

***SACRED HEART PARISH
OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2010-2011***

Dear Family,

Christ's Peace be yours!

Congratulations! You have chosen a Roman Catholic Religious Education Program for your child. This program teaches the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and utilizes Diocesan Programs to train catechists.

We welcome you to Sacred Heart School of Religion. It is our privilege to support you in the Religious Education of your child.

The religious education of the entire parish is the primary concern of the Sacred Heart School of Religion. However, we have a special concern for the faith formation of our public school students. This handbook explains the current policies of our program and encourages you to take an active role in your child's religious education. (Please be aware that the parish religious education office reserves the right to amend this handbook as needed)

We ask for your prayers as we begin a new year in our ministry to serve our Lord and His children.

Thank You,
Sacred Heart School of Religion

Fr. John Paul Alvarado
Pastor

Mrs. Carol Mascola,
Director, Religious Education

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Sacred Heart School of Religion is to proclaim the message of Jesus, to teach His truth, and to extend His love to all people. We hope to enable our parish community, beginning at birth and continuing through life, to discover, grow and mature in their faith experience and to deepen their relationship with Christ and His Church.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

When your child was baptized the priest or deacon asked this question of you as parents: ["Parents you have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"] In addition to instructing your child in Christian truth we welcome this opportunity to assist you in fulfilling your primary obligation in teaching your children to walk in ways of faith. This can only be done when each family places Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their lives through Sunday worship, family prayer and daily living of the Christian message. Regular attendance at Mass with your children is an essential part of their religious education. We look forward to genuine cooperation with you in communicating Catholic Christian values to your children. We need to pray together, talk together, and plan together. In that way we can draw fully from Sacred Scripture and Church teachings and work to support each other in instilling them in our children need these values so much in today's world. Living the Catholic life is not simply experienced by going to Mass regularly or attending religious education classes. It is a lifestyle that is to be witnessed everyday by what we say and what we do at home, at work, at school and at play.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE

The office is located in the Parish Center. You may telephone at 908 756-0633 #43. The office hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00AM to 4:00PM and Friday 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The office is closed for lunch 12 Noon to 1:00PM. There is also someone in the Sacred Heart School office on Wednesday's 4 to 5:15 PM and 7 to 8:15PM and Thursday 4 to 5:15PM when Religious Education classes are in session.

In order for any program concerning children to be effective parents must be involved. Please consider the following:

MASS ATTENDANCE

You, as a concerned parent, are sending your children to our Religious Education Program to be educated in the faith and to grow in their relationship with God. This is obvious by how seriously you take your commitment to make sure that your child is here each week for class. However, when it comes to Sunday worship, unfortunately, parents sometimes send their children mixed messages.

Sunday worship is a time when we come together as a community to be nourished by God, by both word and sacrament. Parents have the responsibility and obligation to ensure that their children are able to experience this vital part of their faith formation. Jesus said "Let the children come to me." We ask that you prayerfully consider your challenge as Catholic parents to set them on the journey that leads to Christ.

PARISH MASS SCHEDULE

An integral part our Religious Education Program is that our students attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and participate fully in an essential part of the sacramental life of the Church. Learning in class can be truly effective only when one meets the Lord sacramentally at the altar.

Our Mass Schedule:

Saturday 5PM Sunday 9:00AM & 11:30 AM

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Service is an integral part of your child's faith formation. Christian Service is our response to appreciating that everything we have comes from God. We only use or manage these gifts while on earth. We must show God how thankful we are through our gifts of time, talent and treasure. We are sure many of you are already encouraging your children to do acts of service and we encourage you to continue to do this. We know that God will bless you for helping to build His kingdom. Each child in our program will receive a packet of envelopes in which they can record good deeds and prayers. These envelopes are to be put in the weekly collection basket at Mass on a monthly basis.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Family involvement is an important part of our program. The more interest shown by you, the more effective the classes will be. Parents should review the material covered in class and also supervise weekly homework assignments. Students are required to come to class every week with their textbooks and completed assignments.

Each student is expected to bring some sort of a back pack or folder that would hold their Religious Education books, and communications sent home. Messages and letters to the parents will be sent home in this back pack or folder each week. Please check your child's back pack or folder weekly. We really need your cooperation and support.

