**Holy Redeemer by the Sea**

**Faith Formation**

**Parent Handbook**

**2019-20**

Dear Parents,

Your role as Catholic parents is surely one of the most sacred, challenging and wonderful vocations that the Lord entrusts to His people. You brought your childto be baptized, thus providing the opportunity to begin life as a disciple of Jesus in the Church. As your child grows, you continue to nurture that spiritual life. You enable your child to live joyously in the Love of God made tangible by your own goodness and love. In the intimacy of family relationships, you teach the Catholic faith to your child every day by what you say and do – a profound and irreplaceable witness.

We in the Parish Faith Formation Program have also been given a sacred role by the Lord – that of Catechist for your child. We welcome the opportunity to assist you in teaching your child to walk in the ways of faith. We pledge all the resources of our program to helping your children come to know and better understand the person of Jesus Christ who so loves them. We pledge to do all we can to help you instill Catholic beliefs and values so that your child may live in the joy of being Jesus’ disciple.

Our experience has shown us that this is most effectively accomplished when the family and the parish work together. The *parents* place Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their family life – through Sunday Mass, family prayer, and daily life as disciples of Jesus. The Faith Formation Education Program teaches Catholic life which the children are living at home and experiencing in the Parish. The Parish supports and nurtures the parents and provides a “home-place” for the families who choose the Catholic way of life in a world that is increasingly lost without God and in need of the Truth that is Jesus.

May God bless us in the work of Catholic Education which we carry on together in His name.

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**William F. Walsh, osfs Barbara Nickerson**

**Pastor Coordinator, Religious Education**

**INTRODUCTION**

The overall success of the Faith Formation program is dependent upon the care and commitment of all of us: parents, students, catechists and staff. We encourage everyone to prayerfully consider their individual roles and make the effort required.

**Parents:**

Attendance at Faith Formation classes is not a substitute for Sunday Mass attendance. You are encouraged to worship together as a family each weekend, and to discuss as a family their experiences in our classrooms. Parents are expected to work with their children, not only by modeling faith, but also by talking about their faith and praying with their children.

**Students:**

Students are expected to attend classes faithfully each week and bring with them a willingness to learn more about themselves and their faith. Students are expected to treat teachers, adults, peers and Church property with respect and Christian charity. Our goals of teaching the Faith and inspiring love of God and neighbor call everyone to practice what is being taught.

**Catechists**:

Basic to the ministry of Faith Formation is the catechist’s commitment to a personal faith which is continually deepened by participation in all teacher training/formation opportunities, personal preparation and readiness for each class session, faithful attendance and a commitment to maintaining the content of the curriculum. Catechists also understand that open communication with directors and parents is essential to the success of the program.

**Holy Redeemer Staff**:

 Parents, students and catechists can expect that the Holy Redeemer Staff will do everything it can to ensure that religious education is a positive experience for your student. The Holy Redeemer Staff will keep lines of communication open and address questions and concerns in a timely manner.

**REGISTRATION**

**Parish Membership**: In order to be effective, the Religious Education Program needs to be strengthened by family participation in the total liturgical, social and educational life of the parish. For this reason, families need to be registered in the parish if the children are attending our program.

**Registration/Forms**: Registration in the Religious Education program is open to any child of a family registered at Holy Redeemer by the Sea Church and Holy Trinity by the Sea Chapel. Children will be placed in the same grade as their regular school placement. The Good Shepherd programs accepts children who will be 4 years old by September 1 of the school year. Registration forms are available on the Holy Redeemer website at obxcatholicparish.org, in the Gathering Space, the Parish Office and the Faith Formation office.

Registration forms should be returned as quickly as possible. Session and class assignments are done on a first-come, first served basis.

**LATE REGISTRATION:** Late registration makes it difficult to arrange for the proper number of catechists, classrooms, textbooks and supplies. REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED AFTER 9/23/19 MAY NOT BE PROCESSED IN TIME FOR PLACEMENT.

**FEES**

Text Book fees are $20.00 for one child; $30.00 for two children; $40.00 for three or more children.

Tuition will be waived for the children of catechists.

No child will be refused admission to the Faith Formation Program because of an inability to pay the fees (tuition). Parents for whom fees would cause a severe financial burden should contact the Coordinator for a reduction or a waiver.

**CLASSES**

**Schedule/Location:** All classes will take place after the 9:00 am Sunday Mass at

Holy Redeemer from approximately 10:00 am-11:30 am. Doors will be locked at 10:15 am.

**Curriculum:** The current curriculum used is Good Shepherd, the Faith and Life Series from Ignatius Press and Call to Faith Series Booklets from Our Sunday Visitor.

**Class Size:** Group sizes for Good Shepherd is limited to 8-14 students.

Grades 1-5 to 16-20 students and Middle/High School classes can number up to 15 students.

**Attendance:** Faith Formation should be a priority. Given the limited amount of time in the Faith Formation teaching schedule, attendance at all classes is mandatory for all students unless there is an excused absence.

