



# **Church of the Magdalene-Faith Formation Religious Education Parent Handbook 2026-2027**

**Father Timothy S. Wiggins, Pastor**  
[themagdalene@archny.org](mailto:themagdalene@archny.org)  
914-631-0529 x100

**Dr. Edward Escobar, DRE**  
[Eescobar22582@gmail.com](mailto:Eescobar22582@gmail.com)  
914-631-0529 x106

**Church of the Magdalene**  
**525 Bedford Road**  
**Pocantico Hills**  
**Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591**

*This document may change according to Archdiocesan or parish guidance.*

## **Religious Education Program 2026 – 2027**

Our Parish Religious Education Program provides instruction for students in Grades K/1-8. The mission of our program is to provide children with a deeper understanding of their faith and beliefs. We are thankful to the volunteer teachers (catechists) who offer age-appropriate and meaningful instruction to students each week. The pastor, Fr. Tim, provides guidance and support.

We will offer instruction for students in Grades K/1 through 8 on Tuesday afternoon and evening, as well as Thursday afternoon for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Levels II and III.

Registration for 2026-27 is online this year. Information is on the website,

<https://www.churchofthemagdalene.org/religious-education/>

Our parish's Religious Education Program adheres to the Archdiocese of New York's Guidelines for Catechesis, Grades K to 6 and Grades 7 & 8.

The Church of the Magdalene offers two parish programs for children's faith formation:

1. A traditional, classroom-based Religious Education Program (RE) is provided for children in Grades 2–8. There is a different focus for each grade level, in addition to recurring themes across grades, e.g., prayer, the Mass, the liturgical year.
2. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS), a Montessori-based program, is an ungraded program for children from ages 5 to 13 years. All First Graders will be in Level I of the Good Shepherd Program. After First Grade, families will choose which type of program, RE or CGS, they want for their child.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, ages 5 to 13

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori-based religious education program begun in 1954 and developed by Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi. The children meet in the atrium, a room with specially prepared catechetical materials and scripture. Each session allows ample time for a leisurely work cycle. The catechists make short presentations to the children, either one-on-one or in small groups. During periods of independent work, the children are invited to return to materials and topics that interest them. All children participate in a group gathering at the beginning of each session that includes exercises in grace and courtesy. The children gather for a prayer service at the end of each session. Additional work includes drawing, singing, and, for older children, copying and writing.

The Archdiocese of New York strongly recommends CGS Level I for young children because of its substantial theological content, sound principles, and proven hands-on methodology. Upon completion of Level I, children may enter the classroom-based religious education program, or they may continue in CGS Level II. CGS students who complete Level II may enroll in CGS Level III to complete their catechetical studies and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

All CGS catechists receive specialized training cosponsored by the Archdiocese of New York and the CGS National Association

Both programs offer Sacramental preparation with Penance/Reconciliation and First Holy Communion in Grade 2 and Confirmation in Grade 8. Children who enroll in either program are expected to complete the full course of study. It is not permitted to enroll only in the year a Sacrament is to be received.

For all students in The Religious Education, a copy of their Baptism certificate is required.

**Church of the Magdalene**

**Faith Formation**

**Days, Tuition, and Fees for the 2026-2027 School Year**

**Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Program Schedule  
(Classes offered are subject to change based on enrolment)**

Grade	Day:	Time:
K & 1 – Level I-A, 9 students max.	Tuesday afternoon	4:00-5:30 pm
K & 1 – Level I-B If the class reaches capacity, the next group will be moved to Thursday	Thursday afternoon	4:00-5:30 pm
Grades 2 - 4 – Level II	Thursday afternoon	4:00-5:30 pm
Grades 5 – 8 – Level III ***Based on Enrolment***	Thursday afternoon	4:00-5:30 pm

**Religious Education (RE) Program Schedule**

Grade	Day	Time
Grades 2-6	Tuesday afternoon	4:00-5:30 pm
Grade 7 Confirmation I	Tuesday evening	7:00-8:15 pm
Grade 8 Confirmation II	Tuesday evening	7:00-8:15 pm

**Tuition/Fees-  
Due to limited seating, your child's seat will be guaranteed if payment accompanies application.**

Tuition Fee	Sacramental Fee
\$400 for one child	\$150 for First Communion
\$500 for two children	\$150 for Confirmation
\$600 for three or more children	

**Tuition for children of catechists is waived, if registered and using the offertory envelopes or We-Share. Sacramental fees are not waived.**

For payment, please drop off at the Rectory from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday. Or place in the mail. Thank you.