PUNCTUALITY

This is vital to us all. Habitual tardiness creates a distraction in the classroom and is a loss of precious time. Please bring your children to class on time. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.

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|---------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Levels K to 6 | Wednesday | 4 to 5:15 PM | Levels 7 & 8 | 7 to 8:15PM |
| Levels 1 to 6 | Thursday | 4 to 5:15PM | | |

EARLY DISMISSAL

On the rare occasion that your child must be dismissed early, due to an emergency or sickness, please be advised that a parent/guardian must sign the child out in the School Religious Education Office (located off the cafeteria) No parent/guardian is allowed to go to the classroom for a child. You must call the Religious Education Office and write a note to both your child's teacher and the Religious Education Office to request an early dismissal.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Please follow the procedures outlined below:

Arrival:

1. Park your car in the appropriate designated areas. If your child is in level K to 4, please escort your child to the school entrance foyer. Level 5, 6, 7 & 8 can go directly to their class.

Dismissal:

2. **PARK YOUR CAR** and wait outside of the school for your child/children. For the safety of the children, students are not allowed to run or play tag on school property.

Traffic Flow:

3. When you pick- up your child, you are to use the use the proper exit when leaving the parking lot of the church. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES** are you permitted to park or block the parish center/convent parking lot or driveways and fire zones.
4. If your child is in a car pool, or usually has someone other than yourself pick them up please make sure that they know who will be taking them home. Remind them that they should wait and not accept a ride from another person.
5. **WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDREN RIDING THEIR BIKES TO AND FROM CLASS.**
6. Please be on time to pick-up your child/children. Children become very upset and worried when they are not picked up on time. Also, this is not fair to our staff. Teachers are not permitted to take on the responsibility of transporting children home. If you cannot pick-up your child on time, **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to make other arrangements and to make sure that your child is aware of these arrangements before they are they are dropped off and picked- up for class.
7. Walking Home - for the safety of your child/children **it is not** advisable for you to allow your child/children to walk home alone. Therefore, please arrange transportation. If there is absolutely no means of transportation and it is your wish that your child walk home, we must have **your consent in writing on file in the Office.** A letter of permission must be dated and signed each year if you wish your child to walk, to and from, class.

SEVERE INCLEMENT WEATHER DISMISSAL

You will know that we are using this dismissal procedure when you see the “Inclement Weather” sign on the outside door. All parents must enter the building to pick up their child/children.

All students will be dismissed from the school foyer. Parent’s will enter the building through the main school entrance. Please make sure that whoever picks up your child knows their class assignment.

ABSENCES

If your child will be absent, you must call the Religious Education Office before class on the day of the absence. Excessive absences will hinder good learning. **NO MORE THAN THREE, UNEXCUSED, ABSENCES WILL BE ALLOWED IN ONE SCHOOL YEAR.** Sickness, death in the family or serious family emergencies are the only valid excuses. Sports or other extra-curricular activities are not acceptable excuses for absence from religion class. A written note from you must also be sent to your child's teacher upon their return to class. Please make sure that missed assignments are made up.

CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations are announced over radio station WCTC (1450AM). Therefore, it is important that you listen to this radio station during bad weather. If your child's public school is closed due to a weather emergency then we are also closed for religion school. You may also call the Rel. Ed. Office (908 756-0633) and we will always leave a message about cancellations on our voice mail.

FOOD ALLERGIES

Food allergies are a growing health concern for children across the country. Even a miniscule amount of the allergenic food is sufficient to cause a life-threatening reaction and inadvertent contact (via nose, eyes, mouth) can be sufficient to put a child in danger. It is the goal of Sacred Heart to provide an allergen free environment for children food allergies, so that they may enjoy a safe and respectful place to grow in their faith. Recognizing that strict avoidance of the allergen is the only way to prevent a potentially life threatening reaction, we ask your cooperation with the following policy: **No food and drink of any kind are permitted during parish religious education programs.** This includes foods that are considered to be "safe." Parents of highly allergic children **MUST** make known the special needs of their child to the parish catechetical leader and catechist, so that all precautions will be taken. * Since we do not have a nurse on premises while our program is in session, it is required that any parent whose child has a life threatening allergy remain at the school while the child is in class in case the child should go into anaphylactic shock from exposure to an allergen.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY

If a catechist or director suspects a child has been abused, NJ State statutes require that the Division of Youth and Family Services be notified immediately. At the discretion of the director or catechist a student will not be sent home with a driver who is visibly impaired. In this instance the program director reserves the right to call an emergency number to arrange an alternate means of transportation.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

For the safety of your children, two fire/evacuation drills will be conducted during the year. A lock down drill will also be conducted during the year.