1. Students are responsible to make up all work for any missed classes.

2. If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call the catechist (prior to class time if possible) and discuss that week’s lesson and any homework the student should complete. Parents must also call the Faith Formation Office to notify us of any absence at 252-261-4700. Please leave a message if no one is available to answer the phone.

3. If a child misses more than five (5) classes or is frequently tardy, the parent of the child may be asked to meet with the Coordinator to develop a possible solution to the problem.

**Arrival/Dismissal:** All students must be in the building at least 5 minutes before the start of class. If your children are in grades 1-6 or the Good Shepherd Program, you are responsible for escorting them to their classroom. Students in the 7th - 10th grade classes may be dropped off by their parents at the Faith Formation Wing entrance. Classes are dismissed at 11:30 am. Before any student is released, we require a parent’s signature on the class sign-out sheet. If a parent is more than 15 minutes late for pick up, the student will be brought to the Coordinator’s Office to wait for pick-up. We will NOT leave until ALL the children have been picked up.

**Portable Electronic Devices**: Gameboys, MP3 devices, I-pods, I-pads and cell phones are NOT to be used during class time, unless specifically authorized by the catechist for classroom instruction purposes. Otherwise, if any of these devices are used during class, the catechist will confiscate them and return them to the student when class is ended. These devices are a distraction to the learning process. Students in need of contacting a parent or guardian may do so through the Coordinator of Faith Formation.

**Dress Code:** Children’s attitudes and behaviors are affected by what they wear. We ask that children dress appropriately for Faith Formation classes and for Mass. Good taste and proper, reasonable judgement should be utilized.

Modesty is a virtue. Dress will be modest. General guidelines:

* Clothes should be clean and in good condition
* Clothes should not be revealing
* Singlet tops are not allowed
* Bare midriff tops are not allowed
* No offensive slogans
* No advertising of drugs, including tobacco and alcohol
* No hats to be worn in class

**Medication:** We do NOT administer prescription or non-prescription medication to any child in our Faith Formation Program. Parents are asked to administer any medication before or after Faith Formation class and to make the catechist and the Director/Coordinator aware of any possible side effects. Parents are permitted to come to our program and administer the medication to their children.

**Food**

Many of our children have various food allergies, some of which are quite severe. Therefore, we cannot allow **any food** to be brought into the classrooms under any circumstances.

**Photos and Press Releases:** From time to time, photos or videos may be taken of special events which may include your child. These pictures include the First Holy Communion pictures and the Confirmation pictures. Please notify the Coordinator of Faith Formation at the beginning of the school year if this is not acceptable to you and we will comply with your request.

**Class Cancellations:** The Church will be closed and all activities canceled if a LOCAL State of Emergency is declared by Dare County or the Town of Kitty Hawk that includes mandatory evacuations or restrictions or prohibitions on travel in Kitty Hawk. Never put yourself at risk of accident or physical harm to come to Church in dangerous conditions, even if a delay or emergency has not been announced.

Since our new inclement weather policy governing closures and cancellations will now be tied to County and Municipality States of Emergency, we urge all parishioners to sign up for County Alerts. Dare County Emergency Management has the ability to send emergency alerts to residents, visitors and property owners

via text, email, and over the phone. Registered users pick how time-sensitive messages are received and which devices, phone numbers and email addresses notifications are sent to. Examples of emergency notifications include but are not limited to: mandatory evacuation orders, reentry information, hurricane advisories and bulletins, emergencies disrupting vehicular/pedestrian traffic, and countywide post-disaster information.

Phone Numbers – Users can opt in to receive alerts sent as voice recordings over the phone and/or text.

Addresses – Alerts affecting specific areas of Dare County, may be sent based on location; including your home address, work address, and the addresses of any additional properties you own in Dare County, which will ensure you receive notification of situations that may impact those areas.

Weather Events – Select which alerts you would like to receive from NOAA & the National Weather Service. The link to sign up is: https://www.darenc.com/departments/emergencymanagement/emergency-alerts

**CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

We **require** that all students behave in an appropriate manner in order to create a productive, orderly and peaceful learning environment. Disrespect towards teachers, fighting, using foul language, defacement of church property, carrying harmful objects, and stealing are considered unacceptable behavior. Additionally, we have a zero tolerance policy on bullying. Any child caught in the act of bullying, either physically or verbally, will be removed from the class and their behavior will be discussed with the parent upon-pick up. This requires full cooperation of students with the catechist. Full cooperation includes:

* Listening at appropriate times
* Participating willingly in discussions and activities
* Speaking only when it is your turn.
* Keeping your hands to yourself.
* Being dressed appropriately at all times; hats are to be removed during class time.

Our Catechists are trained in skills that help promote an orderly and structured atmosphere. Nevertheless, disciplinary problems may still arise. Frequent disruptive behavior is unfair to all other students in a class. It is the policy of our Faith Formation Program to attempt to resolve such problems using the following method:

**First Offense** - Verbal warning to the student by the Catechist. **If** the offense is serious in nature (i.e. hitting another student) the parent(s) will be notified and the Catechist will report the incident to the Coordinator of Faith Formation.

