St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church

*Office of Catechetical Ministries*

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Faith Formation
Family Handbook

2017-2018

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stmargaretmaryparishchino.org

 ***SAINT MARGARET MARY CHURCH***



 12686 Central Avenue ⚫ Chino, California 91710-3508 ⚫ (909) 591-7400

**Faith Formation**

Parent Handbook

2017 – 2018

Parents – Parish – Community

*a vision*…

Our Church teaches – **Parents** are not only the *first* teachers, but the primary educators, of their children. It is their responsibility to teach their children in the ways of the faith and their spiritual formation. The **Parish** leadership (staff and consulters) stands ready to help by providing vibrant religious education programs for children, as well as providing formational and informative meetings to inspire, and develop, the faith of the parents, and to support them; and the parish faith **community** supports all of our families by and through those who volunteer as catechists to share their faith with the children.

Parent Responsibility

It is of vital importance, for all of us to work together, that parents ensure their children attend sessions regularly and on time. As collaborators, parents need to communicate with the catechist and staff any special needs or circumstances that may affect their child within the session; and most importantly, be an active part of their child’s learning, including being involved in the sessions at the catechist’s request. Parents are expected to participate in ALL required parent meetings and adult formation sessions.

*Attendance / Participation*

All those involved in Faith Formation – students, parents, catechists – are expected to be present for all activities/events. This includes Sunday Mass, other Sacraments and Rites, class time, regular and special meetings, rehearsals, etc. Not being present (as with many absences) sends a message that our faith in Christ Jesus, the mission of His Church, and the efforts of our parish, are NOT important, and speaks poorly about the commitment of those involved.

It is anticipated that there would be no more than three (3) *excused* absences. More absences truly indicates a lack of interest and commitment, which not only affects your child’s faith development, it affects everyone else. Parents are asked to contact the Faith Formation Office if a child will be absent from class (909) 591-7400 (ext. 230). The staff will advise the catechist.

***Sign-In, Sign-Out***

By way of respecting the importance of your children, and our responsibility to ensure their safety (and whereabouts) **ALL children will be signed in and signed out of every session**. A parent, or their designee known to the child, will need to walk their child(ren) INTO the classroom and sign them in for each session. In the same way, children will not be released without a parent or their designee coming INTO the session to sign them out. These procedures are in place for the safety of YOUR children.

*Arrival/Dismissal/Punctuality*

* Please have your child/children here on time. It is very frustrating for a catechist to have to stop and start each time a child arrives late.
* If your child/children need to be picked up early, please contact the office. (909) 591-7400 (ext. 230).
* Sports games/practices are really NOT acceptable reasons for a child to miss faith formation sessions, or to leave early. Be committed to developing *their* faith as disciples of Christ.
* Children will only be released to a parent or guardian, or someone known to their child as your designee (such as someone included on the emergency card) – there are really no exceptions.
* Please pick up your child/children on time. Our catechists also have family and personal obligations. Please be considerate to them, and those who serve you.
* If you have an emergency, and must be late, please call and notify the office immediately (909) 591-7400 (ext. 230) so arrangements may be made for your child.
* Any children not picked up 10 minutes after class time has ended will be taken to the Faith Formation Office, and will need to be signed out there. *We reserve the right to charge a fee for children left longer than 10 minutes after the session has ended.*

Children’s Responsibility

Each child must respect the parish property. Children are expected to cooperate and behave in ways that encourage learning, for themselves and others. Everyone is expected to participate actively in all of the session activities and discussions, and, of course, to complete any home work assigned.

*Respect Whom God Has Made*

We expect everyone to live as children of God, treating one another with respect, courtesy and kindness. It was one of the initiatives of the Diocese of San Bernardino that all programs in our parish schools, catechetical programs and youth ministries aim at promoting Christ’s message of love and respect – and to learn how far from Christ’s love and respect we are when we treat each other with unkind words, harassing and bullying tactics, and physically attacking others. This insight is intended to be a value statement that all hateful behaviors will not be tolerated in our Catholic education/catechetical efforts, and the environment of the parish.