CLASS SCHEDULES

Calendars for all Religious Ed Classes are included in this handbook. Please keep it in a convenient spot so that you and your child can check schedules. Please note the days when there are no classes scheduled. We cannot be responsible for children being dropped off on a day when there are no classes.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

Rules are necessary for the orderly operation of our Parish School of Religion. We expect our children to contribute to an atmosphere of Christian concern for others. Willfully damaging or destroying property will not be tolerated. Vandal damage must be paid for by parent of student. Accidental damage is to be reported to Director immediately.

It is the duty of the parent/guardian and that Religious Education Program to help children acquire self-control. Cooperation of parents is vital in helping our children develop good character traits. To this end, children are expected to comply with the rules and regulations of the Sacred Heart School of Religion. Deliberate disregard for the policies stated in our Student Code of Behavior will lead to:

1. Teacher reprimand and call to parent
2. Reprimand by Office of Religious Ed. and call to parent
3. Parent Conference
4. Discharge from program with home study option
5. Special rules apply to those students in levels six through eight. There is a 0 tolerance rule for those in upper levels. The materials covered in class are too important for disruptions. If a student is sent to the office a parent/guardian will be called and the student will be sent home. If behavior continues the student will be in danger of discharge from program.

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOR

1. Students are expected to show respect for all persons in words and actions.
2. Students must conform to the attendance policy stated in this handbook.
3. Students should comply with the classroom rules set out by their teacher in the interest of providing a good learning environment.
4. Students must do nothing that could cause physical harm to themselves or to others.
5. Students must not destroy, deface, or remove property from the building.
6. Students are responsible for completing all religion school class work and homework.
7. Drugs, alcohol, and weapons, of any sort, are not allowed on the premises. If a student is found to be in possession, the student will be detained and the police will be notified. The student will immediately be dismissed from the formal program and placed on home study.
8. **Cell Phones must be turned off during class time and no text messaging**
9. **No Electronic devices will be permitted in class.** If a student comes with an electronic device of any sort it will be kept in the office until class is concluded.
10. Students are not to bring candy, gum or any other snacks or drinks to class.(see allergy policy)
11. **We maintain a firm Zero Tolerance Policy for any and all verbal and non-verbal threats.** If such an incident is reported to our office, the student will be detained and the authorities will be notified. The child will immediately be dismissed from the formal program and placed on home study.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports are issued twice a year. Usually these reports are given out in January and at the end of the year. Comments will be made by the teacher and you are invited to respond in the place indicated on the report. You are also required to sign & return it. These reports will indicate studied knowledge, home assignments, class participation and class behavior.

TEXTBOOKS FOR LEVELS PRE-K TO 8

Grade K Promise (Silver, Burdett Ginn) Theme God gives us Life

Grade 1 Blest Are We (Silver, Burdett, Ginn) Theme God's love creates the Universe

Grade 2 Blest Are We (Silver, Burdett, Ginn) Theme We Gather as Believers

Grade 3 Blest Are We (Silver, Burdett, Ginn) Theme The Church is One, The Church is Holy, The Church is Apostolic, The Church has a Mission to the World.

Grade 4 Blest Are We (Silver, Burdett, Ginn) Theme The Goodness of God

Grade 5 Blest Are We (Silver, Burdett, Ginn) Theme The Sacraments

Grade 6 Blest Are We (Silver, Burdett, Ginn) Theme We Answer God's Call

Grade 7 Liturgy and Sacrament (Benziger) Theme the Liturgy and Sacraments

Grade 8 Confirmation Filled With the Holy Spirit (RCL Benziger) Theme Confirmation

BENZIGER FAMILY LIFE PROGRAM

In addition to the "Blest Are We" series our program incorporates the Benziger Family Life Program which is mandated for all students in both Catholic and parish Religious Education Programs of our diocese. That Family Life Program is based on human values and education which enables the contemporary Catholic Family and an ever changing society.

