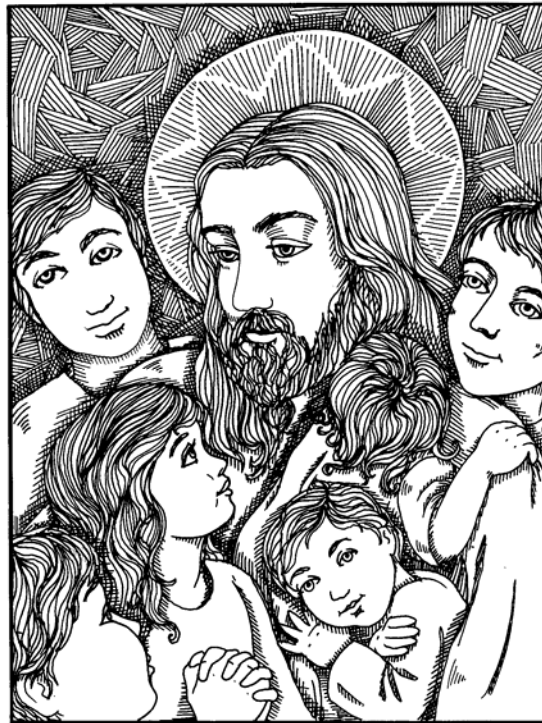


# St. Patrick's Religious Education Program



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## Parent Handbook

2016-2017

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Yorktown Heights, NY 10598

Tel. 962-5586/Fax 962-3207  
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## **MISSION OF ST. PATRICK'S RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

*The mission of the St. Patrick's Religious Education Program is to journey in faith with children and families and to transmit the Catholic Christian message with excellence; so that they may come to know and love Christ more deeply, and participate in the Sacramental and Liturgical life of the Church more fully.*

### **PARENTAL ROLE**

Parents are the primary educators of the children in all things. How a child prays and worships God and how he or she relates to others in a Christian way are values which children should already experience at home before they begin formal religious education. Please encourage your children to deepen their faith through prayer, reception of the sacraments, art, music, multimedia, family discussions, books, etc.

**\*\*\* IT IS ESSENTIAL AND EXPECTED THAT THE CHILDREN  
ATTEND MASS EACH WEEKEND AND ON HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION.\*\*\***

### **MASS SCHEDULE**

#### **Weekend Mass Schedule**

##### **Main Church**

Saturday - 5:15 P.M.

Sunday - 7:45, 9:15, 11:00 A.M., 12:30 and 5:00 P.M.

##### **Stone Church**

Sunday - 9:00 and 10:30 A.M.

#### **Sacrament of Reconciliation Schedule**

**Saturdays:** after the 9:00 a.m. Mass, and 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Please call the Rectory if you wish to make an appointment for another time.

### **OFFICE HOURS**

<b><u>Office Hours:</u></b>	Monday – Tues, Wed, Thursday Friday	10am-7:30pm 10am-6pm By Appointment	Closed for Lunch 12-1pm Closed for Lunch 12-1pm
<b><u>Summer Hours:</u></b>	Monday – Thursday Friday	Please call, hours may change. Closed	

## CONTACTS

### Office Staff:

**Kelly Vardakas**, Coordinator of Religious Education

**Mary Ellen Falco**, Assistant Coordinator of Religious Education and Registrar

**Cathy Scola**, Sacramental Coordinator

**Gloria Golia**, Administrative Assistant

Telephone number: (914) 962-5586 Fax Number: (914) 962-3207

Email Address: saintpatricksred@yahoo.com

Kelly-	Ext. 11
Mary Ellen-	Ext. 12 For questions regarding tuition and placement
Cathy-	Ext. 13 For questions regarding the Sacraments
Gloria-	Ext. 10 For absences and other questions

## ADMISSION POLICY

All families who are **registered** members of the Parish are able to sign up for Religion Classes.

Classes are available for children in Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Children who have not yet been baptized and older children who have been baptized but have not yet received First Reconciliation, First Communion or Confirmation are also encouraged to enroll and we make arrangements for them to receive.

## REGISTRATION

All children attending Religious Education must be registered yearly for CCD in the office. Registration will be held at the close of each academic year (end of May). There will be set times to come into the CCD office to register.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Grades 1 & 2:	Monday-Thursday	4:30-5:40pm
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***All children in grades 1 and 2 should be dropped off and picked up at the classroom.***

Grades 1-7:	Monday Afternoon	4:30-5:45pm
Grades 4-8	Monday Evening	6:15-7:30pm
Grade 1-8:	Tues, Wed, Thurs.	4:30-5:45pm

## ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, PARKING

All arrivals, dismissals and parking must take place in the main Church parking lot at the top of the stairs. **By town zoning ordinance, no parking is permitted in the rear exit road behind Building B.**

**Parking and driving is also prohibited inside of the barriers/white line where children are dismissed.**

**No cars are permitted in the school quad at any time.** Any student, parent or catechist who requires handicap drop-off, pick-up or parking must arrange it in advance with the Office of Religious Education.