Catechist Responsibility

Catechist responsibilities include:

* Providing a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that all children will be able to grow in their faith
* Prepare and teach designated curriculum and share their own faith story
* Be a Christian role model
* Communicate regularly with, and involve parents in, the faith development of their children.
* As a requirement of the Diocese of San Bernardino, all Faith Formation Catechists are subject to a background check/and or fingerprinting through the California Bureau of Identification and Information, and the Department of Justice (F.B.I.) of our federal government. As well, all catechists complete “safe environment training,” and a “mandated reporter training” course. As mandated reporters, catechists are required to report any sign of child abuse to San Bernardino County Children and Family Services. [(909) 384-9233 / (800) 827-8724 –

<http://hss.co.san-bernardino.ca.us/dcs/reporting_child_abuse/default.htm>] this includes suspicion of physical or sexual abuse, child exploitation, child pornography, severe and general neglect, extreme corporal punishment resulting in injury, willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment; abuse or neglect in out-of-home care.

Curriculum

Our parish and school have adopted the “*We Believe*” curriculum. The publisher of this series, Sadlier, is one of the largest and oldest publishers of Catholic religion textbooks in the country. These textbooks are on the Diocesan approved list for faith formation programs. We are very excited about this curriculum. Parents are welcome to visit the Faith Formation Office to review the curriculum and program materials at any time.

Safe Environment –*Virtus*

St. Margaret Mary Parish will present a sexual abuse prevention program [the “Touching Safety” of *Virtus* –<http://www.virtus.org/virtus/touchingsafetyprogram.cfm>] to ALL of our Faith Formation students in the months of November/December, 2017. There will be a make-up session offered in January of 2018 for those students who were absent for previous sessions. The curriculum and program materials are provided to us by the Diocese of San Bernardino, and is part of our ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to help all children not to be abused.

Emergency Card

An **updated Emergency Card will be required** annually for each participant registered in a Faith Formation Session.

Off-Site Activities

Permission slips signed by the parent/guardian are required for any off-site activities.

Religious Education Accident Insurance

The parish seeks to maintain a safe environment for your child while he or she participates in the Faith Formation sessions, and all related activities (sponsored and supervised). Even so, accidents can and do happen. Insurance is provided while your child participates in our sessions. If your child sustains a covered injury, please contact our parish staff, specifically Nancy Keegan or Paulette Burandt, regarding the accident and injury to your child. They will provide you with a claim form and instructions. You may also direct questions to the plan administrator at Nationwide Insurance and K&K Insurance through Catholic Mutual.

Photo Release Form

All families are asked to sign a photo release form, which advises you that we want to use pictures of our children participating in our programs in our Parish bulletin. These photos are used to share the “good news” of the faithful life in our parish.

Emergency Session Cancellation

Best efforts are made to ensure that all sessions are held as scheduled. However, there are occasions when we may have to cancel sessions. In this event we will notify the parent/guardian by phone. Therefore it is *vitally* important that we have your cell-phone or work numbers to ensure our ability to reach you.

Right to Amend

This handbook is primarily a tool to help in our communications, be specific as to expectations, and help us to work together. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how we intend to go about our ministry of serving your children, *with* you, in passing on the faith. And yet, please know our parish may amend this handbook as necessary, though all changes will be shared with you.

Office of Catechetical Ministries/Faith Formation
2017-2018 Catechetical Year Calendar

These dates are for children in grades 1 – 8. Sessions are 4pm–5:30pm, weekly
***Classes begin the week of September 25, 2017 and end the week of May 14, 2018.***

Monday Sessions Tuesday Sessions

Sept. 25, 2017 (First session on 25th.) Sept. 26, 2017 (First sessions on 26th.)
Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 2017 (no sessions on 30th.) Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 2017 (No session on the 31st.)

Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27, 2017 Nov. 7, 14, 28, 2017 (no sessions on 21st..)
Dec.4, 11, 2017 (no sessions on the 18th. or 25th.) Dec. 5, 12, 2017 (no sessions on 19th. or 26th.)
Jan. 8, 22, 29, 2018 (no sessions on the 1st. or 15th.) Jan. 9, 16, 23, 30, 2018 (no sessions on 2nd.)
Feb. 5, 12, 26, 2018 (no sessions on the 19th.) Feb. 6, 13, 27, 2018 (no sessions on the 20th .)
Mar. 5, 12, 19, 2018 (no session on he 26th.) Mar. 6, 13, 20, 2018 (no sessions on the 27th.)
Apr. 9, 16, 23, 30, 2018 (no sessions on the 2nd.) Apr. 10, 17, 24 2018 (no sessions on the 3rd.)
May 7, 14, 2018 (last sessions on14th.) May 1, 8, 15, 2018 (last session on 15th.)

Wednesday Sessions Thursday Sessions

Sept. 27, 2017 (First session on 27th.) Sept. 28, 2017 (First session on 28th.)

Oct. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2017 Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26, 2017
Nov. 8, 15, 29, 2017 (no sessions on the 1st.or 22nd.) Nov. 9, 16, 30, 2017 (no sessions on the 2nd. or 23rd.)
Dec. 6, 13, 2017 (no sessions on the 20th. or 27th.) Dec. 7, 14, 2017 (no sessions on the 21st. or 28th.)
Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31, 2018 (no sessions on 3rd.) Jan. 11, 18, 25, 2018 (no sessions on the 4th.)
Feb. 7, 14, 28, 2018 (no sessions on the 21st.) Feb. 1, 8, 15, 2018 (no sessions on the 22nd.)
Mar. 7, 14, 21, 2018 (no sessions on the 28th.) Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 2018 (no sessions on the 29th.)
Apr. 11, 18, 25, 2018 (no sessions on the 4th.) Apr. 12, 19, 26, 2018 (no sessions on the 5th.)
May 2, 9, 16, 2018 (last session on the 16th.) May 3, 10, 17, 2018 (last session on 18th.)

Saturday (Spanish) Sessions

**Session times: 9:30 – 11:00 am, weekly.**

Sept. 30 (First Session on the 30th.)

Oct. 7, 14, 21, 28, 201 7

Nov. 11, 18, 2017 (no sessions on the 4th. or 25th.)

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 2017 (no sessions on the 23rd. or 30th.)

Jan. 13, 20, 27, 2018 (no sessions on the 6th.)

Feb. 3, 10, 17, 2018 (no sessions on the 24th.)

Mar. 3, 10, 17, 24, 2018 (no sessions on the 31st.)

Apr. 14, 21, 28, 2018 (no sessions on the 7th.)

May 5, 12, 19, 2018 (last session on the 19th.)

***VERY IMPORTAT INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WHO WILL RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS OF FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION!***

First Reconciliation

We will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in January/February, 2018, at several parish celebrations. We will give information on dates and times at the Parent Meeting for First Reconciliation. We will have visiting priests to help our own Priests.

All parents with a child who will be receiving First Reconciliation this year are required to come to a parent meeting for the Sacrament. In an effort to accommodate family's busy schedules, we have two dates for the meeting for you to choose from. They are:

 Sunday, November 12, 2017, 2:30pm. – 4:00 pm./In the Parish Hall

 OR

Monday, November 20, 2017 7:00 – 8:30 pm./In the Parish Hall

*These meetings are for parents/guardians only.*

**\*\* Your child/children will not be scheduled for First Reconciliation until you have attended one of these parent meetings.**

First Communion Workshops

All Parents/Guardians are required to attend a workshop with their First Communicant(s). These workshops are designed for the parents and their child to experience together activities that enhance and deepen their journey of faith. The workshops include: Bread Making, Storytelling, Videos, a Tour of the Church and a very special prayer service. Because of the large number of communicants we offer the workshop three (3) times. The date and times for you to choose from are:

Saturday, March 3, 2018 - 9:00am – 12:30pm

 Saturday, March 3, 2018 - 1:30pm – 5:00pm

 Sunday, March 4, 2018 - 1:30pm – 5:00pm

**\*\*Your child/children will not be scheduled for First Holy Communion until you have completed one of these workshops**.

First Holy Communions

First Holy Communions will be celebrated on Saturdays during the Easter Season. Dates and times will be given at the First Communion Workshops in March, 2018. Rehearsals will be held during regular class times. Students will attend (1) rehearsal. Parents are asked to come the rehearsal.