**Second Offense** – Continuing behavioral problems will be referred to the Coordinator of Faith Formation, who with the cooperation of the Catechist and the parents involved will take whatever action is necessary to insure both the integrity of the class and the child. If necessary, the parent will be called to pick the child up.

**Third Offense** – Referral to the Pastor of Holy Redeemer by the Sea for possible dismissal from the Program. The Coordinator of Faith Formation, along with the Pastor, reserves the right to remove the child from the Parish Faith Formation Program if cooperation is not evident by the child or parent.

**SACRAMENTS**

***Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States***explains that through visible and finite symbols we encounter the invisible presence and infinite holiness of God. Sacraments celebrate God’s actions in the life of the community of believers. Preparation for reception of a Sacrament necessitates a two-fold understanding of this communal dimension. The family is the primary community for sacramental preparation for it is within this structure that we first form values and attitudes and we first encounter intensified support through structured sacramental preparation programs and parish communal celebrations of the Sacraments.

Candidates normally must have satisfactorily completed two (2) consecutive years of religious education for preparation for the sacraments. This is a Diocese of Raleigh policy.

Parent meetings are mandatory for all parents with children being prepared for sacraments.

Preparation for the Sacraments is an integral part of the Faith Formation Program. Sacraments are celebrations that mark important phases in a child’s faith journey and therefore, parental involvement in the Sacramental preparation of children is of the greatest importance.

**Parents are expected to take an active role in the faith journey of their child**. **It is a blessing to:**

1. Nurture the spiritual life of the child.
2. Encourage an active family life.
3. Regularly attend Mass on Saturdays/Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
4. Participate/attend Parent Information Meetings.
5. Read parent letters and review take home materials.
6. Ensure that the child has completed any related requirements as assigned.

**First Reconciliation and First Eucharist**

At Holy Redeemer by the Sea the Faith Formation Program preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist begins in the 1st grade.

Here the children will learn and have basic knowledge and understanding of the following:

- God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- God’s personal love for each person

- The Church as People of God

- The Sacrament of Baptism

- Prayer as a response to God’s love

- Traditional prayers: The Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Immediate and formal preparation begins in the 2nd grade where the children will be provided with opportunities to include understanding of the Christian way of life, our sinfulness, God’s forgiveness and how that forgiveness is celebrated in the Church. Additionally, they will also come to an understanding of who Jesus is, the main events in His life; and to realize that Jesus is present in the Eucharist Bread.

In keeping with the Diocese of Raleigh guidelines, in communion with the See of Rome, at least one (1) year for the preparation and reception of these sacraments is recommended; therefore, we at Holy Redeemer by the Sea will administer both Reconciliation and the Eucharist in the 2nd grade. This will provide an additional year of sacramental preparation for each child. Reconciliation will be during Advent and First Eucharist in the spring.

**Confirmation**

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation along with Baptism and the Eucharist. Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism though an outpouring of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a time where the candidate personally accepts and makes the commitment to Catholicism that was made for him/her by parents at Baptism. It is an initiation to a fuller and richer life.

The process of preparation for Confirmation takes place over a two (2) year period beginning in the 9th grade and culminating at the end of the 10th grade with the reception of the Sacrament either in late spring or the following fall of the 11th grade. It is essential that your child attend both years in order to be eligible to receive the Sacrament.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

**Child Abuse** – **Safe Environment Training**

Our Faith Formation Staff is required by the Diocese of Raleigh to complete the Safe Environment Training. This program is powerful in content. The goal is to educate all those who work with children to recognize abuse/abusers and address the protection of children as noted below.

To report child abuse: Division of Social Services 252-475-5500

The Local Police: Emergency: 911 Non-emergency: 252-475-5980

**Safety Guidelines/Building Security**

Recent tragedies in our society and schools nationwide have prompted us to strengthen our policies and guidelines to ensure the protection of our children and adults who work in the Faith Formation Program.

Please be aware that the classrooms are secured when classes are in session in order to provide a secure environment for the children. The building will also be locked and secure when classes are in session.

**Note:** Please be extremely careful in the parking lot area as children are often distracted and not watching car movement.

**Early discharge**: If your child is to be dismissed early, a note must be given to the catechist at the beginning of class and a parent must sign the child out with the catechist.

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Date

I have read the **Holy Redeemer by the Sea Faith Formation Parent Handbook,** and am aware of the Program’s policies and regulations concerning:

My child \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Please Print Student’s Name)

My child\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Please Print Student’s Name)

My child\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Please Print Student’s Name)

My child\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (Please Print Student’s Name)

Signatures:

Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian

This signed and dated affirmation is to be detached from the Handbook and given to the Coordinator of Faith Formation on the first day of classes, UNLESS the page attached to the Registration Form was completed, signed, and turned in with the Registration Form.