We are requesting that all payments be cash or check. Other arrangements for drop off can be made once discussed with the Director. You can mail your payment by check with your child's name in the memo to:

Church of the Magdalene 525 Bedford Road  
Pocantico Hills  
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

# **Church of the Magdalene**

## **Religious Education Program Parent Handbook**

### **Table of Contents**

#### **Purpose and Overview of Parish Religious Education Program**

Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines

Family Catechesis

Religious Education for Children with Special Needs

Preparation for the Reception of the Sacraments

Responsibilities of Parents in regard to the Religious Education Program

Responsibilities of the Child Enrolled in the Parish Religious Education Program

#### **Registration and Placement**

Registration Procedure

Child's Placement in the Program Sessions

Repetition

Transfer to Another Program

#### **Arrival, Lateness and Absences**

Arrival

Walkers

Lateness

Absences

Notification Procedure for Absence

#### **Dismissal**

General Dismissal

Early Dismissal of the Program

Dismissal of an Individual before the End of the Day's Session

#### **Communication with Parents**

Emergency Cancellations of Program

Written Communications to Parents

Rights of Non-Custodial Parent

Parent Visits to Religious Education Program

Individual Meetings with Catechists

Invitation to Parents to Use Online Enrichment Materials for Families Social Networking Sites

### **Religious Education and the Parent's Involvement**

Homework

Prayer at Home with Your Child

Pray with Your Child in the Parish Community

Textbook Assessment

Progress Reports

Permanent Record Card

### **Behavior Management**

Dress Code

Cell Phones

Lost Valuables

Unacceptable Behavior

Vandalism

Bullying and Cyber-Bullying

### **Medication and Medical Emergency**

Medication

Medical Condition of Child

Medical Emergency Information

### **Safe Environment**

Archdiocesan Children Protection Policy

Safe Environment Training and Possibility for Parent Opt-Out

### **Media**

## **Purpose and Overview of Parish Religious Education Program**

The child experiences Catholic life in the home and in the parish, learning from the experiences of these two environments how to live as a faithful Catholic person. Those who give life to the child- the parents - bring the child through Baptism to Life in the Kingdom of God and continually nurture that life. Parents teach their children the faith by what they say and do, by how they live, by placing Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their family life. The witness of Christian life given by parents in the intimacy of family relationships is irreplaceable. Through it, children perceive and joyously live in the closeness of God in Jesus made tangible to them by their own parents' love and goodness.

The purpose of the Parish Religious Education Program is to assist parents in that sacred responsibility entrusted to them at their child's Baptism: to form and educate their children in the Catholic faith. But the effectiveness of the Religious Education Program depends radically upon the child's growth and development in the Catholic faith at home.

### **The six fundamental tasks of Catechesis which are entrusted to the Religious Education Program by the Catholic Church are:**

- to promote the knowledge of the faith
- to give moral formation,
- to provide liturgical education,
- to teach to pray,
- to educate for community life.
- to initiate into the missionary dimension.

The role of the Director of Religious Education and the Catechists is to provide intellectual enlightenment about the Catholic life that the child is already living, and to foster the child's faith development by accomplishing the "Fundamental Tasks" in an age-appropriate way.

An integral part of both a true Catholic home life and of the Religious Education Program is the child's attendance at Mass every Sunday and on the Holy Days of Obligation. A primary responsibility of every Catholic parent is to attend Mass weekly with the child. The Religious Education Program helps the child to understand ever more deeply the meaning of the Mass that the family regularly attends.

For the sake of brevity, the word “child” will be used to indicate children and youth up to 8th grade, the word “parent” will be used to indicate the child’s primary caretaker, whether parent or guardian and the title “Director” will be used to indicate both the Director or the Coordinator of Religious Education.

*Catechesis* is a Greek word used by Christians from the earliest centuries of the Church. It means Religious Instruction and Formation in the faith.

There are 6 Holy Days of Obligation (days when, in addition to Sunday, Catholics are required to attend Mass):

1. Dec. 8 – Immaculate Conception
2. Dec. 25 – Christmas
3. Jan. 1 – Mary, the Mother of God
4. 40 days after Easter – the Ascension
5. Aug. 15 – the Assumption of Mary
6. Nov. 1 – All Saints Day

### **The Religious Education Program: an 8-Year, Sequential Program**

The essential Religious Education program is a seven-year sequence of formation beginning with grade level k-1 and continuing through grade level 8. All Catholic children of the parish who are not attending Catholic schools are expected to follow this 8-year program.

