

St. Patrick's Church  
26 Hunter Street  
Highland Mills, NY 10930

PARENT HANDBOOK  
ST. PATRICK'S RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION PROGRAM



**XVI. Sacramental Preparation**

- All parents of students preparing to receive Reconciliation, First Eucharist or Confirmation must attend parent meetings. These meetings are mandatory for the reception of sacraments. (Check **calendar of events** for dates).
- Children must fulfill all grade level requirements in order to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
- Preparation for First Penance/First Eucharist takes place in second grade. The child must have completed two full years of catechetical instructions in order to be prepared to receive these sacraments.
- Confirmation Students receive Confirmation at the completion of eighth grade. At the end of seventh grade a Parent Child workshop is held wherein requirements for Confirmation will be explained. Failure to attend this meeting (given on several dates and times) will result in the child being eliminated as a candidate for Confirmation. All children preparing for First Eucharist and Confirmation must attend a retreat day. (Check calendar for dates).
- St. Patrick's offers Sacramental Preparation for older children as well as children with special needs. Please call the office to make arrangements.

**XVII. Family Faith Fun Events**

- Two events schedule during the year.
- Parents and child(ren) must attend. These events are part of the curriculum.
- Attendance will be taken.

**XVIII. Shamrock Program**

- A program for children grades K-8 who have special needs.
- Admittance to Shamrock program requires an IEP and parish evaluation.



Director of Religious Education:

Louise Pisano

845-928-6688-or 845-928-3354

[www.stpatrickshm.org](http://www.stpatrickshm.org)

*To be a Catholic parent means to nurture the faith in the child and share it in the family. Through the witness of an active, conscious faith, parents respond to the call of God, to enrich themselves and their children. They walk with their children under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who directs the growth of each "in Wisdom, Age, and Grace".*

**It is your parental responsibility to know the policies and procedures contained in this handbook...**

**I. Admission**

St. Patrick's Catechetical Program represents the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. We endeavor to bring the Gospel message to all students; therefore we do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national origin or handicapped condition.<sup>1</sup>

**II. Role of Parent/Guardian**

*The faith we possess is a gift from God that grows and matures within the context of our family, our church and our community. Everything that we experience has some effect on our faith and trust in God. The warmth and love of family life, the understanding and beliefs of our parish life, and the bond of belonging, all help your youngsters to grow spiritually. Having promised before God at the time of Baptism, you have the primary and sacred responsibility to educate your children in faith. St. Patrick's Religious Education Program is designed to assist you in this responsibility. Our parents, working with our church, provide the essential ingredients for a strong, secure belief in God.*

**III. Responsibility of Parent/Guardian**

It is essential to your child's faith development that you live the life of faith at home. The effectiveness of the religious education process radically depends upon this. Each week your child learns that celebrating the Eucharist (Mass) as a community of faith is essential to being a Catholic. Therefore, your child must attend the weekly Saturday evening or Sunday Mass supported by you.

- The Director of Religious Education must be informed of the rights of non-custodial parents as these pertain to the child's participation in the program.
- It is important that the whereabouts of the children be known at all times. For security reasons we request that **if your child is absent please call the office** so that your child is accounted for.

Parents are required to complete an emergency medical release form. This form is sent home every year with registration forms and kept on file in the Religious Education Office. It is very important that the office be informed of any medical or physical condition that can affect the learning environment. (E.g., allergies, asthma, auditory or visual impairment, seizures, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, etc.). This information is confidential and will only be shared if the need arises.

**MEDICATION:** No medication can be distributed or taken during the Parish Catechetical Program. If an exception has to be made the parent must provide a written request and directions.

**XI. Safe Environment Program**

- All catechists and Staff members are required by the Archdiocese of New York to complete a background check and to participate in a workshop and an ongoing program on safeguarding our children from all kinds of abuse.