TEXT BOOKS

The Sacred Heart School of Religion provides textbooks for all students enrolled in its class sessions for levels K - 8. This is done in hope that this investment is properly safeguarded. Textbooks will be distributed by the classroom Catechist on the first day of class. Students are to inscribe their name, the name of their catechist, "Sacred Heart Parish" and the Pastor's name "Fr. John P. Alvarado" on the front inside cover of the book. Textbooks are to be brought home and back to class weekly. If a textbook is lost, stolen, or damaged a new one must be purchased at the cost of \$15 immediately.

HOMEWORK

Homework reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study and creative thinking. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for their children to complete their assignments and checking to see if assignments are done. Parents are also encouraged to refer to the section at the end of each chapter in the textbook which offers suggestions for family activities pertaining to each lesson.

VALUABLES AND LOST AND FOUND

The Catechetical staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to class. It is recommended that all valuables be left at home. All lost clothing, money, jewelry, or any other articles of value are that are turned in may be claimed at the school religious education office.

SACRAMENT POLICIES

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation entails two years of formal class instruction. Permission for home study may only be granted after a discernment process by the Pastor, the Parish Religious Education Office, and the Diocesan Religious Education Office. Home study is only approved if extenuating circumstances warrant it. Sacrament programs require both formal religious education classes as well as attendance at practices, activities and special liturgies held on days other than regular class days. You will be reminded of these special dates through letters and monthly notices.

Parental Involvement - Parents play a very important roll in the preparation of their children to receive the sacraments. During this special time of preparation, parents are required to attend information meetings as well as Evenings of Reflection. These evenings will enrich the faith of the parents and aid them in preparing their children.

Sacramental Fees - Additional fees are required during sacrament preparation (see under fees)

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Jesus began His work on earth by calling people to repentance and faith: "Reform your lives and believe in the Gospel." (Mark 1:15) The Sacrament of Reconciliation continues his work of forgiving and reconciling. Catechesis of children for reconciliation must always respect the natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances of individuals and seeks to make clear the relationship of the sacrament to the child's life, help the child recognize moral good and evil, repent of wrong doing, and turn for forgiveness to Jesus and the Church, encourage the child to approach the sacrament freely and regularly. Parents should be involved in the preparation of children for this sacrament. Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation starts in second grade and is a joint effort of parents and catechists.

FIRST EUCHARIST

Catechesis recognizes the Eucharist as the heart of Christian life. It helps children understand that the celebration of the Eucharist forms and nourishes the faithful with Jesus, the Bread of Life. Catechesis for children seeks to strengthen their awareness of the Father's love, of the call to participate in Christ's sacrifice and of the gift of the Spirit. Children are taught that the Holy Eucharist is the real Body and Blood of Christ, and what appears to be bread and wine are actually Jesus' Body and Blood. They learn that the Eucharist is both meal and sacrifice and that it is a memorial Last Supper. Catechesis for First Communion is conducted separately from catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation since each sacrament requires its own concentrated preparation. Beginning at the second grade level, preparation for First Communion is a joint effort of the parents and catechists. The second grade curriculum is covered weekly in class by the catechist and followed-up at home. The First Eucharist program helps explain the Eucharist to the child and familiarize them with the main events of Jesus' life. It also helps them to participate more meaningfully in the action of Mass and to receive Christ's Body and Blood in communion in an informed reverent manner. The children learn that they may receive Holy Communion in the hand, on the tongue and under both species. Catechesis includes requirements for fasting (no food or drink except water with medication for one hour before receiving communion)

Because parents are the primary educators of their children, they are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life of the church. Parents are also expected to serve as role models for their children by being good moral Christians, participating in Sunday Mass regularly with their families, nurturing their child in faith, attending scheduled parent sessions, and helping to determine their child's readiness for the Sacrament. First Eucharist will be celebrated in the Spring 2011.

