



SS. FAITH, HOPE & CHARITY
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2011-2012 PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Ss. Faith, Hope and Charity Religious Education Program ("the Program") is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. The Program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national origin in admission policies, administration of its policies, supplementary programs, or any other program based function.

Registration: Registration begins in the spring for the school year beginning in the fall of that same year, and is accepted at any time. The Program accepts both parishioners and non-parishioners, although tuition for non-parishioners is doubled.

Families may register children for either of two options on a first-come, first served basis.

Early Morning Session: **Sundays 9:00-10:15 a.m.** All grades

Mid Morning Session: **Sundays 10:30-11:45 a.m.** All grades

There is a very strong expectation that all families enrolled in the Religious Education Program attend Sunday Mass weekly. Based on the results of our spring 2008 survey, the majority of families prefer to have the opportunity to attend Mass as a family together with all their children at the same time. In our current structure, children will be supervised only in the classroom and will not attend Mass under the supervision of catechists. Instead, families can attend Mass together at the time best for their family.

Tuition: \$325 per student (no additional fees)

The Program is fortunate to have so many wonderful volunteers who generously give of their time to make the students' experiences so meaningful. Our budget reflects the full cost for the operation of the RE Program, including (but not limited to): textbooks, staff salaries and benefits, administrative expenses, sacramental preparation expenses, and one-sixth of the cost of heat, electricity and maintenance for the school building. The tuition which we collect does not cover all of these expenses. In fact, **the Religious Education Program is subsidized significantly by the parish every year**. In addition to tuition payment, we also encourage families to remember to make regular contributions to parish collections which finance so many aspects of the life of our wonderful parish - worship, priests and staff, music, church building maintenance, outreach - as well as subsidies to the Religious Education Program and the Parish School.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

God Made the World Program for Age 4 Preschool (published by Loyola Press): This program integrates Scripture and Church doctrine into each lesson to help children and catechists relate Catholic beliefs, sacred Tradition, and faith to their lives. Parent pages will help parents expand on the lessons at home.

God Loves Us Program for Age 5 Kindergarten (published by Loyola Press): This program integrates Scripture and Church doctrine into each lesson to help children and catechists relate Catholic beliefs, sacred Tradition, and faith to their lives. Parent pages will help parents expand on the lessons at home.

Finding God program for Grades 1-5 (published by Loyola Press): In systematic catechesis for children (who need sequential formation that respects their spiritual lives), all basic doctrine and teachings of the Catholic Church are covered in age-appropriate ways at each grade level. This program has a unique emphasis on spirituality and prayer which can help children deepen their relationship with Jesus. All grades build upon one another so that children learn, review, and live out the Scripture, doctrine, and tradition of our faith. Each level has a particular focus as follows:

Grade 1

- An introduction to the Trinity:
 - God is our Creator and loves us as our Father;
 - Jesus came to tell us about God the Father and save us;
 - the Holy Spirit helps us live as the followers of Jesus called the Church.
- We learn and practice what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus.
- We can say these prayers: Glory Be, Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary.

Grade 2

- Celebrating the sacraments brings us closer to God, our Church, and our families, and helps us on our journey of faith;
- We know and practice the prayers of the Mass and of the Rite of Reconciliation;
- We show our love for Jesus by following him with our actions.

Grade 3

- God calls us to live in community. Our Church community is diverse yet unified in Jesus Christ.
- God wants our love as a response to his love for us.
- We learn and practice what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus.
- Sin breaks our relationships with God and with our community.
- We state our common beliefs in the Apostles' Creed.

Grade 4

- God calls us to live a moral life;
- God is faithful to his promises and calls us to faithful discipleship in all we do;
- we are guided by Jesus and the Holy Spirit, the Ten Commandments, the two Great Commandments, and the Beatitudes;
- the Saints show us many paths of holiness;
- we pray the Mysteries of the Rosary with Mary, the first disciple.

Grade 5

- the Gospel of Mark
- the seven Sacraments
- living as a disciple of Jesus

The Catholic Connections Program for Grades 6-8 (published by St. Mary's Press): This new program uses an active, hands-on approach to introduce Catholic young adolescents to Jesus Christ in a new way and inspire them to follow him. Fostering the faith of young adolescents involves helping them to make connections between the Catholic faith and everyday life. It also means helping young people to strengthen their connection to the faith community. *Catholic Connections* aims to strengthen the participants' Catholic identity and inspire them to participate more fully in the Church's mission. These middle school grades also use Bibles from St. Mary's Press as another primary text.

