the end of the session. If a student is using electronic media devices or electronic communication devices during class, the equipment may be confiscated, secured in the office, and returned to the student or his/her parent. Repeated violations may result in disciplinary action.

The unauthorized use of electronic video devices (handheld video camcorders, video cellular phones, and other electronic video or electronic still

image devices) is prohibited at all times during St. Mary's Religious Education class sessions

CORI and Suspected Child Abuse

All Religious Education staff and volunteers who are over the age of 17, must complete a CORI (Criminal Offender Record Information) annually. As required by Massachusetts state law and Fall River Diocesan policy, our staff and volunteers are required to report any instance of suspected child abuse to the proper authorities immediately.

All Teachers are required to be familiar with the Charter for Protection of Youth and the Code of Conduct for the Diocese of Fall River. Both can be found on the Parish website. Hard copies will be found in the Religious Education and Confirmation Formation Office.

Food and Gum Chewing

Food is not allowed in any of the classrooms. As classes are only 60 or 90 minutes long, students should not need a snack (except for medical needs). Gum chewing is not allowed in either the parish center or St. Mary's School. Food and gum creates maintenance problems for custodians.

Inclement Weather

When we make the decision to cancel classes, we do so with your family's safety in mind. We contact the elementary and middle schools when class is cancelled so that an announcement can be made and children can phone their parents from the school offices. We also telephone teachers so that they can contact their students' families. Class cancellations are posted on the St. Mary's Parish website and a message will be left on the CCD and / or Confirmation telephone voice mail messages.