

Church of the Holy Spirit
Religious Education



Family Handbook

1969 Crompond Road
Cortlandt Manor, New York 10567
914-734-9243
re_holyspiritchurch1969@verizon.net

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Church of the Holy Spirit Religious Education Program! Thank you for entrusting your children to us to complement your family faith formation.

The Religious Education Staff at Holy Spirit is looking forward to sharing the faith in Jesus Christ with your children. We are here to support the catechesis in your home, for “family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of instruction in the faith” (CCC 2226). The Christian home is the place where the children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason, the family home is rightly called the “domestic Church”, a home centered on prayer, virtues and Christian charity. God ordained the family as the place where life in Christ takes root in the human heart, blossoms and spreads outward to embrace the world.

Please feel free to contact us at the Religious Education Office with any concerns you might have. Let us continue to pray for Christ’s blessings on our catechetical efforts. May God bless you and your families as you strive to imitate the Holy Family.

In Christ’s love,

Elizabeth Kogler

Coordinator of Religious Education

A PARENT’S PRAYER

Most loving Father, the example of parenthood, You have entrusted our children to us to bring them up for You and prepare them for everlasting life. Assist us with Your grace that we may fulfill this sacred duty with competence and love. Teach us what to give and what to withhold. Show us when to reprove, when to praise and when to be silent. Make us gentle and considerate, yet firm and watchful. Keep us from the weakness of indulgence and the excess of severity. Give us the courage to be disliked sometimes by our children, when we must do necessary things which are displeasing in their eyes. Give us the imagination to enter their world in order to understand and guide them. Grant us all the virtues we need to lead them by word and example in the ways of wisdom and piety. One day, with them, may we enter into the joys of our true and everlasting home with You in heaven. Amen.

MISSION OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Goal and Mission of the Church of the Holy Spirit Religious Education Program is help families grow in their relationship with God and build a faith community centered on the Eucharist for the present and future Church.

FAMILIES

The Religious Education Program is designed to assist families in their sacred responsibility to educate their children in the faith. Children first experience God through the loving care of their parents. Parents serve as models by being committed Christians, worshipping regularly with family, nurturing children in faith, attending meetings and participating in activities and prayer services. The family's regular celebration of Mass and the Sacraments, along with daily prayer and practiced Christian values and beliefs are the foundation on which the Religious Education program is built.

Christian education should be a positive learning experience. Parental support and involvement will assist in the Program's efforts to attain this goal. Parents are asked to introduce themselves to their child's catechist. You are invited to contact the catechist or the Religious Education Office with any questions you may have throughout the year.

The Coordinator should be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent as these pertain to the child's participation in the Program as well as dismissal from the Program.

STUDENTS

All students are expected to attend Religious Education classes weekly. Children should come to our program with eagerness and a positive attitude towards learning. The students should live a moral life that reflects the values and teachings of Jesus Christ.

MASS ATTENDANCE

The Catholic faith is taught, expressed and fulfilled in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Religious Education is incomplete without attendance at Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation. We really want to see and greet your family at Mass! The Mass schedule is Saturday evenings at 5 p.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. (Children's Liturgy) and noon. Please see the bulletin for the Mass schedule for Holy Days of Obligation.

CATECHISTS

Catechists teach our faith as volunteers. They have the task of creating the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit to bring about growth in faith among believers. They foster students grown in personal faith and spirituality; initiate them into the faith community and its life, worship, symbols and practices in the classroom and in the community.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

We are fully committed to providing and monitoring a *Safe Environment Program*. Every person, without exception, who has regular contact with our children must have an Archdiocesan background check and complete the *Safer Spaces* training.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The Church is responsible to nourish the faith of the baptized person to the degree that the individual is capable of growing. Please inform the Coordinator of Religious Ed (CRE) of any special needs your child has so we can best educate him/her. In consultation with the parent, the Coordinator will appropriately place each child in a program that will service his/her special needs and encourage further spiritual growth.