**XII. Dress Code**

- Students are required to dress modestly and appropriately for class. NO halter tops, short shorts, bare midriffs, pajama-like pants (flannels) or tee shirts with inappropriate wording are to be worn. Nothing should be worn to religious education classes that could not be worn to regular classes in the School District

**XIII. Registration**

- Re-registration takes place in early March. Please notify us if you do not plan on returning to the Program. Registration forms are available on our website, [www.stpatrickshm.org](http://www.stpatrickshm.org) Please bear in mind that the Sunday classes are filled almost overnight; therefore if that is a need for your family you must return the forms as soon as they are available on line in EARLY March,

**XIV. Communication**

- All parents receive a calendar and handbook. The handbook contains all pertinent information as it relates to the Religious Education Program. ***Please post calendar in a safe place to avoid unnecessary calls to the office.***
- The Religious Education Program will send home through your **youngest** child notices of calendar changes, upcoming events, reminders of parent meetings etc... Please ask your child weekly for such information.
- Parents are responsible for whatever announcements are in the weekly church bulletin.

**XV. Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Faith Formation Program**

**The weekly lessons are in a convenient booklet format that will inspire children and young teens to live the Gospel in their daily lives.**

**Every lesson goes home to involve parents as well, and to foster attendance at Sunday Mass for the whole family.**

**Program is time sensitive and is Lectionary based. Themes develop directly from the Sunday Gospel reading.**

**Every grade is doing the same lesson just on different learning levels.**

**Grade 1—Promise**

**Grade 2-3 Good News**

**Grade 4-5-6— Venture**

**Grade 7-8 Visions**

**VIII. Early Departure from class**

- Children cannot be excused early from class to attend sport activities, dancing lessons, etc. If children choose to participate in these activities the child should not attend class and will be marked absent for the session. Only serious and unusual medical appointments will be allowed as a reason for early dismissal. Although early dismissal was tolerated in the past, it has now become too big a distraction for the teacher trying to cover the curriculum and for the other children as they watch their friends go off to other activities.
- If a child is to be excused for a medical appointment or emergency situation, parents must come to the office and sign out child/children.
- Mrs. Pisano will use the PA system to call and get the child/children.
- Please do not go directly to classroom to pick up your child.
- We are responsible for all children in the building and must be aware of there whereabouts.

**IX. Progress Reports**

- Progress reports are distributed once each semester. The purpose of the progress reports is to allow the parent/student the opportunity of knowing where they stand in their understanding of the material being presented. It is a way to affirm and encourage students to be their best selves and to use the many gifts that God gives them.  
**Semester One** - Distributed to students the last week of: January.  
**Semester Two** - Distributed to students last class in: May.

**X. Emergency Crisis Plan**

- The archdiocese of New York has mandated that an emergency crisis plan be in effect in every Religious Education program. Catechists have been instructed and a plan is in place to respond to fire, bomb threat, health emergency, severe weather or lock down of the building. This plan is called **H E L P S** and is available in the Religious Education office if parents wish to read it.

**INCREASED SECURITY MEASURES**

In order to insure increased security in the building, all doors to the building will be locked as soon as classes begin. **DOORBELLS** have been installed at the entrance ways and children arriving late for class will have to ring the doorbell to enter. In addition, any parent or guardian who wishes to enter the building after the program has begun will have to use the doorbell to enter the building. **NO PARENTS ARE TO ENTER THE BUILDING THROUGH THE HUNTER STREET ENTRANCE.**

**IV. Role of the Student**

The obligation of the students enrolled in the Religious Education program is spiritual, academic and behavioral.

**A. Spiritual:**

- To participate in the Eucharistic Celebration of the Mass on all Saturday/Sundays
- **To participate in the assigned class Mass during the year. (Grades 3-8)**
- To lead a sacramental life, frequently receiving the Eucharist.
- To try to follow the guidelines that tells Catholics how to love God and their neighbor. Those guidelines are:
  1. The Ten Commandments
  2. The Beatitudes
  3. Corporal Works of Mercy
  4. Spiritual Works of Mercy

**B. Academic:**

- Weekly attendance at religious education classes (Under ordinary circumstances, an excess of 5 absences may be cause for repeating the grade. Louise Pisano will determine this on an individual basis.)
- Proper preparation for class instruction.
- Complete homework if assigned
- Participation in class discussions and activities.
- Satisfactory completion of special assignments.
- Doing the very best work possible. Just "getting by" is not a worthwhile goal.

