

Welcome!

Our program includes classes for almost everyone in the parish preschool through 8th grade, classes for children with special learning needs, RCIC for children in grades 3 to 6 needing Baptism, Reconciliation and Eucharist, HSPREP for our youth in grades 9 to 12, and RCIT for students in grades 9 to 12 that need sacramental preparation.

The mission of our program is to promote the faith, and to teach the Word of God, in our parish and our community will strive to help all who come to explore their Catholic faith, develop morally correct attitudes towards God, self and others as they grow in religious understanding and practice. Specifically, by our example and commitment to our own formation, will assist parents in their roles as the primary educators of their children.

Our texts and materials help to enhance our mission. Our preschool will be using RCL Benziger's *Stories of God's Love* We will continue to use W.H. Sadlier's *We Believe* for children in Kindergarten through 6th grade, *We Live Our Faith* for our 7th & 8th graders; *and various books for teens* for our High School program.

The Faith Knowledge Standards developed by the Archdiocese of Washington are at the core of our teaching. These Standards are based on the 6 pillars of catechesis (pray, learn, celebrate, share choose and live).

Although we use the term "grade" to represent each level of our program, our intent is to provide a complete catechesis. Therefore, each child is placed in what is deemed an appropriate level/grade with the expectation that he/she will participate from the beginning level to the end. It has happened in the past, where a child may attend for one or two years and drop out, only to return at "sacrament time". In this situation, the child will be placed at the level when he/she left our program.

Parents, we need your support in our mission. Please review this handbook for program policies. Discuss with your child what is being taught in the classroom. Most importantly, attend Mass together. Let us all pray for a fruitful year filled with learning and love for the Lord.

Holy Family Catechists

As mentioned on page 5 of this handbook, knowledge based assessments will be administered annually to students in grades 3 to 8. Our students will take this assessment in the spring. **Please make sure your child is in attendance for the Assessment.** Any missed FKA will be scored as a 0 (zero) on the progress report.

Collaboration with Parents

We are a team. We cannot and should not replace you as the primary catechist of your child.

It is our role to support you in your efforts and we respectfully ask that you reciprocate.

We believe that with prayer, faithful Mass attendance, reception of the sacraments, service to others and study of the teachings of our faith we can all be the people that God has called us to be.

Internet Communication

Each week, on Thursday, you will receive reminder emails/texts (via Flock Note) regarding the upcoming classes. A link on the front page of our website will help you to register for this application. This is a courtesy and not meant to replace the printed calendar.

Our parish has a webpage www.holyfamilywoodmore.org and a page link for Religious Education. On this page you can find the calendar, syllabus, handbook, Unit Tests, Summer Packet and other related program information.

Knowledge Based Standards For Religious Education

In 2011 the Archdiocese of Washington, implemented the new Faith Knowledge Standards. Recently all of the standards underwent revision. Parents should be familiar with these standards so we have provided a link on our webpage. The guidelines are called:

Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization
Archdiocesan Religion
Curriculum Guide
Grades Pre-K to 8

This curriculum looks at the six tasks of catechesis as six key elements of lived Catholic life so as to help young disciples in formation to realize the intimate connection between our Catholic faith and life. These six key elements of Catholic life “constitute a unified whole by which catechesis seeks to achieve its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.” (GDC nos. 85-86; NDC no. 20)

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or by email at: holyfamilyprep@msn.com
Visit our webpage at www.holyfamilywoodmore.org

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Program Times

PREP - (Preschool—8th Grade) 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays from 10:40 to 11:50 AM (see calendar as there are a few exceptions).

REAL Faith —(Religious Education for Atypical Learners)

RCIC—(Grades 3-6) 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays from 10:40 to 11:50 AM

RCIT - (High School Sacrament Preparation Class) 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays from 10:40 to 11:50 AM

HSPREP - (High School Religious Education) 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays from 10:40 AM to 11:50 AM (Sep to Apr)

Confirmation Preparation—1st Wednesday of each month from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Dates included on 8th grade syllabus.

Our program year runs from September through May to meet the Archdiocesan requirement of 30+ hours of instruction.

Please make your best effort to have your child here on time. It is very disruptive to have a child enter the classroom once instruction has begun! **Excessive tardiness (20 minutes or more)** will be counted as an absence.

Family Event

In an effort to be more creative in the ways that we teach and learn, we will be holding a Family Event based on the catechetical theme provided by the USCCB. Parents and children will be brought together for a day of learning, prayer and activities. Attendance is expected as it is part of our parish program. This one day event will count as 4 classes of Religious Education. Please see the calendar and syllabus for the date of this event.

Attendance Policy (Updated in 2015)

If a student should miss 8 or more classes, during the program year, the parent(s) will be required to meet with the pastor to discuss the reason for such high absenteeism. Students are still accountable for making up any missed class work/homework.

Confirmation

In the Archdiocese of Washington, it is recommended that confirmation be celebrated during the 7th-8th grade year. Here at Holy Family, we begin our preparation in January of the student's 7th grade year. Preparation concludes in June of the 8th grade year.

Our program has 7 Components:

1. Faithful attendance at Sunday Mass
2. Faithful attendance of Confirmation Class (once-a-month on the 1st Wednesday of each month)
3. Completion of Community Service Projects
4. Participation in a parish ministry
5. Attendance at a weekend retreat (held in spring of 2nd year)
6. Written essay regarding desire for the sacrament
7. Interview with the pastor to determine readiness

Confirmation is a Rite not a Right. Readiness of the candidate determines its reception.