The Religious Education Program consists of a minimum of 30 sessions, 90 minutes long, held between September and May.

### **The Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines**

The Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis for Grades K-1 through 6 and Grades 7 and 8 ensure a uniform presentation of the faith for each grade level and outline the content of the catechesis each child is taught at every grade.

### **Family Catechesis**

Each family in the Religious Education Program must participate in a minimum of five hours of family catechesis offered between September and August.

The following Family Catechesis programs may be offered:

- 1) Christmas Program – December
- 2) Family Mass and Children’s Liturgy – offered between September and May at Sunday Mass.
- 3) Parish events for families- mass on the grass, liturgical celebrations.

### **Religious Education for Children with Special Needs**

Some children require an individualized program of instruction in a small group or a one-on-one setting or as part of the regular Religious Education session but with a personal assistant. In consultation with the parent, the Director will design an approach to Religious Education that addresses every child’s needs.

### **Preparation for the Reception of the Sacraments**

Preparation for the reception of the Sacraments – first reception of the Eucharist, of Penance (Reconciliation) and of Confirmation – is an integral part of the 8-year program. The child’s primary preparation for the reception of the Sacraments is done throughout the consistent 8 year religious education, including home study.

In order to receive the Sacrament of Penance and First Communion, the child must complete the first and second year of the Religious Education Program. **Please note:** The Church of the Magdalene has instituted an attendance requirement at Mass each Sunday for children in Sacrament Classes-(First Communion and Confirmation) each Sunday. Parents will receive communication outlining the details at the parent meeting.

Confirmation is received after the completion of the 8-year curriculum and the child must have fulfilled all grade level requirements in order to receive it. The students will continue their attendance requirement at mass, which has been a requirement for a number of years.

However, for each Sacrament, the parish program provides an immediate preparation for the Sacrament which has a strong family/parent dimension, and which helps the children prepare themselves spiritually for the Sacrament. Immediate preparation is required to receive the Sacrament, and it is done in sessions separate from, and in addition to, the regular Religious Education program. Special books specific to each Sacrament are provided and parents are expected to work with their children to complete these books.

The immediate preparation program for each Sacrament will consist of:

- A parent evening session particular to the Sacrament being received,
  - A special parent/child session centered on the Sacrament being received,
  - A special Sunday Mass for the families of those students receiving a Sacrament.
- One or two scheduled practices for the reception of the Sacrament.

The preparation for Confirmation also includes Christian service. Attendance at the Confirmation retreat is also required.

The parents of a child preparing to receive Reconciliation/Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation must attend the required parent meetings as listed in the calendar. See the Religious Education program calendar for the dates.

### **Preparation for Sacraments for Children who are Older or Who Have Special Needs**

The parish also offers Sacramental preparation for children who come into the program later than the second-grade level and for children with special needs. Sacramental readiness must be assessed and demonstrated before a child can receive a Sacrament and may require a longer preparation time.

The parent should call the Religious Education office for more information and to register.

### **The schedule for Reception of the Sacraments:**

The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is received in February/March after Ash Wednesday. First Communion takes place in May. Confirmation is received in May of 8th grade.

### **Responsibilities of Parents regarding the Religious Education Program**

Parents have the primary and sacred responsibility to form their children in the Catholic faith and do so in the following ways:

- teaching their child to live in the reflection of the values and teachings of Jesus Christ and the teachings, laws and norms of the Catholic Church. The primary way parents teach this is by living it themselves.
- attending Mass each Sunday with their children, thus instilling in them the conviction that weekly Mass attendance is essential to being a Catholic.
- participating fully with their child in the parent preparation for the first reception of Reconciliation/Penance, for First Communion, and for Confirmation.

- preparing your child for participation in Religious Education each week by ensuring a timely arrival for the sessions and by fostering an openness and positive attitude toward the religious education the child will be receiving.
- fulfilling all the requirements outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- ensuring that their child fulfills his/her role in the Religious Education Program as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- participating in their child's faith formation by making use of the provided textbooks, online materials and the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis.
- reviewing and praying at home the prayers to be memorized.
- assisting their child with homework as needed.