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade parents or an authorized adult must drop off and pick up their child **at the class room**. Grades 1 and 2 dismiss 5 minutes earlier than grades 3-8 to allow adequate time for parents to do this. **Older siblings may not pick up a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grader.**

For dismissal, parents are asked to meet their children in the designated area at the top of the stairs and to please let the teacher know you are taking your child by a wave or a nod. If you carpool, a letter must be given to the Religious Education Office and to the Catechist in advance so that we know which children are to be dismissed to which parent. We have a form available for this in the office.

In order to avoid disturbance of classes in session, and for security reasons, doors to all buildings will be locked during class time.

**THERE IS NO EARLY DISMISSAL.**

## ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

**Excessive absences will result in a child having to repeat the year.**

Parents are asked to call or email the office when they know their child will miss class. The child or a parent should then follow-up with the Religious Education Office to make sure that the missed work is completed.

## CALENDAR/CLASS DAYS

A program calendar will be sent home to each family in August. We normally follow the Yorktown School District Calendar. The calendar is subject to change based on changes in the Yorktown School District Calendar, weather, or church events that would affect safe arrival and dismissal.

**The Yorktown School District calendar is followed for seasonal recesses and holiday observances or days off.** Classes are not held when the local district is off, including days where there is inclement weather. Weather cancellations are announced on WHUD radio (FM 100.7) and on their website: [www.whud.com](http://www.whud.com) See "Storm Center Report."

We will be using GOOGLE Remind to send text messages in case of weather closings.

**\*\*\*\*\*You may also sign up for text message closing alerts through WHUD.com.**

## COMMUNICATION

Important communications (reminders, date changes, etc.) will be texted to your cell phone and emailed to you, so please be sure that the office always has up to date email address and telephone information for your family.

**Also, please check the Mass bulletin each week for announcements and upcoming events.**

If a parent cannot be reached in case of an emergency, the emergency contact provided at registration will be called. Please let us know if the emergency contact's information changes.

### **COST OF PROGRAM AND TUITION**

The Religious Education Program runs on a budget which covers the expenses of running such a large program. Tuition payment must be made at Registration in the month of May in order for the registration of any family/child to be complete. If you are in a financially difficult situation, please let us know so we can arrange a payment plan.

### **TUITION FOR 2016-2017**

#### **Registration Fees for 2016-2017**

1 Child - \$230  
2 Children- \$335  
3 Children- \$385  
4 Children- \$430

#### **Registrations received after May 19<sup>th</sup>**

1 Child - \$270  
2 Children- \$375  
3 Children- \$425  
4 Children- \$470

### **SPECIAL NEEDS/MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

Please make the office aware of any special needs or medical conditions that your child may have before the first day of classes so that arrangements may be made to best accommodate them.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION**

We do not allow students to carry on their person any medication of any kind for any reason, unless we have a letter from a doctor on file. We also do not administer medication of any kind for any reason to any child, as we are not qualified to do so.

### **HOMEWORK**

For learning to truly take place, children need to review, use, teach others and integrate into their lives the information they have been given. For this reason, 1-2 pages of work will be sent home each week by Catechists to reinforce what has been learned in class. The purpose of this work is also to involve parents in the faith formation process. Please help your child with any work that is sent home.

### **DRESS CODE**

We hold the dignity of the person in the highest regard, and believe that clothing reflects who we are and what we believe.

**All students are expected to be appropriately dressed while attending our program.**

Our dress code requires that all bellies, backs, and shoulders are covered. This means no low cut shirts, no short skirts, no spaghetti straps, and skirts and shorts must reach the fingertips when hands are at sides. Bellies, backs, bottoms, shoulders and chests need to be covered.

All clothing, and especially shirts worn to class that have messages or sayings **must not:** be negative, disrespectful, have skulls or demons, advertise alcohol or have sexual innuendo, or demean the human person in any way, etc.

Discretion will be left up to the Director as to what is acceptable. Any child who comes to the program and is not in compliance with the dress code or is dressed inappropriately will be sent to the office and parents will be called to pick him or her up. **This dress code will be strictly enforced.**

## DISCIPLINE

We aim to transmit the Christian message with excellence and love. To do this, we understand that there needs to be an atmosphere of mutual respect and preparedness in each class. Students should arrive on time, with their textbook, pencil, Bible (grades 6-8), folder (grades 1-3), etc. and be prepared to participate to the best of their ability.