REGISTRATION

Registration will be on a first come, first served basis. Because of the size of our Program and space available, we may not always be able to accommodate parents on their choice of session, although we will make every effort to do so.

New Students

If your child was not baptized at Holy Spirit, you are required to bring a copy of their Baptismal certificate when registering for the first time. If you do not have one, you may obtain one by calling the Church of Baptism. No students will be registered without this document.

Transferring Students

Any student who is transferring to the Program must also supply a copy of the permanent record card or a transcript from their previous Program. You must also supply Sacramental information and documentation for Penance and Communion if applicable. This will help determine the child's placement in our Program.

REGISTRATION FEES

The Religious Education Program runs on a budget funded solely by registration fees. The registration fee is used for educational materials, supplies, activities, staff salaries, etc. There is a Sacramental fee the year a child receives First Penance and First Holy Communion and the year of Confirmation. Students will not be registered without payment. After June 30, the registration fee increases by \$25. If you are in a financially difficult situation, please call Coordinator to discuss payment options.

CLASS SCHEDULE

For the convenience of our families, grades one through eight meet at each session. Session days and times are as follows:

Tuesday	4:30 – 5:45 p.m.
Tuesday	6:30 – 7:45 p.m.
Wednesday	4:30 – 5:45 p.m.
Wednesday	6:30 – 7:45 p.m.
Thursday	4:30 – 5:45 p.m.

CANCELLATIONS

In case of inclement weather, please listen to radio stations WLNA 1420 AM or WHUD 100.7 FM or go on-line to www.WHUD.com and click on the Storm Center. The outgoing message at the Religious Ed phone (914-734-9243) will also announce any cancellations. If the Lakeland Central School District closes for inclement weather, so does the Religious Ed Program.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and to arrive on time and remain for the entire class. Participating in sports or after-school activities should not conflict with class time; they do not constitute a justifiable absence from class. Parents are asked to call the office when they know their child will miss class for any reason. Please follow up with the catechist to make sure that the missed work is completed. After excessive lateness and/or absences, the parent/guardian will be required to meet with the CRE to discuss the problem and develop a plan

for the successful completion of studies for that grade level. If early dismissal is unavoidable, parents should report to the Office to sign out their child.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Your assistance is needed to have children arrive on time for class. We will begin every session in the Church where students will meet their catechists. After the Church gathering, the catechists will then escort their students to their classrooms. Upon dismissal, parents/guardians of first and second graders are to go to their child's classroom to sign them out. Children in third through eighth grade will walk to meet their parents/guardians lobby or parking lot. A note must be sent to the catechist or CRE when someone other than the parent/guardian will pick up your child. *Please drive slowly into and through the parking lot. Follow the arrows and obey the posted traffic signs and cones.* Parents/guardians are asked to please park their vehicles in the spaces provided. Please do not double park or park in front of the stairs to the PAC. Handicapped parking spaces are reserved for those who need it.

CALENDAR INFORMATION

A program calendar will be sent home to each family in August. We follow the Lakeland Central School District calendar for seasonal recesses and holiday observance. We do not close for public school parent-teacher conferences. Please check the calendar for dates of sessions, meetings, family breakfasts, Sacraments, etc. You will be notified of any changes.

COMMUNICATION

Communications will be mailed to your home or be sent home with the student. Please be sure that the office always has up-to-date address and telephone information for your family. Please read all mail and flyers and consult the parish bulletin or website for relevant information. Parents/Guardians are always welcome to call or make an appointment with the Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss any aspect of the Program or their child's progress.

SUPPLIES

Textbooks will be issued the first day of class. The catechists will inform you of any other supplies needed. There will be a fee for the replacement of lost or damaged textbooks. Donations of classroom and/or office supplies are greatly appreciated.

HOMEWORK AND TESTING

The main objective of the Religious Ed Program is to foster love of God and neighbor; however, there should be some assurance as to level of knowledge and understanding of our Catholic faith and its practices. Tests and homework are some of the assessment tools used. Homework assignments will be determined by the individual catechist.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports for the Religious Education Program reflect class performance and homework assignments. They are issued twice annually to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the students according to Archdiocesan guidelines. The areas of evaluation are: achievement, class participation, assignments, effort and behavior.