Grade 6

- God's plan of salvation revealed through the Old Testament Scriptures and people;
- the Gospel of Matthew;
- the common bond of the three monotheistic religions (Christianity, Judasim, Islam).

Grade 7

- the Gospel of Luke
- putting our faith to work in our lives in the way we act, the decisions we make, and the people we become.

Grade 8

- the Nicene Creed as a summary of our faith;
- the Acts of the Apostles;
- the role of the Holy Spirit;
- the Rite of Confirmation;
- the effects of Confirmation in our lives.

The content of faith at all grade levels is presented according to the following essential categories:

Mystery of God
Mystery of Jesus
Mystery of the Holy Spirit
Mystery of the Church
Spirituality

Sacraments
The Eucharist
Reconciliation
Prayer

Scripture/Tradition
Theological Virtues
Creation
Grace

Mary & Saints
Moral Life of Christians
Salvation
Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Prayers Emphasized in Each Grade Level

Students are expected to know the following prayers at the grade level indicated. Although we work on these prayers in class, your child will only know them well if they are taught at home. Please try to incorporate them into your daily routine. Copies of the prayers are in the Handbook for Today's Catholics which every family received when they joined the Program and are also available at the Loyola Press website: www.findinggod.org.

Grade 1	Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace before Meals
Grade 2	Grade One prayers; also, Act of Contrition, Glory Be. Grace after Meals also recommended.
Grade 3	Grade Two prayers; also, the Apostles' Creed, familiarity with Morning Offering & Evening Prayer
Grade 4	Grade Three prayers; also, the Ten Commandments, the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross
Grade 5	Grade Four prayers; also, the Beatitudes, the Nicene Creed
Grade 6	All of the above should be learned by this grade level.

Consistent Enrollment and Attendance

Please note that Religious Education students need to be enrolled in an RE Program for both 7th and 8th grade (i.e., either the FHC Home-School program as described above or regular RE Program or an RE Program at another parish or a parish school) as part of their preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. The same two-year preparation process applies to children preparing for the Sacrament of First Communion in second grade. Additionally, if children are not enrolled in either a regular RE Program or a parish-sponsored home school program for more than one year, we may ask for the child to demonstrate mastery of knowledge benchmarks through a written assessment before admittance to the Program at their grade level.

Religious Education Program Rules

The Program seeks to provide an environment that will allow children to learn, experience, and grow as members of our Christian community. A partnership between children, parents and catechists is necessary to achieve this goal. The Code of Behavior encourages children to be accountable for their behavior. They are expected to be courteous to other children and all adults. Every person who chooses to belong to and to worship at Ss. Faith, Hope and Charity has the right to worship in an environment that fosters reverence and respect for God, Church and each other.

CODE OF BEHAVIOR

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Raise your hand to speak. Do not interrupt others.
3. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
4. Use encouraging words; no put-downs or name-calling.
5. Stay in your assigned areas.
6. Do not abuse the classrooms that we use on Sundays. Stay out of desks and lockers. Do not write on any school property.
7. Inappropriate clothing is not permitted. Examples of inappropriate clothing include sport shorts, T-shirts with "loud" decorations, bare shoulders, etc. The motto is "Dress with respect - for yourself and others."

CONSEQUENCES OF INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The catechists, supported by the staff of the Program, will discuss the consequences of inappropriate behavior with the children, in general terms. At all times the catechists will attempt to administer discipline with dignity for the child. The following is an outline for parents of what they can expect if it is necessary for the catechist to take action in order to control behavior that is disturbing the class.

1. One warning will be given to the child.
2. Parents will be called by the catechist if child does not respond to the warning.
3. If a second call is required, the name will be given to Program staff for follow up.
4. After two calls, and intervention by the Program staff, parents will be required to accompany their child to class.
5. If further action is necessary, parents and child will meet with the pastor to try and discover why the child cannot respect the Code of Behavior.
6. Suspension from the Program is the last resort.

Most behavior problems can be solved between the catechist and the parents if there is a spirit of cooperation there that the child can sense. The goal is the same - to create an atmosphere in which learning can take place.

May I request a particular catechist or friend for my child's class? In an effort to build Christian community, and balance girls and boys between school systems, we are no longer able to honor special requests for friends or catechists. (Policy statement of the Religious Education Board, April 2008)

Textbooks: Each student is assigned a textbook for use throughout the year (some grade levels may have two books). The textbooks for 4-year-olds and kindergarten will be kept in the classroom at school, with parent pages sent home after each class. Beginning in the Fall 2009, textbooks will go home with students in grades 1-8 and carried back to the next class. The adoption of this practice is intended to encourage and facilitate parent familiarity with classroom work. (Policy statement of the Religious Education Board, March 2009). Syllabi for each grade level are posted on our website for easy reference.