CONFIRMATION

As a Sacrament of Initiation, Confirmation is intimately related to Baptism and the Eucharist. Christians are reborn in Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation, and sustained by the nourishment of the Eucharist. In Confirmation young people are signed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. They become more perfect images of the Lord Jesus as Confirmation confers grace upon them and renews and strengthens their baptismal call to bear witness to Christ before the world and work eagerly for the building up of His Body, the Church.

As primary educators of their children, parents, along with sponsors, are to be intimately involved in catechesis for Confirmation. This will help them renew and strengthen their own faith, enabling them to set a better example for their children. Parents should encourage their child to reflect thoughtfully on the decision to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, assist their child with their immediate preparation for the sacrament through prayer, study and Christian Stewardship and worship regularly with their family. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation begins in Grade 7. The Sacrament is celebrated in Spring of Grade 8 and is a two year program.

Requirements of Confirmation Program:

- Weekly attendance at Religious Education Classes
- Proper preparation for class instruction and completed homework assignments
- textbook available for each class and participation in class discussions and activities
- Consider taking a Confirmation Name (Saints Name) or retaining one's Baptismal name [no new name is required]
- Christian Service/Stewardship (20 hrs.)
- Choose a Sponsor (fully initiated practicing Roman Catholic, 14yrs of age or older in valid Church marriage if married)
- Sponsors Certificate (from Sponsor's registered parish)
- Candidate must demonstrate adequate knowledge of the content of the Catholic faith
- Regular Mass Attendance on Sunday's and Holy Days of Obligation
- Periodic participation in the Rite of Reconciliation
- Participation in a two Confirmation Retreat
- Participation in various rites at scheduled Sunday liturgies
- Provide Proof of Baptism (unless baptismal record is on file at parish)
- Write a book report on a Saint and your experience preparing for Confirmation
- Attend the Parish Mission April 10 to 14.
- \$ 50 Sacramental Fee in Grade 8 to be paid with tuition when registering

RCIA ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN

This process is for children ages 7 to 16 years of age who have not been baptized or have been baptized in another Christian denomination. These children have not been catechized, nor have they received the sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation. The process begins with a family interview by the Director of Religious Education where the family is asked to express their desire to enter more fully into the Catholic community by attending Mass and participating in the RCIA for children process, which is held during a separate class from the normal religious education class. All family members are welcome and encouraged to attend the sessions with their children. The Rite of Christian Initiation is a process where one comes to a deeper understanding of the Lord. The final decision to join the Church is up to the individual family and child. Please call Carol Mascola at 908 756-0633 #43 if you are interested in this process.

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES

The Diocese of Metuchen has published “Wisdom” the Catechetical guidelines for catechesis for Level 1 to 8 which ensure a clear and uniform presentation of faith for each level. While the guidelines are not considered a substitute for the textbook, they are of assistance to the catechist in the use of the textbook identifying the essential content.

HOME STUDY

A home study catechetical program is one in which a child is instructed in faith at home by their parents. Any request for home study, that replaces the parish catechetical program is carefully considered by the Director of Religious Education. Home study adheres to the following:

- Text book and materials used must be approved by the Director
- The Diocesan Guidelines for Catechesis must be followed and taught in their entirety
- Parents receive regular direction and guidance from the Director
- Parents are encouraged to participate in Diocesan Catechist Formation
- At regular intervals students will be tested by the Director who will evaluate their progress

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Special Religious Education is a ministry that responds to the religious and spiritual needs of persons with a physical, mental or emotional disability which impairs their functioning in a regular classroom. Because of that disability the student may require individualized instruction in a small group or in a one-on-one setting, or may be mainstreamed into the regular catechetical program if assistance is provided. In consultation with the parent, the Director will appropriately place each child in a program that will service his/her special needs and encourage further spiritual growth.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

VBS meets 9AM to 12 Noon, for one week in mid-July each year. The program focuses on scripture, bringing to life Bible Stories using skits, music and craft activities. The program is for children ages 4 to 10 yrs. old. Program is open to all children - not limited to Sacred Heart Parish.

MOVING?

If you are moving out of Sacred Heart Parish, we would appreciate a call from you. We like to keep our files accurate and we would be glad to give you a transfer letter to bring to your new parish.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

If your address or telephone number is changed during the school year, please notify the office. This office has a difficult time getting important messages to you if we do not have accurate information.