ITEMS TO BE LEFT HOME

It is very important that any item that might cause a distraction in class be left at home. Gameboys, portable electronics and toys are not permitted. Any item confiscated by the catechist during class will be turned into the office and must be retrieved by the parents.

CELL PHONES

All cell phones must be turned off during the Religious Ed sessions. Be aware that if it goes off during Church or class time or students uses the phone, it will be confiscated. Cell phones will not be returned to individual students. Parents will be responsible to pick up the phone from office.

DRESS CODE

In order to have a program conducive to prayerful, learning and Christian values, students should be dressed appropriately for attending Church.

DISCIPLINE

Christian education should be a positive learning experience. Students enrolled in Religious Education classes are expected to maintain a high standard of behavior. This expectation will encourage and strengthen each child's character in accordance with Catholic principles and promote order and an atmosphere of discovery/learning throughout the program. Parents are asked to discuss expectations of what cooperation looks and sounds like with their children, especially in the beginning month of the program and periodically throughout the year.

Holy Spirit's faculty consists of catechists and aides who give freely of their time, talents and energies and deserve our utmost respect, consideration and support at all times. If a problem cannot be solved quickly in the classroom setting, the catechist will ask the student to go to the coordinator's office. When a student has been sent to the office, after confirming the reason sent by the teacher, the student will be talked to, a "disciplinary action plan" will be made and then the student will be walked back to the classroom. If the behavior cannot or will not be corrected and expulsion becomes necessary, the decision will be made by the Coordinator of Religious Education in consultation with the Pastor.

We have the right to remove a child if we believe that the student would benefit from individual or small group settings or if student is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in group.

VISITORS

Parents/guardians are always welcome at our Church gatherings. You are also welcome to visit your child's class. Visitors are asked to go to the Religious Education Office, sign in and receive a visitor's pass.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please inform the Coordinator and catechist of any medical needs. No medication can be administered to or taken by a child during the Catechetical session as it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. In case of an emergency, the parent will be called first and then the emergency contact.

SACRAMENTS

“The Sacraments of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist – lay the foundation of every Christian life.” (CCC 1212) Parents meetings are held for each sacrament. Please check for the dates listed on the calendar.

Penance and Communion

Preparation for Penance and Communion takes place in second grade. Children must have two years of formal Religious Education before receiving Penance and Holy Communion. The Sacrament of Penance is normally celebrated prior to the reception of First Communion. Parents are asked to attend scheduled meetings. Students and parents attend the “Bread of Life” workshop.

Confirmation

Confirmation takes place in the eighth grade. Any child who does not attend the Religious Education Program after receiving First Communion and wishes to return will be required to complete the grade level(s) curriculum missed. In addition to attending their Religious Education classes weekly, Confirmation candidates have other responsibilities that will be presented in class and at the Parent/Candidate meeting. Each candidate to be confirmed will have an individual sponsor. All sponsors must present a written statement from the pastor at his/her parish that he/she is qualified to be a Confirmation sponsor.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School is for children ages four through fifth grade. Older students are welcome to assist. VBS is held the last week of August. Details are published in the bulletin.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Children are invited to join the children's choir. The choir rehearses weekly and is scheduled to sing for one Mass per month. Please see the Parish bulletin for more information

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Children ages 4 through 9 are invited to the Children's Liturgy of the Word at 10 a.m. Mass on Sundays.

ALTAR SERVERS

Children in grades 4 and up are invited to become altar servers. Please see the Parish bulletin for more information.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are needed to keep us growing and our program running efficiently and effectively. Our catechists are all volunteers. There are also many other ways to help—directing traffic flow in the parking lot, helping in the office, being a substitute, etc. Please consider sharing you time. Your efforts are needed and appreciated.