Students that are out of sequence should review the requirements on page 7 of this handbook.

Service Projects

Over the years, we have offered several opportunities for the children to participate in service projects. While the projects may vary from year to year, some traditional ones include:

Cemetery Clean-up	Christmas Giving Program
Lit For Little Ones	Shepherd's Cove
So Others Might Eat (SOME)	Various Charitable Collections
Warm Nights/Bridges of Hope	March For Life Hosting

While these projects are not mandatory, we hope that you would encourage your children's participation to give them a sense of stewardship of God's creation and towards each other.

Sacrament Preparation

It is Archdiocesan Policy that students receive Sacraments at their home parish. Preparation (catechesis) for the reception of these sacraments is also received at their home parish. Students attending a Catholic School should contact the pastor to obtain his permission for catechesis to occur outside of the parish program. Otherwise your child will be expected to participate with the parish program for their preparation. Primarily this affects those students in grades 2, 7 & 8. Please be aware of the following:

1. All parents of children preparing for sacraments are required to attend parent meetings. Review the parish website, calendar and bulletin for time and place of meetings.
2. Parents of Catholic School students are asked to donate \$20 for supplies versus the \$80 registration fee.
3. Catholic School children will need to attend classes, as scheduled (see calendar). These classes will focus on knowledge of the sacraments, exploration and investigation of the specific sacrament and foster a sense of community.

Children who are Out of Sequence

These are children who did not receive sacraments at the usually prescribed age. This program aims at helping them become fully initiated Catholics.

Students in grade 2 that had no prior religious instruction will be enrolled in grade 1 and will meet during PREP.

Students in grades 3-8 will meet during PREP. This is RCIC class.

Students in grades 9-12 will meet during PREP. This is RCIT class.

All participants are required to attend class each week, complete all homework assignments, attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation and complete any required service projects.

Cancellations or Delays

We follow PG County Schools for weather related cancellations. Notices of cancellation will be placed on the voicemail box of the Religious Education Office (301-249-1167). Any make up classes will be announced at the lectern during mass and may also appear in the church bulletin.

Dismissal Procedures

For the safety of our children, the following dismissal plan will be followed:

- At the end of each session (11:50 AM) students will be dismissed, as a group.
- Students in grade 2 and above will be allowed to leave the hall to wait in the designated area (weather permitting)
- **Please be reminded that no child from preschool through 1st grade will be released without an adult. They will not be released to a non-adult sibling.**

Classwork

Each student should come prepared for class with his/her textbook and binder. We will provide all other needed supplies. Each year, your child's binder will contain the program calendar, handbook and textbook. Upon request a CD containing the Archdiocesan Faith Knowledge Standards will be given to newly registered families each program year. The standards may always be found as a link on the Religious Education page of our parish website. A syllabus for each grade/level is also provided.

Unit Assessments and quizzes are part of the curriculum. Unit Assessments will be taken in class. Please make sure to note the dates of the Unit Assessments on the syllabus and help your child to prepare. If accommodations are needed, please let us know at the beginning of the program year.

A Faith Knowledge Assessment will be given in the Spring to students in grades 3-8.

Homework

Students will be given homework including those students in Sacramental Preparation. Each week it will be checked for completion and recorded. Homework is listed on the syllabus along with applicable due dates. Late work is not accepted, however a possible exception will be made if a student's absence was due to illness. Parents will need to submit a note with the late assignment.

Progress Reports

Two progress reports will be given to students in grades 1-8. The first report will come mid program year and the final report will be emailed home in June. Reports will indicate scores from all 4 Unit Assessments, Faith Knowledge Assessment (if applicable), Summer Packet Score, Homework and Family Event assignment. It will also reflect attendance records. **An overall proficiency of at least 60% must be obtained to progress to the next grade level.**

Home Schooling/Study

Parents are the primary teacher of their child. If the preference is to teach Religious Education at home, we have materials that can be purchased. This excludes those students preparing to receive Sacraments. These children should be part of our Preparation Program per the Liturgical Norms—Archdiocese of Washington (2010), para.17.1.

Summer Packets

An integral part in retaining the knowledge taught to the children is the completion of a Summer Packet. **This packet is mandatory** for children in grades 1-8 and part of the registration requirement. Packets can also be found on the parish website. Printed copies may be requested and also found in the church vestibule.

Child Protection

The Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) has implemented policies and procedures in an effort to protect our children. All of our adult volunteers, who work with children are required to be in full compliance with the ADW's policy. Volunteers undergo a background check, fingerprinting and Child Abuse awareness training.

Students are educated, in an age appropriate manner, about ways to maintain their safety. Upon request, parents will be given a guidebook and an overview of the lesson material given to their child. They are welcome to attend any of the sessions.

Our program offers Safe Environment education for all students in grades PreK to 12. The curriculum to be used is *The Circle of Grace*. These sessions are held in the fall and your child's participation in all of the sessions is required as we must meet 90% or greater participation. You may find the curriculum on the Links page of our website.

REAL FAITH

(Religious Education for Atypical Learners)

Formerly called SPRED people of all abilities have a right to know the "mystery of faith". However, we recognize that each person develops at differing rates. Some may also have special education needs. These needs may include learning related or developmental related issues .

We ask that you work with us, to help identify what needs there are so that we can do our best in bringing your child to God. Our catechists will utilize the individual's learning style so he/she can be a more integral part of our parish community of faith. Any information provided will be treated with respect and confidentiality.