**Our most basic expectations for each child who attends our Program are as follows:**

- 1. Being respectful toward the Catechist and other students in word and action.**
- 2. Listening to the lesson prepared by the Catechist without interrupting or carrying on side conversations.**
- 3. Raising one's hand when wanting to ask or answer a question.**
- 4. Respecting the property of St. Patrick's School (desks, chairs, classrooms, bathrooms, grounds, buildings, parking lot, etc.)**
- 5. Completing assignments in class or at home and good performance on quizzes and tests.**
- 6. Turning off and not using cell phones or electronic equipment or recording devices during class. If a child is using one of the above during class, it will be given to the Director and parents must come in to the office to pick it up.**
- 7. No child is ever to record (audio or visually) a class in session, the catechist, or the other children in the class.**

We have the right to remove a student from a class if we believe that the student cannot behave and/or is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group. If a child physically harms or endangers another child, they will be asked to leave the program.

Consultations with the student, his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), the Director and the Catechist may be necessary to determine the best option for all involved.

## ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK SAFE ENVIRONMENT RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

### Keeping an eye on boundaries

Adults have a responsibility to maintain clear and appropriate boundaries in their relationship with minors. Here are some specific behaviors that may indicate that an adult is failing to maintain proper boundaries:

- Having an excessively familiar relationship with a child (e.g., trying to be a child's friend or "confidant" rather than dealing with them as a professional or treating the child as a "favorite")
- Trying to be alone with minors, or being with them in private locations (e.g., in living quarters or bedrooms, or giving them rides in a car).
- Displaying sexual materials (especially pornography) to minors
- Having private communications with a minor (e.g., text messages, emails, cell phone calls, instant messages, "Friending" or putting a child on a "buddy list" through a social networking site)
- Giving gifts (especially expensive presents) to children without their parents' knowledge and consent (other than small items distributed to entire classes or groups)
- Touching children in an inappropriate way (e.g., regularly kissing or hugging a child; tickling or wrestling; holding hands for a long time; repeatedly touching on the arm, back or legs; putting an arm around a child's waist and leaving it there)

If you become aware of any of these behaviors, you should talk to your child to find out if there is anything else inappropriate going on. You should assure your child that this is not their fault, but that this behavior by the adult is not right. Encourage your child to let you know if anything else inappropriate takes place. You should also monitor very closely any further contact your child has with this adult, or exclude them entirely from any contact with your child. If the adult works with your child in an Archdiocesan program or institution, you should contact the adult's supervisor immediately.

### What to do if you suspect abuse

1. Talk to the child. Believe what he or she says and allow them to comfortably discuss the events or actions. Do not pressure them with demands or numerous questions.
2. Don't dismiss the action as a 'misunderstanding' or 'accident' (sexual abuse is intentional and not an error in judgment.)
3. "It's ok to tell," that's the important message for a child to hear. Assure them that they will never get in trouble for tattling or not keeping a secret.
4. Keep calm; validate the child's innocence. Assure the child he or she did nothing wrong. "It's not your fault."
5. Contact local law enforcement immediately.

### Have open discussions with your children

1. Emotionally support your child - always. Kids with a strong sense of self are much less vulnerable to an abuser.
2. Discuss the human body and where it is okay to touch and where it's not ("private parts").
3. Validate the idea that "My Body is My Own" and that no one has a right to touch a child anywhere that makes him or her uncomfortable.
4. Talk about feelings and what makes physical situations good versus bad. Hugs from one's parents can be good and different from sitting on a family friend's lap, which could be weird or funny. (For young children, read-aloud "The Right Touch" by Sandy Kleven, LSCS, Illumination Arts Publishing Company, Inc.)
5. Condition the child that if something happens that makes them uncomfortable they must "SAY NO AND GO" encourage them to get away from the bad person, and then "GO-and-TELL" direct them to find an adult in a position of trust and report what happened.
6. Talk to your child daily about school and after-school activities. Listen carefully to his or her descriptions of encounters with adults at school or in programs. Assess the interest that adults show in your child: is it related to their professional concerns (e.g. how he's doing in math) or their personal lives (e.g. personal outings, giving of gifts, etc.)? If you're uncomfortable, talk first to the adult about it. Assess his or her reactions. If still uncomfortable, talk next to the adult's supervisor.
7. Be very cautious about outings that only involve certain children without other adult chaperones. Should you hear about such activities contact the program supervisor (e.g. pastor, principal, DRE, etc.) at once.