RE-REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

In March registration forms for the following year are handed out in class for each family. Please fill out one form per family. You may mail back the forms along with the required fee or drop them off at the Religious Education Office, located in the Parish Center. We ask that you return your forms by the cutoff date. A late fee of \$25 will apply for all registrations received after the cutoff date.

NEW STUDENTS

All new students must be registered by a parent in the Religious Education Office. A Baptismal Certificate is required for all new students in addition to any previous records if child attended a Religious Education Program in a different parish or diocese. If applicable a Walking Permission slip must be filled out and or a Medical Release Form. All children regardless of race, sex, or national origin will be admitted to the parish program.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the Director about their child who has a special medical condition that could flare up in a session or which could affect the teaching/learning environment (e.g. allergies, asthma, auditory or visual impairment, possibility of seizures, learning disability, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder etc) This information is kept confidential and is communicated to the Catechist, and Director of Religious Education. In the event medication needs to be administered to a child a Diocese of Metuchen Release from Physician and Parent for Staff to Administer Medication to Student form must be completed and returned to the office. (Call our office if you need one of these forms)

FEES

No child shall be refused Religious Education due to finances; therefore, if there is a financial problem, please call the Religious Education Office.

Registration Fees: Per child Tuition is \$100

With the exception of Grades 2 & 8 (see Sacramental Fees below)

* Those who volunteer in our program will receive a tuition break:

Catechist, Aides, Childcare = Free Tuition Hall Monitor = ½ Tuition

SACRAMENTAL FEES

Students in sacrament classes are charged an additional sacrament fee that is added to the tuition fee for that year. This additional fee covers the cost of retreats, receptions, certificates, robes etc..

Fees Are: Grade 2 - Reconciliation & Eucharist \$125

Grade 8 - Confirmation Grade 8 \$150

NEW FAMILY ORIENTATION

Each year in September we hold a meeting for all new families who have children attending our Religious Education classes for the first time. At this meeting we welcome these families and explain the policies of the program.

CLASS PLACEMENT

The following fulfills the directives of the Diocese of Metuchen: Parish Religious Education Programs are preparation for life. The students are expected to attend Religious Education Classes continuously from Level 1 through 8. In order to be eligible to receive First Eucharist, the student must complete the first two years of the program and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Any child older than the first level, without previous formal Religious Education must be enrolled in the RCIA for children, in addition to the appropriate age level class. Any child who leaves the Religious Education Program after receiving First Eucharist will (upon re-entering) the program be required to complete the level curriculum missed. The placement of the student is determined by the Director of Religious Education after consultation with the parent.

COMMUNICATION

A calendar of class dates, holidays, times of classes is published in this handbook. Parent sessions, retreats and all sacramental programs will also be published and distributed to students as they become available.

This past year we went green and most letters to parents, newsletters etc. are now published on our parish website **churchofthesacredheart.net** monthly. Also, occasionally we will mail important sacramental information or give it out in class. Our monthly newsletters are always published the end of the prior month on our website. Again, just go to churchofthesacredheart.net, then click on Religious Education, and then go to Newsletter, or First Eucharist, Confirmation etc. for all your needs. Please be sure to read all notices posted monthly on website in order to stay informed on what is happening in our program, important date reminders etc. Also, check our parish bulletin for other relevant information.

THE CATECHIST

A Catechist is a person of faith who has the task of creating the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit to bring about growth among believers. They foster “mature faith” through a regular systematic presentation. The primary mission of catechists is to communicate God’s love to those entrusted to their care, by proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. This is accomplished through the fourfold activities, the message, community, worship and service. Our parish is blessed by having a number of our catechists accredited by the Diocese of Metuchen.

VOLUNTEERS

Our parish Religious Education Program is served by volunteer Catechist, Aides, Hall Monitors and Babysitters. All employees and volunteers of the Diocese of Metuchen, 18 yrs of age or older, who have more than a one time contact with a minor as defined under New Jersey State Law, **MUST**, undergo a criminal history background check and fingerprinting in accordance with the policy set forth in the Policy on Criminal History Background Checks.

All volunteers in our parish program have completed this program. In addition to our volunteers, our Pastor and Director of Religious Education also, have already completed this program.