### **Responsibilities of the Child enrolled in the Parish Religious Education Program**

The obligations of children enrolled in the Program are:

- living according to the values and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- participating in the Parish Mass each Sunday.
- receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation/Penance at least 2 times a year.
- following the laws, norms and guidelines of the Church.
- attending the weekly Religious Education Sessions.
- being well-prepared for each Religious Education session by arriving on time and completing homework assignments satisfactorily.
- memorizing all required prayers.
- participating in class discussions and activities.
- behaving in the sessions with attentiveness and respect.
- performing satisfactorily on assessments and tests.
- fulfilling all requirements of the Religious Education Program including appropriate dress.

### **Registration and Placement**

The Parish Religious Education program offers Catechesis to all children who attend Public Schools and whose families are enrolled in the parish as parishioners. When space allows, the Director will try to also accommodate in the program children whose families are not able to become members of the parish.

There is no discrimination on the basis of race, gender, national origin, disability conditions, family background and situation.

## **Registration Procedure**

Every child must be registered for the Religious Education program every year. The Registration procedure is as follows:

- Register your child for the Religious Education Program starting in the summer and prior to the first class
- Registration for the 2025-2026 Religious Education Program is online on the parish website.
- If a child is new to the program, a copy of the Baptismal Certificate must be provided.
- Speak with the Director about any accommodation that your child needs which will affect their learning and well-being in the Religious Education sessions.
- Refer to the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis for your child's grade level. so that you will know the essential content taught to your child in the current year.

## **Religious Education Program Fees: Fees:**

- Fees for the 2026-2027 school year are as follows:  
\$400 for one child; \$500 for two children; \$600 for three or more children.
  - Sacrament fees for First Communion are \$150 Confirmation are \$150.
- If a registration is cancelled and/or child attends fewer than 3 sessions and then withdraws, tuition will be refunded in full, via check to the registrant.

No child will be refused admission to the Religious Education program because of inability to pay tuition. Parents for whom tuition would cause a severe financial burden should contact the Director for a reduction or a waiver. If a family cannot pay the tuition in full at registration the Director and the parent draw up a payment plan. This plan may include payment in the form of a specific service given to the parish.

## **Child's Placement in Religious Education Sessions**

The Guidelines for Catechesis are located on the website of the Archdiocese, under Resources (Catechetical):

[Youth Faith Formation - Archdiocese of New York](#) Under GUIDELINES FOR CATECHESIS.

The Director of Religious Education makes the final decision for each child's placement in the Religious Education Program sessions.

For any child who requires accommodation, the Director or Coordinator for the Special Needs Program in consultation with the parent will determine a program of religious education to effectively address these needs.

Any child who leaves the Religious Education Program and subsequently returns will, upon reentering the program, be required to complete the curriculum of the grade levels missed using an assessment based on the Archdiocese Curriculum Guidelines.

When a child who is in third grade or older and has not had formal religious education, the Director will determine the most appropriate and effective way for the child to be taught the content of the faith, using the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines as the norm.

### **Repetition**

Repetition means that the child must repeat the grade level or the year's curriculum. Great care should be taken in the home as well as in the program to help the child realize that repetition is not a punishment but rather a means to help the child be as successful as possible.

The grounds for repetition are as follows:

1. Excessive absence: 5 or more absences are grounds for repetition.
2. Poor performance: if your child does poorly when assessed on the content of the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis, remedial work will be required and organized by the 10 Director. If the remedial work is not sufficient in enabling the child to grasp the content, repetition may be the best solution.
3. Excessive lateness: 6 or more late arrivals are grounds for repetition.

### **Transfer to Another Program**

When a parent must withdraw a child from the program, the parent should immediately inform the Director. The Director will send a copy of the child's permanent record card to the Religious Education Program to which the child is transferring.

## **Arrival, Lateness and Absences**

Parents assume full responsibility for the transportation of their children to and from the parish site where Religious Education sessions take place.

### **Arrival**

Religious Education Sessions take place at the following times:

Regular Classroom Sessions Tuesday afternoon 4:00-5:30pm, Grades 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6,  
Tuesday evening 7:00-8:15pm Grades 7 & 8

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Tuesday afternoon 4:00-5:30pm Grade K & 1 - Level I,  
Thursday afternoon 4:00-5:30pm Grade K & 1 - Level I Grades 2-4 - Level II Grades 5-8 -  
Level III (Please refer to the chart in the beginning of the handbook)

Supervision of the children in the afternoon sessions will be provided beginning at 3:50 PM.  
should not be on the school premises without an adult with them before this time.