## Teen-Talk, taking time with young adults

1. Discuss self-esteem and build their confidence making smart choices and decisions.
2. Validate the "trust your gut"- feelings, if it doesn't feel right-then chances are it is not! The teen years are often confusing for what are bad, curious, or good feelings. No one has a right to touch a teen anywhere that makes him or her uncomfortable.
3. Talk about peer pressure and any unusual friendships with older teens or adults.
4. Remind them that silence is not a solution; secrets are a sacred and powerful tool for sex offenders and they may instill fear into victims who are ashamed admitting what has happened.
5. Encourage an inquisitive mind during Teen-Talk by creating an open forum for questions about right and wrong behavior for teens and adults.

## How to listen

The material in the "Younger Kids" and "Older Kids" links that follow is age appropriate for your children. We urge you, however, to review these items with your child as s/he reads them, or soon after reading them.

Better yet, we urge you to role-play situations that might suggest themselves to you by the material that follows.

**FOR YOUNGER KIDS**, role-playing a common situation like what to do if an aunt or uncle hugs or kisses them too hard is a good way to clarify for them what is bad or simply uncomfortable, and the best way to deal with those situations.

**FOR OLDER KIDS**, let them read the material themselves and then ask them what they thought about it. Since pre-teens and teenagers are beginning to move in reference groups other than family, the most vital thing is to be aware of their activities - at school, after school, and on the Internet - and with their friends. Rather than ask if they ever engage in certain behaviors, ask if they know of anyone who does. That might make it less threatening for your child and get him or her to open up more.

Above all, **LISTEN TO YOUR KIDS, PATIENTLY AND NON-JUDGMENTALLY**. Don't convey in any way that they are at fault. ("How could you be so stupid?" "Why would you go there?" "Haven't I told you to be more careful?") Questions like that, along with the tone of voice or sense of anger that usually accompanies them, will simply drive your child away and s/he will be much less inclined to go to you when there is a real problem. Remember, sexual predators consciously choose their victims. They look for kids who don't seem to have a curfew, who don't have to stay in touch with their parents, and whose parents or caregivers are never home. If your kids are in frequent touch with you, or if they need your permission to be even a few minutes late, most predators will move on to another child.

**WHY IS IT SO HARD FOR US PARENTS TO LISTEN PATIENTLY AND NON-JUDGMENTALLY?** The first reason is because we're grownups. We probably made some of the same mistakes we're now about to discuss with our kids. We already know where the story is going, so why wait for the end? Let's just "cut to the chase," as we often say, or "get to the bottom line"? In our fully formed parental state, it's always hard to experience something like a kid again. Remember, it took you a good while to develop the moral courage to resist peer pressure. What seems easy and matter-of-fact to us can be unimaginable to them.

## SOME THINGS TO DO TO PROMOTE PATIENT AND NON-JUDGMENTAL LISTENING

### POSITION & POSTURE:

Never discuss a difficult situation with your child while standing up. And even if you sit, try not to sit on the edge of your chair, as though you're ready to pounce on the first thing you hear. Sit back in the chair, cross your legs, and drop your arms to the side or put them on the chair armrests - as though you're watching a long movie. If you are in a relaxed position, it will be easier for you to listen patiently without interrupting and before responding. And a child who thinks s/he is being listened to will reveal more than if s/he thinks otherwise.

Bear in mind, however, that your child, particularly a teen-age child, will prefer to stand, especially in a doorway - probably to make a quick getaway for a dramatic exit followed by a door slam. (If you have stairs in your house or your child's room is at the end of a long hallway, look out for this strategy!)

To meet this strategy, you should choose to sit in a comfortable chair at the farthest end of the room. That will draw your child into the room. Eventually s/he may sit down, especially if the discussion gets long (and especially if you look all nice and comfortable while s/he is standing!).



That's better than demanding that your child sit down. If they think an ill wind is blowing on the parental poop deck, that's the last thing they will want to do. And then the discussion ends before it even begins.

Always remember: the longer the discussion goes on, the more you will learn. If you act in a way that cuts off the discussion too early, that doesn't benefit you.

### **REMEMBER HOW KIDS COMMUNICATE**

Kids aren't adults or business people. They will not "bullet point" a presentation to you. If they're trying to justify themselves they are going to present lots of details that at the time may not seem relevant to you.

Let all of that pour over you. You may hear something interesting that you can follow up on later, when you start to speak. You may even hear something that makes your child less at fault. If you acknowledge that, your child will be much more likely to repeat the process with you in the future.

**DON'T CLOSE THE SALE RIGHT AWAY!** Take your time. Don't feel as though you have to listen to the story, review its problematical elements, and mete out punishment all in one night! Taking some time to "process" what your child said accomplishes a couple of important things. It allows you to consider things enough so that you will be fair in whatever you decide to do. It allows your child to realize what he or she could have done better in the situation. Finally, it allows for a further conversation the next day, keeping the lines of communication open.

Remember, the last thing a sexual predator wants is a child who regularly talks with his or her parents!