

Our Mother of Consolation
Parent/Student PREP Handbook
Revised 2019-2020



Parish Mission Prayer

Nourished by the Word and Eucharist, we, the members of Our Mother of Consolation Parish, strive to create a vital, welcoming Catholic faith community that embraces each person. Acknowledging our blessings and supporting one other, we humbly serve the needs of God’s people and work to be the presence of Christ in our world.

PARISH STAFF

Pastor Father Bob Bazzoli, OSFS
Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation..... Sr. Christine Konopelski, SSJ

THE PREP PROGRAM: A FAMILY CATECHESIS MODEL

As a welcoming community of faith, Our Mother of Consolation Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) has the rich tradition of our Catholic Faith both as its heritage and as the basis for promoting religious formation. With our families, we hope to participate in the transmission of Gospel values and in fostering a vibrant faith in each child. In order to achieve this end, we invite parents to join with us in full support of our program.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

The PREP program is designed to empower the family to nurture its faith. It emphasizes the importance of the Parents as the primary Catechists in their children’s lives and provides guidance, material, and events that help Parents in this essential responsibility.

The program consists of classes held on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. This program begins with 9:00 AM Mass and includes participation in Children’s Liturgy of the Word for Grades 1 and 2. At the end of Mass, children and Catechists line up in the front of the church and then move to their classrooms in the Parish School. Dismissal is at 11:30AM.

On alternate weeks (2nd and 4th Sundays), home-based assignments are posted online. These are to be completed ***with the support of*** parental instruction – Parents being the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Parents are responsible for ***“teaching” the children their lesson, no matter what grade level the child assigned.*** These lessons are posted on line with directions for the parents. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact the Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation at the Parish Center (215-247-0430).

ARRIVAL

PREP begins with family attendance at Mass, with children in PREP Years 1 and 2 participating in Children's Liturgy of the Word. Students and their Catechists line up according to PREP Years at the front of the Church and proceed to their classrooms in the Parish School. If you attend another Mass please bring your child to the side entrance of the church (school side) where your child will wait until Mass concludes. Students need to bring their textbooks unless notified via e-mail.

ATTENDANCE – ABSENTEE POLICY

Regular and continuous attendance at class is essential for a child's continuing faith formation. When a child does miss a class, the ***Parents assume the responsibility of instructing the child on the missed lesson. These lessons are posted on the website.*** The child's completed work will be checked by the Catechist at the next class.

Archdiocesan Policy considers ***three*** absences in a year to be excessive. If a child misses more than three classes the Pastoral Associate will assess the child's readiness to receive a Sacrament and/or their readiness for advancement to the next year.

Absences should be for serious reasons only. Excused absence includes: illness of student, illness or death in the family. For other urgent reasons, please call the Pastoral Associate. ***For all absences, send an email to christinessj@omcparish.com.***

MISSED ASSIGNMENTS

Our Mother of Consolation PREP Program involves a partnership with Parents. Parents assume the responsibility of teaching their child certain lessons assigned on alternate Sundays from the onsite lessons taught by the Catechists. ***If a child is absent and/or has not completed more than three consecutive lessons, the Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation will contact the Parent to set up an appointment on a separate day from the day of PREP to check both the completion of the missed assignments and the understanding of the material.*** This helps to assure the child's understanding of the material required for him/her to progress to the next grade level.

CURRICULUM

Sadlier's *We Believe: Catholic Identity* presents the content of the Catholic faith from Scripture and Tradition through words, art, activities, and discussion which form young people as disciples of Jesus Christ. Each lesson incorporates the "Six Tasks of Catechesis:" Knowledge, Liturgical formation, Moral formation, Prayer, Community life, and Mission. Every year, a spiral learning approach provides a transformative catechesis which encourages the integration of faith and life. Parents are welcome to visit the Sadlier website at <https://religion.sadlierconnect.com/wbcid> to learn more and to see the available resources. For Confirmation preparation in Year 6 the ***Chosen*** program published by Ascension Press is used. Parents are encouraged to review this program by going to the website at <http://confirmationstudy.com/about/tour/>. For PREP Year 7, a variety of presenters and input is used with the students in this second year of Confirmation preparation.