Supervision for evening sessions will be provided beginning at 6:50 PM.

On arriving for the afternoon Religious Education classes, the parent brings the child directly to the entrance of the Church. Unregistered parents are not permitted in the school building during drop-off. On arriving for evening Religious Education, parents may drop their children at the entrance to the building. Please do not leave until an adult has let your child into the building.

Supervision of the children is provided 10 minutes before beginning and 15 minutes after the class ends.

### **Walkers**

Parents must notify the Director in writing if they are permitting their children to walk home. No child will be allowed to leave the program unaccompanied without written parental permission to do so.

### **Lateness**

If the child arrives after 4:15 PM in the afternoon or 7:15 PM, they report to the Religious Education office. From there, they will be escorted to the classroom.

Punctuality is essential. Children who arrive late not only miss important information but also disrupt the entire Religious Education session. If the child arrives late more than 6

times in the year, this can result in repeating the year. The Director will determine these make-up sessions.

### **Absences**

Your child's regular attendance at Religious Education is very important to his/her whole life. These sessions should take priority over all other after school programs and activities.

- Three unexcused absences will result in the child having to make up the sessions. The number of make-up sessions will be determined by the Director and will be based on the number necessary for the child to be adequately taught the Archdiocesan Guidelines for his/her grade level.
- Five or more unexcused absences may result in the repetition of the grade level or attendance at make-up sessions.

In the case of a long-term illness confirmed by a doctor's report or family hardship, the Director and parent should make arrangements for religious education at home.

### **Notification Procedure for Absence**

When a child is to be absent from a program session, the parent must give the Director advance written notification, preferably by email. If this is impossible, notification must be given to the Religious Education office by phone, email or text message before the Religious Education Program session begins.

### **Dismissal**

#### **General Dismissal**

At the end of the Religious Education session every child is released to the care of its parent or parent substitute. The parent substitute must be the person designated in writing at registration. If someone other than the parent or parent substitute is to pick up the child on a given day, this change must be given in writing to the Director prior to the session in question.

- A child will not be released to anyone under age 18.
- A child will not be released to someone who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Staff of the Religious Education Program are not allowed to drive children home.
- The Director should be informed in writing 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 to the

child's release from the program. A copy of the appropriate section of the custody papers should be attached to the written statement.

Catechists should be notified that a child is being released into the care of a parent or parent substitute.

At the end of the afternoon sessions, the children will wait inside the Church for dismissal. Parents must come inside and pick up their children. Each child should notify the supervising adult that he/she is leaving and with whom.

At the beginning and end of the evening sessions, students will enter and exit at the upstairs/top floor of the building. Students may meet their parents at their car.

No child may remain on the parish premises after the Religious Education Program ends because supervision is not provided. The parent must instruct the child to report to the Director in the unforeseen event of not being picked up on time.

### **Early Dismissal of the Program**

The Religious Education Program will not have an early dismissal unless it is necessitated by an emergency. Parents will be notified of the emergency closure of the program using Flocknote, emails, or text messages.

Depending on the emergency situation, the children will be taken either to the office or to the Weaver Parish Hall.

### **Dismissal of an Individual before the End of the Day's Session**

If your child needs to be dismissed early, the request for this early dismissal should be given to the Director in writing by the parent prior to the scheduled session. This request should include:

- the name of the person picking up the child,
- the designated date and time,
- the reason,
- the signature of the parent.

The Parent must come to the Religious Education office to pick up and sign out the child. The Director or appropriate adult will go to the session and walk the child to meet the parent. The Parent may not go directly to the session area.

## **Communication with Parents**

### **Emergency Cancellations of Program**

Emergency cancellations due to forecasted weather or building accessibility issues will be announced using Flocknote or text. E-mail notifications may also be used. **It is imperative that we have the most up to date emails for parents.**

The Religious Education program follows the weather guidance from the Public Schools for the Tuesday and Thursday Programs. Therefore, if public schools are closed, the Religious Education program is cancelled. Also, if Public Schools cancel after-school activities, the Religious Education program is also cancelled for that day.

Parents should have in place an emergency plan for those times when Religious Education must be cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstance.

### **Postponements and Rescheduled Events**

Parents are notified of the cancellation of other Religious Education events via Flocknote and email.

