

# RELIGIOUS FORMATION

## POLICY GUIDE

Welcome to Our Lady of Good Counsel! We exist to offer everyone a life-changing encounter with Jesus. It is our privilege to journey in faith with you. Please read below for important information and policies.

### WHO TO CONTACT ABOUT RELIGIOUS ED & YOUTH MINISTRY

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

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## **ABSENCE REPORTING**

Please email your child's catechist of their absence and inquire about what was missed in class. Catechists can assist with make-up work arrangements. There is no need to call the office unless special circumstances require a conversation with our DRE. Be mindful of the allowed absences for the program you are enrolled in. Attendance and participation is required.

## **ATTENDANCE**

To receive the full benefit of our Religious Formation Program, **participation and attendance are required in all sessions; formation classes and sacramental offerings.** Excellent attendance every year is vital for the children and their families. If poor attendance (20% of classes missed) becomes a concern, the Director of Religious Education will contact the parents for discussion of a plan to move forward.

## **BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES**

A copy of your child's Baptismal Certificate is required before they can receive First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. Families will be contacted when we do not have a copy on file.

## **CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

Catechists will discuss rules of behavior at the beginning of the school year. These rules are very basic e.g. listening, respecting others, etc. Children should only bring class material. NO TOYS, CARDS, GAMES, STUFFED ANIMALS, ETC. Under no circumstances may cell phones, I-Pods, etc. be in use or in sight in the classroom. Catechists will have the authority to take said item to the office and will only be returned to the parent.

## **CLASS SIZE**

Class sizes are based on a variety of factors; including room size, number of catechists, and program enrollment.

## **CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a hands-on Montessori-based methodology. All other programs are based in Scripture via St. Mary's Press "The Catholic Children's Bible" and the Archdiocese of Detroit religion curriculum in step with Unleash the Gospel.

### **ARCHDIOCESE OF DETROIT (AOD)- RELIGION CURRICULUM**

- The AOD launched a new Religion Curriculum in 2017.
- The emphasis is in Encountering our Lord, Growing in faith, and Witnessing our faith in the world. Evangelization, discipleship, and being on-mission are common threads.
- For more information click on this curriculum link >

<https://aod.app.box.com/s/xpv12f2c8jt55ubfu94wmyv75c7zi5m6/file/377041461105>

## **DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

We utilize a 1 – 2 – 3 approach to discipline issues with our students. First, the catechist will try to redirect a student's behavior in a positive direction. Second, the student will be given a verbal warning. Third, the student will be sent to the office and the parent will be made aware of this. If further discipline is needed, a plan will be decided on between the DRE and parents. Note that Catechists are encouraged to discuss any situation with the DRE and the parents. Everyone is expected to work together for what is best for all involved. *Our overall approach is to “catch children doing good” and reinforce positive behaviors and choices.*

## **EARLY PICK-UPS**

If it is necessary to pick up your child early from class, a note should be written to the catechist. Parents must sign out their student at the front desk, or check-in location first, then a Religious Formation member will go to the classroom to pick up your child.

NOTE: Students who miss more than 30 minutes of a class will be marked absent.

## **EDGE (Grades 6-8)**

EDGE is more than a program, it's a life-giving ministry. EDGE will ensure that your youth have access to amazing resources and leaders that teach and model how the Catholic faith is lived out. EDGE is a place to learn about true joy, that comes from God, through the love of Jesus Christ. EDGE is a place for faith, fellowship, and fun. This is a place our youth learn to become disciples of Christ.

*NOTE: EDGE includes a formation track for Confirmation.*

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT & MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS**

Medical release forms are now included in on-line format at time of registration.

## **EMPOWERING GOD'S CHILDREN**

The Office of Safe Environments of the Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD) mandates that each student receive Empowering God's Children training. How and who will teach lessons will be determined by the RF Team. Opt-out forms are available as well as lesson plan copies for parental review.

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Scholarships or tuition reduction are available for those in need of financial assistance.

## **FOOD & DRINK POLICY**

No food or treats (including gum and candy) will be used in the program unless it is written into the lesson plans by the Catechist and approved by the Religious Formation Office. This policy is in place for the protection of all students particularly those with food allergies. No drinks are allowed to be brought into the classroom unless approved by the Catechist. (Exception to this is class celebrations - catechists must email parents in advance).

## **HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES**

We follow the directives established by the State of Michigan and the Archdiocese of Detroit. Any updates, changes, are communicated to all families along with how programming may be impacted. RF programs will perform fire, tornado, and shelter-in-place drills.

## **PARENT/STUDENT SIGN-OFF FORMS**

Specific to CONNECT and HomeSchool offerings. This is a required turn-in at the end of the term. If not received, students will not be able to pass on to their next grade. Two service offerings to our parish and community are required as well.

## **PICK UP / DROP OFF PROCEDURE**

- Please arrive a few minutes early; taking children to the restroom prior helps with flow of class time.
- CGS - parents sign-in and sign-out their children.
- Pick up at the end of class; please be on time.
- Please advise your catechist if someone other than a parent is picking up your child.
- CONNECT - parents sign in after taking children to their classes.

## **SNOW DAYS**

If bad weather, we will finalize our decision to cancel classes based on local weather reports, contact with Plymouth/Canton school district, and if need be, by driving local roads. If we cancel classes a notice will be on the OLGC RELIGIOUS FORMATION website and announced via Flocknote communication. Otherwise, if the evening local news stations list Plymouth/Canton day classes as closed, we will evaluate if our evening offerings will be closed too. Again, the OLGC website will be updated to reflect canceled classes. It is the responsibility of each family to check the website. NOTE: In all situations, parents are free to decide what is best for their circumstances.

## **STUDENT & PARENT EXPECTATIONS**

- Behave in a Christian manner at all times showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students.
- Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
- Attend class regularly and complete any assignments or homework.
- Code of Conduct: Respect for others and property - no use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs - no weapons on premises.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Required by the Office of Safe Environments and in cooperation with the Archdiocese of Detroit, employees and volunteers are required to complete: Criminal History Background Check; Protecting God's Children Workshop or Healthy Relationships for Teens, and Codes of Conduct. Access Protecting God's Children Workshops at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) to register online if not previously taken.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

- Empowering God's Children is the program we are required to implement by the Archdiocese of Detroit (AOD).
- Please call our office at 734-453-0326 ext. 225 if you would like more information.