DISMISSAL

The Catechists will accompany the children to the parking lot at 11:30AM. Parents can enter the parking lot through the entrance closest to Chestnut Hill Avenue and line up in their cars to pick up their child. Parents of children in Years 1 and 2 use the lane closest to the convent. Older siblings of these children will join their younger brothers and sisters who are in Years 1 and 2. Parents of children in Years 3 to 6 use the parking lot lane closest to Norwood Avenue for pick up. For safety reasons, the doors of the school are locked during class time. If a Parent/Guardian needs to pick up their child early, they need to contact the Pastoral Associate ahead of time and come to the front entrance of the school building to gain access.

COMMUNICATION WITH CATECHISTS

Parents are asked to contact the Pastoral Associate or their child's catechist with any questions or concerns they may have. Each catechist has a parish email address which is posted on the Parish website at www.omcparish.com.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Effective communication promotes a mutually supportive program. Parents are provided with a calendar at the beginning of the program. The calendar and the program outline are also posted on the website. Unless otherwise requested, PREP communicates with parents through email, the Parish bulletin, KYW radio in emergencies, and PREP links on the Parish website at www.omcparish.com. Parents are asked to keep the PREP Office informed of a current email address.

CONDUCT

The PREP Program offered by Our Mother of Consolation is designed to assist Parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behaviors that are in accord with Catholic teaching.

Students are expected to display respect for administration, Catechists, adult volunteers, students, and the property belonging to others.

Our program has a *No Tolerance Policy* for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including, but not limited to:

- bullying
- acts of obstinacy or improper language
- fighting
- physical, emotional or psychological intimidation
- vandalism
- demeaning behaviors such as name-calling, obscene language or gesture
- harassment

In the event a child engages in any of the listed behaviors or any other inappropriate conduct, and has failed to respond to a Catechist's request to stop or correct the behavior, the Catechist will report the inappropriate behavior to the Pastoral Associate who will speak with the child.

Following this conversation a call will be made to his/her Parents/Guardians. If the behavior does not improve, the Parents/Guardians will meet with the Pastoral Associate and Catechist to discuss the procedures necessary to change the behavior.

DRESS

All students attending PREP classes are expected to dress appropriately for class. Students may not wear shirts with offensive or inappropriate logos, language or messages. In addition, students may not wear shoes that are harmful to the floors in the building or potentially harmful to themselves - baseball or football shoes with “cleats” and/or shoes with rollers.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)

When registering or re-registering a child who has an IEP from his/her public/private school, please provide the PREP Office with a copy of the document. An IEP can help guide us in making accommodations for a child. The document may be shared with the child’s Catechist to ensure we are working to accommodate a child’s needs. The IEP will be handled in a confidential manner by both the Pastoral Associate and Catechist.

LATENESS

When a student arrives late for class he/she upsets the flow of the class and impairs personal progress. **Every effort** should be made for your child to **arrive on time**. If a child is constantly late, the Parents/Guardians will be contacted to discuss the situation.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CUSTODY OF A CHILD

In custody situations where only one parent is to have contact with the child/children, the custodial parent must inform the Pastoral Associate. The document for proof of custody will be kept on file in the PREP Office. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the office with any changes.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION: RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST

The Archdiocese requires that Sacraments be received in the parish in which the family is registered. Sacramental preparation is the joint effort of the Parents/Guardians, Parish, and Catechists. At present, we celebrate First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in Year 2. A Parent Sacrament Forum is held at the beginning of the PREP year to give faith formation enrichment to the Parents/Guardians and to go over necessary details for the reception of the Sacraments.



To share in communion for the first time children must have “sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity” (Code of Canon Law 913). Readiness is "determined in consultation among Priest, Parents/Guardians, Catechists, and child." The following are also required:

- Registration at OMC or permission from your Pastor to receive the Sacrament/s at OMC
- A copy of the Child's Baptismal Certificate
- Attends scheduled Religious Education classes
- Weekly Mass Attendance
- Knowledge of all required prayers and understanding of the Eucharist Preparation Text
- Readiness to receive the Sacrament
- Parent/s' attendance at the Parent Meetings, Retreat and Rehearsal
- Minimal absences (no more than 3)
- Payment of Sacrament Materials Fee

SACRAMENT PREPARATION: CONFIRMATION

It is the policy at Our Mother of Consolation Parish that students continue their religious education uninterrupted through Confirmation. The Archdiocese requires that Sacraments be received in the parish in which the family is registered. Sacramental preparation is the joint effort of the Parents/Guardians, Parish, and Catechists. At present we celebrate Confirmation in the Spring of Year 7. A Parent Sacrament Forum is held at the beginning of the PREP year to give faith formation enrichment to the Parents/Guardians and to go over necessary details for the reception of the Sacraments. The following requirements must also be fulfilled:



- Registration at OMC or permission from your Pastor to receive the Sacrament/s at OMC
- Received Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and First Eucharist
- Weekly Mass Attendance
- Attends scheduled Religious Education classes
- Knowledge of the Catholic Faith and an expressed desire for full membership
- Participates actively in Confirmation Service Days
- Completes Confirmation Statement of Intent and Saints Research
- Sponsor Certificate of Eligibility
- Parent/s' attendance at the Parent Meetings, Retreat and Rehearsal
- Minimal absences (no more than 3)
- Payment of Sacrament Materials Fee

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia has a Safe Environment policy in place. One lesson per year called "Keeping God's Children Safe" is taught to the students. You may view this lesson online prior to its being taught at <http://phillyocf.org/safe-environment/>. Parents may opt out of these lessons for their child by contacting the PREP Office in writing prior to the published date on which the lesson will be taught.

SAFETY

- **FIRE/EVACUATION:** In the event of an actual fire or other emergency, directions for evacuation of the building are posted in each classroom. A fire/evacuation drill will be conducted in the beginning of the year so that all students and catechists are familiar with this procedure.
- **FIRST AID POLICY:** Every attempt is made to provide a safe and healthy environment. Since accidents sometimes do occur, and children may become ill quickly, the following procedure will be followed:
 1. The Pastoral Associate will notify the Parents/Guardians. If they are unreachable, the emergency contact person will be called.
 2. If neither of the above parties is available and/or time is of the essence, the Catechist or the Pastoral Associate will call 911. A PREP staff member will continue to call contact persons until someone is notified.
- **MEDICATION:** Except in extraordinary circumstances (which will be approved by the Pastoral Associate) the Religious Education personnel will not maintain or supervise the taking of medication. It is the responsibility of the Parents to inform and update the PREP Office about allergies and any other medical condition that would affect the safety of the child in the PREP program.
- **SHELTER IN PLACE:** Shelter in Place is an emergency response plan to the release of hazardous materials into the air. This response can only be called by the police or fire department. If our program were instructed to *shelter in place*, we would initiate our plan to protect the children. If Shelter in Place is called, no one is permitted to leave or enter the building. It becomes our responsibility to care for the basic needs of our children until we are given permission to safely dismiss the students to their parents.

SNOW EMERGENCY & CANCELLATIONS

In the event of severe inclement weather, listen to **KYW News Radio 1060 AM**. In the event of a non-weather-related cancellation, we will make every effort to contact families as early as possible via KYW, PREP Reach, and/or we will send an e-mail to you to inform you of the cancellation.



SPECIAL NEEDS

Our PREP Program is available for students with learning style differences and challenges. Parents/Guardians of any child with special needs participating in PREP should contact the Pastoral Associate to discuss how their child can be supported in their faith formation.

NEW REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

For a child to be registered in the PREP Program the following must be met:

- The family needs to be registered in the parish.
- Parents and child meet with the Pastoral Associate for Faith Formation
- A copy of the child’s Baptismal certificate must be provided.
- Registration form completed by September 1st
- Registration fee paid



Students transferring from another PREP Program need the following additional information:

- Dates of any Sacraments received
- Copy of transfer letter from previous program Director stating the child’s completed grade level and the year that level was completed.

RE-REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Re-registration for students presently in the program takes place during the months of April and May. No registrations will be accepted after September 1st.

TUITION

Tuition for Years 1 to 7

- One child \$200.00
- Each additional child.....\$100.00
- Tuition covers the cost of each student textbook as well as audiovisual materials, resource material, catechist training and other items purchased for use in the program.
- SCRIP credits may be used to pay for tuition.
- A replacement fee of \$35 is charged for lost textbooks.
- If a family has a financial concern or difficulty, please contact the Pastoral Associate at the Parish Office (215) 247-0430. No child will be denied access to religious education for financial reasons.

WEBSITE

The parish website, www.omcparish.com, has a link for the Religious Education Program. Calendar updates and other announcements will be posted there along with other material and links as they are developed.



This Handbook acts as an agreement between Parents/Guardians and their child/ren who participate in Our Mother of Consolation Parish Religious Education Program. By enrolling your child/ren into our program, you agree to support and abide by the standards outlined in this Handbook. Parents are encouraged to discuss these standards with their child/ren to ensure that all parties understand the responsibilities of participation in the PREP Program.