### **Written Communication to Parents**

General written communication is distributed via Flocknote, church bulletin, or e-mail. The parish website is the source for all program documentation and instruction.

All individual communications to parents will come from the Director and be emailed or mailed unless they can be handed via conversation or phone call between the parent and a program staff member.

### **Rights of Non-Custodial Parent**

The Director should be informed in writing by the custodial parent of the rights of the non custodial parent such as receipt of duplicate sets of progress reports, invitations to religious education events, notices, calendars, etc. as these pertain to the child's participation in the program. A copy of the appropriate section of the custody papers should be attached to the written statement.

### **Visits to Religious Education Program**

Unauthorized persons are NOT allowed when Religious Education sessions are taking place. Parents may be in the Religious Education office while the Religious Education is in session if a program staff member accompanies them.

### **Individual Meetings with Catechists**

All meetings between parent and Catechist regarding the faith formation or behavior of a child must be approved and arranged by the Director prior to the meeting.

A Catechist may be allowed to keep a child after the program session for reasons such as additional instruction, misbehavior, excessive absence or lateness but this can only take place with the permission of the parent, and it must be organized by the Director.

### **Invitation to Parents to Use Online Enrichment Materials for Families**

The book publisher, Loyola Press, offers online enrichment materials that families are encouraged to explore. We are using the series, Finding God 2021.

For children in Grades 1-8: [Families | Loyola Press](#)

### **Social Networking Sites and Your Child's Protection**

Regarding the use of Social Networking Sites and all other electronic communication, the parish Religious Education Program follows the directives published by the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office ([Child Protection and Abuse Prevention | Archdiocese of New York](#) – Safe Environment Resources – Facebook and Child Protection). These include the following:

- - There may be no private direct communication with a minor. All communications must be through parents.
- There may be no photographs or videos of minors posted without the written permission of the parent.
- There may be no photographs or videos posted of Religious Education personnel posted without the individual's written permission.
- With regard to a group photo or video, written permission for the child or Catechist must be given.
- There may be no contact information, or other personal information, of a minor or of Religious Education personnel posted without the written permission of the parent or Catechist/Director.

Written permission for all the above must be given directly to the Religious Education Director.

## **Homework**

### **Religious Education and the Parent's Involvement**

Homework reinforces learning and provides opportunities for independent study and creative thinking. It is an effective way for the child to internalize the religious education he/she has received so that it becomes "faith formation". Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for them to complete the homework and by encouraging and helping the child as needed.

Parents are strongly urged to participate in the online parent dimension of the child's religious formation which is provided by the textbook company and follows the child's lessons.

### **Prayer at Home with Your Child**

Parents are the primary educators in the faith for their children. One of the most important ways parents fulfill this essential responsibility are by praying with their children every day and in this way teaching them to pray. Some of the prayer practices that are done in the Catholic home are:

- +grace before meals,
- +prayers at the child's bedtime,
- +blessing the child in the morning before he/she leaves for school by tracing the cross on the forehead and saying with the child the prayer to his/her guardian angel,
- +saying the family rosary together regularly, 15
- +having pictures and statues of Jesus and Mary in the home and gathering around them for prayer,
- +having a family bible in a place of honor and reading a passage or story from it regularly,
- +reciting with the child the traditional Catholic prayers which he/she is learning in Religious Education

### **Prayer with Your Child in the Parish Community**

Weekly attendance at Mass together as a family is one of the most powerful and essential ways that the parent fulfills their responsibility to form their children in the faith. Our Sunday 9:00 AM Mass at the Magdalene is designated as a "Family Mass." Throughout the school year, various grades are asked to attend and participate in this Mass in a special way.

### **Textbook**

Every student receives a textbook during the first class. For 2025-26 students will use a print book and have digital access to their grade in Finding God 2021. [Loyola Press: A Jesuit Ministry: Catholic Religious Education Publisher](#)

### **Assessment**

Each child is expected to master the contents of the Archdiocesan Guidelines for Catechesis at the grade level in which he/she is enrolled. Children will be assessed regularly with written tests and oral exercises. These assessments will be based on textbook lessons and on the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guidelines.

It is important to assess the faith formation of the child and to offer feedback to you, the parent, in order to facilitate further growth. Please be aware that the child's faith, love for the Lord, and commitment to the Church is not being assessed in the testing program. What is being assessed is the child's grasp of the knowledge that has been taught in the Religious Education Program.