**C. Behavioral:**

- It is expected that in the Religious Education Program the Gospel values of charity, kindness, honesty, respect, sharing, obedience to authority, etc. that are being learned in class should be lived. Therefore, acts of violence, prejudice, or abuse by words or actions will not be tolerated by anyone.
- The Program Director and Coordinator reserve the right to dismiss from the program any student, who after initial correction, continues to be rude, disruptive, or in any way shows disrespect or continued lack of cooperation with the catechist.

V. **Program Procedures****A. Arrival Procedure:****WEEKDAYS****Grades 1 through 8**

- All parents driving students to class must completely enter the parking lot, circle the parking lot and then drop off children at the asphalt pathway leading to the building.
- **Parents or car-poolers are NEVER allowed to drop children in the entrance/exit lanes of the parking lot.**
- No students or parents are allowed to use the entrance door facing Hunter Street by the circular driveway. This entrance is for TEACHERS ONLY.

**SUNDAYS****Grades 1 to 5**

**BECAUSE OF SUNDAY MASS CONGESTION IN THE PARKING LOT, CHILDREN IN GRADES 1 through 5 MUST BE BROUGHT INTO THE BUILDING BY AN ADULT.** The children may proceed directly to their classrooms.

**Grades 6,7,8 ALL SESSIONS**

Students in these grades may enter the building on their own if parents are comfortable allowing this. However, for safety reasons we recommend that parents bring these children directly to the building

**B. Dismissal Procedures:****All Sessions**

- **All parents (grade 1-5) must pick up their child/children in the Hall (gym).**
- **Teachers will lead all classes** to Weireter Hall (Gym) for prayer service and dismissal.
- Grade 6-8 students may exit the building from the front exit. Following the directions of the crossing guard on duty.
- This dismissal procedure is in compliance with the safety rules of the Fire Department and will provide an orderly and safe dismissal of your children. This procedure will allow us to know at a glance if a parent is late so the appropriate measures can be taken. Your cooperation in these matters is essential to facilitate an orderly arrival and dismissal.
- **PARENTS OR CAR-POOLERS MAY NEVER PARK OR STAND ON EITHER SIDE OF THE DRIVEWAY LEADING INTO THE PARKING LOT.**
- **PARENTS/GUARDIANS/CARPOOLERS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES WILL BE ASKED TO REMOVE THEIR CHILD/CHILDREN FROM THE PROGRAM.**

VI. **Attendance:**

- Weekly attendance in the program is a must if proper instruction and learning is to take place. **When a student is absent please do one of the following:**

- Notify the Religious Education office (928-6688 or 928-3354) on **AFTERNOONS AND SUNDAYS.**
- Call 928-3354 for **EVENING SESSIONS.**
- The following week send in a note with date, reason for absence and parent/guardian signature.
- Children who miss more than 5 sessions for the year are required to do makeup work over the summer. Placement in the fall is contingent on completion of the work.

**PLEASE NOTE!**VII. **Half school days:**

When Monroe-Woodbury schedules half-day classes for Superintendent Day or Staff Development day, etc. St Patrick's Religious Education program ***will be in session.*** It becomes the responsibility of the parent to make sure your child is brought to class or a note of explanation is necessary the following week.

**EMERGENCY CLOSING OR BAD WEATHER CLOSING****IMPORTANT:**

- **THERE WILL BE NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES. WHEN THE MONROE-WOODBURY SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED.**
- **WHEN MONROE WOODBURY CANCELS "ALL AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES", ALL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES ARE ALSO CANCELLED.**
- All cancellations will be broadcast on WHUD (100.7 FM) & Cancellations.com. Catechists will also call your home.
- Parents should have in place an emergency plan for when Religious Education classes are cancelled before 2:00 PM, and your children arrive home earlier than expected.
- Sunday closings will be broadcast on WHUD (100.7FM) & Cancellations.com no later than 8:00 AM. Catechist will also call your home.

**CANCELLATIONS.COM.** You may check on this site to verify whether we are in session. Just follow the directions when you open the site. You may also register at this site to receive a direct e-mail to your home or business whenever St. Patrick's has a cancellation.