Supervision during RE Program:

- Supervision is provided in the classrooms for students only during their assigned 75-minute class time.
- Preschool and kindergarten students (4 and 5 year olds) must be signed out by their parent or other pre-designated individual before being released by catechists.
- Students in grades 1-3 will not be released by their catechists until a parent arrives to pick him or her up from the classroom.
- Students in grades 4-8 will be released at the end of class from the classroom. Further supervision will not be provided, although volunteer hall monitors will help insure safe exits.
- Inside the front main doors of the school (at the top of the stairs), the Religious Education Program has a temporary table set up each week which is known as our "front desk." From 8:30 a.m. until Noon, an RE volunteer or staff person will be available at the front desk to assist students, parents and catechists with any questions or concerns. **Parents are asked to inform their children to report to the front desk if they miss their parents at pick up time, need to call home, or need help in any other way.**

School Security during Religious Education Program sessions: To best ensure the safety of your children during Religious Education sessions and keep the buildings secure, the parish administration, the Religious Education Board, and Religious Education staff have determined that the school buildings will remain locked with entry monitored.

- All entrances to the main school building and the Parish Activities Center (200 Ridge) will remain locked on Sunday mornings during program times.
- Please note that all entrance/exit doors of the school have “panic bars” so that even though the doors are locked, people may always exit.
- Ensuring the safety of our children requires the assistance of parent volunteers. Parents (who are not catechists) are asked to consider volunteering to serve as a monitor once a month.

Custody Issues: If parents are divorced or separated, the Program presumes that both parents have access to the children and to the children's records unless one parent can provide evidence that he or she has the sole right.

Bulletin/Web Site Photo Usage: From time to time, photos may be taken of Program participants for use in our parish bulletin or Program newsletter (*Sunday Spirit*). These items are also available on the parish web site. Photographs of children will not be used on the web site without written permission from at least one of their parents. Written photo usage permission forms are signed at the time of registration.

Health and Safety:

Authorization for Medical Treatment: The Program requires parents to sign an *Authorization for Medical Treatment* form for each child. This authorizes the Program to obtain medical treatment for a student in an emergency. The Program has injury procedures in place of which any parent/guardian may obtain a copy by calling the Religious Education Office at (847)446-1828.

Medication: Except in extraordinary circumstances that must be approved by the Director of Religious Education (DRE), Program personnel will not maintain, supervise the taking of, or administer medication.

Emergency Procedures for fire are in place and in accordance with commonly accepted current practices. Students take part in a fire drill during the school year so that they are familiar with emergency exit routes.

Computer Lab Usage: Your child’s class may use the school computer lab at some time during the year. All users are expected to use the computers and computer networks in a responsible, ethical and polite manner. Teachers will provide guidance and monitoring of the program to the best of their ability as a regular instructional activity. Controlling all materials on a global network is impossible and an industrious user may discover inappropriate information or perform inappropriate actions in spite of adult supervision. Therefore, the Program encourages parents to have a frank discussion with their children about Catholic Christian values and how those beliefs should guide student activities while using the Internet. Misuse of the Internet can result in loss of privilege to use the lab again. The parent/guardian is responsible for any damage caused by the student’s inappropriate use of the Internet system. Before use of the lab, parents and students may be required to complete Acceptable Use Consent Forms.

Safe Environment Training (*Child Lures Program*): In response to the sexual abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops directed Catholic dioceses around the country to implement several steps which would “unify and enhance the existing efforts to protect children and young people from sexual abuse.” A directive from the Archdiocese of Chicago requires parish Religious Education Programs to offer the *Child Lures Prevention Program* to the children enrolled. The program educates children on safety prevention in the areas of sexual exploitation, abduction, Internet crime, drugs and school violence. The

Child Lures program will be offered to FHC RE students annually on dates to be determined (outside of the regular Religious Education sessions). If parents choose NOT to have their children attend and participate in this program, the Archdiocese requires that our office keep on file an acknowledgement that the parent has chosen to opt out or decline their child's participation. It is this "Parental Declination" which requires your signature. The Parental Declination signature form is completed at the time of registration. (If you should later decide to instead have your child participate in the *Child Lures* program, your Parental Declination would be discarded.)

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The Program will attempt to keep you informed of any changes as soon as practical.