If a child does not do satisfactorily reflect understanding of the basic faith formation concepts, a meeting will be arranged with parents, the Catechist and the Director in order to come to a better understanding of the child. A remedial plan will be developed and once it has been followed, the child will be evaluated again.

The Director will decide, in consultation with the parents, if a child needs to repeat a year.

### **Permanent Record Card**

A Permanent Record Card is kept in the Religious Education file for each child. It records the child's successful completion of each grade level. If a child must transfer to another religious education program, a copy of this Permanent Record Card is sent to the Director of the new program.

### **Behavior Management**

Catechists use behavior management (or "discipline") appropriate to an educational environment as a necessary means for the Religious Education Program to accomplish its goals. The purpose of behavior management is to help the children develop self-control, self-respect, respect for others, and reverence for the Word of God which is being explained to them in these sessions.

Discipline includes positive reinforcement to shape acceptable behavior and redirection. Consequences may be employed to stop unacceptable behavior. Consequences include actions such as pausing in class proceedings to focus on and rectify an individual child's inappropriate behavior, changing a child's place in the room, assigning a written reflection on the problem behavior, telling the child their parent will be called after the class, and/or sending the child to see the Director.

Several infractions of rules of conduct or persistent disrespect will result in a call by the Director to the child's parent in which the Director will describe the situation and work out a solution with the parent. If the infractions continue, the Director will organize a conference with the Parent, the Catechist, the Director and the Pastor. In some cases, a program of home study may be the only alternative to a difficult situation.

### **Dress Code**

Children are required to wear appropriate clothing reflecting the dignity of the faith formation in which they are participating.

Examples of unacceptable clothing include but are not limited to:

1. Revealing garments such as tube or halter tops and short skirts or dresses
2. Exposed undergarments.
3. Unsafe footwear such as flip-flops, excessively high heels, roller shoes and laced shoes that are unlaced.
4. Clothing promoting values or products that are inconsistent with Christian living.

The exercise of good taste and proper, reasonable judgment on the part of the parent in overseeing the child's choice of clothing, in itself, supports effective formation for the child. With the approval of the Pastor, the Director has the final authority to determine the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the clothing worn. If a child violates the policy, the child is removed from the session and the parents are immediately called. The parents

must bring alternative clothes for the child to change into so that he/she may return to the Religious Education session.

### **Cell Phones**

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices by the child is not permitted during the Religious Education session, unless directed by the Catechist as part of the educational process. Cell phones brought into the place of the Religious Education session must be turned off and kept in the child's backpack. Children in need of contacting a parent must ask the Catechist's permission to go to the Religious Education Office to place the call.

### **Lost Valuables**

All clothing, money, jewelry or other articles that are found should be turned in to the Religious Education Office and can be claimed there. Children should not bring valuables to the program and the program personnel cannot be responsible if these are lost.

### **Unacceptable Behavior**

The following types of behavior are not allowed during the Religious Education Program. Infractions that call for discipline by the Catechist

- Acting in a disrespectful manner toward the Catechist, other adults or children in the program
- Speaking and interacting with other children inappropriately instead of being involved in the session
- Leaving a classroom without permission
- Using a cell phone during the session when not authorized by Catechist
- Doing something other than the work of the session
- Violating the dress code Persistence in any of these behaviors after several corrective measures have been taken will place this behavior in the category below.

Infractions that call for immediate action by the Director and Pastor

- Possession of and /or trafficking alcohol or other drugs
- Leaving the Religious Education premises when child is supposed to be attending the session
- Willful defiance of authority
- Possession of weapons, such as knives, guns, or look-alikes
- Physical assault/fighting
- Extortion
- Arson
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Cheating
- Intimidating fellow students
- Abusive/vulgar language
- Harassment
- Defacing or damaging of parish property
- Threatening bodily harm
- Bullying/Cyber-bullying

### **Vandalism**

Willfully damaging or destroying property (personal or parish) will not be tolerated. The parent of the child who did it must pay for vandalism. Accidental damage should be immediately reported to the Director.

### **Bullying and Cyber-bullying**

The Archdiocesan policy against bullying is followed. This policy states: 'A safe and civil environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve Christian values; harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying (using technology to bully such as but not limited to: posting an inappropriate pictures of a student on the Internet) and other violent behaviors will not be tolerated in a religious education program environment. Any student who engages in this behavior may be asked to leave the religious education environment if this is seen to be in the best interest of the rest of the religious education community. Bullying includes but is not limited to: threatening physical harm, verbal abuse, intimidation, cyber-bullying.

### **Medication and Medical Emergency**

No medication of any kind (including both prescription and over-the-counter) will be administered to, or taken by any child during the Religious Education Program.

In the event that a child has a condition for which emergency medication may be necessary, the parent must provide a written request and directives to the Religious Education Director when the child is registered for the program.

Any emergency medication/medical device to be administered during the program according to the above directives must be brought by the parent to the Religious Education Office and ideally is administered there.

### **Medical Condition of Child**

The parent must inform the Director about any child who has special medication needs, a medical condition which could flare up in the session, or a medical condition which could affect the teaching/learning environment or safety of the child such as allergies, asthma, auditory or visual impairment, possibility of seizures, learning disability, hyperactivity, attention deficit disorder, or need for the epi-pen. This information should be entered on the registration form and is strictly confidential and will be used with the utmost discretion. The Director will ensure that the Catechist is informed.

A course of action in case of a flare up is determined by the parent at the time of registration and put in writing. The Director and Catechist will follow these written instructions.

Completed program registration forms will list the names and contact information for the people who must be contacted in case of emergency.

### **Medical Emergency Information**

In the case of any medical emergency, 911 will immediately be called without exception. The information provided by the parent on the registration form and the Allergy supplement (if required) is kept on file in the Parish Religious Education Office. The parent is expected to keep the information in these forms current. Any changes to the forms are made in writing and signed by the parent.

### **Safe Environment Archdiocesan Children Protection Policy**

The Archdiocese of New York and the parish are committed to ensuring the personal safety of all children in the Religious Education Program. Therefore, the parish and its Religious Education Program follow all the policies, directives and requirements of the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. These policies and programs are to be found on the Safe Environment web page that can be accessed through the Archdiocesan web site (Archny.org) and [Child Protection and Abuse Prevention | Archdiocese of New York](#)

In compliance with the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office directives, any adult who works with or has contact with the children in the program must first:

1. Complete a volunteer application form with two references
2. Take a training session entitled Protecting God's Children
3. Read the Child Protection Handbook and sign the Acknowledgement form.
4. Read the monthly training bulletins.

Assistants to Catechists who are under the age of 18 do not receive this Child Protection training; therefore, they must be supervised at all times by an adult who has received the training.

### **Safe Environment Training and Possibility for Parent Opt-Out**

Safe Environment –The Archdiocese of New York, as part of the Bishops' Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, now requires lessons of Safe Environment to be implemented within our curriculum. Lessons for primary, intermediate and junior high grades will be included each year. Topics include appropriate touch, identifying safe people and types of lures and internet safety. All catechists undergo a background check. This curriculum is posted online. [Children's Curriculum | Archdiocese of New York](#)

Each year, the Religious Education Program provides to each child the curriculum entitled "Right, Safe and Good Relationships", following the lesson plans provided by the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Office. (See Safe Environment Web site: [Children's Curriculum | Archdiocese of New York](#) This training is explained at the beginning of the

school year. Parents have the option to exempt their child from any session of the Safe Environment Training. If the Parent chooses to do so, they must complete and sign the Parent Opt-Out Form that they secure from the Religious Education Office.

***MEDIA AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FORM for Registration Form***

I hereby consent to the taking of photographs, movies, videos, and images capable of reproduction in any medium of me or my children or children of whom I am the designated guardian. (Children attending the Religious Education Program at the Magdalene) by the Church of the Magdalene, the Archdiocese of New York and its parents, affiliates, trustees, directors, members, officers, employees, volunteers, agents, invitees, and contractors of the Parish. I hereby grant to the parish the right to edit, reproduce, use and reuse images for any and all purposes including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion and display, and I hereby consent to the editing, reproduction, use and re-use of said images in any and all media in existence and all media yet in existence including, but not limited to, video, print, television, internet, and podcasts. I forever grant, assign, and transfer to the parish any right, title and interest that I and/or my child/children may have in any images, including negatives, taken of me and/or my children by the parish. I hereby agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the parish from any and all claims, demands, actions or causes of actions, loss, liability, damage or cost arising from this authorization.

**Please note: this is considered “implied consent.” If you do not agree with this authorization, you must submit a statement in writing to the director.**