

2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

*Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish
Religious Education Program*

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK



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Dear Parents/Guardians and Children,

Thank you for enrolling your children in our Religious Education Program.

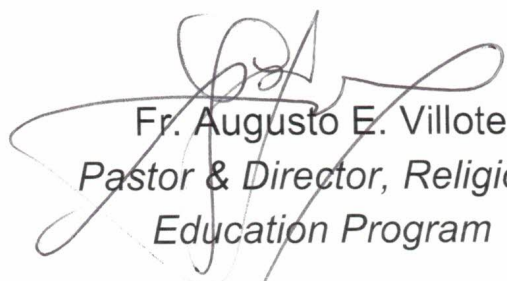
The formation of our children is very important work of our parish. Often, you hear that our children are the future of the Church. Their knowledge of their faith is the one thing that will make them aware of God's presence in their lives. Part of the sacred duty of being a parent is educating your children in our beliefs. Our program exists to assist you with this. Let us work together and recommit this coming year to growth as we gather as one family to educate our youth in revealing God and to set them on the right path as we teach them to know, love, and serve God.

The Catechetical staff hopes this handbook will provide you with valuable information about the Our Lady of Perpetual Help religious education formation ministry for children and youth. It is important that you read and discuss it with your family.

We ask that you keep this handbook in a convenient place and refer to it as needed. We welcome any questions or suggestions from you and look forward to serving you and your family.

May God bless us all.

Sincerely in Our Lady,



Fr. Augusto E. Villote
*Pastor & Director, Religious
Education Program*



RenaeLeen Ricasata
*Coordinator,
Religious Education Program*

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish believes that the Religious Education Ministry is sharing in Jesus' own mission of evangelization; a mission of proclaiming the Reign of God.

It is an activity which enables faith to become alive, conscious, and active through the light of instruction – especially sharing God's Word in Scripture and sharing the traditions of the Catholic Church. Faith formation is a life-long process for each individual, as well as the work of the whole Catholic Christian community.

The Church teaches that the *primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of the children rests first and foremost with the parents.* Parents may share this responsibility with others, but they do not relinquish it.

The Church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the religious education ministry. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that those being catechized (children, youth, and adults) can understand. They help children/youth build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the Word, building a sense of community, leading prayer and worship, encouraging loving service to others, and through the example of their own lives.

Our catechists are volunteers. They are people who have answered the call to minister to our children/youth and who have prepared themselves in different ways to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is important enough to share.

In conclusion, the Religious Education Program seeks to open the children/youth to the discovery of the love, goodness, and beauty of God as reflected in their world, and help them to experience this world within the Catholic Christian community. It seeks to help them grow further in their faith, their understanding of our Catholic tradition, our unity in Christ, and the many gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“Let us keep the flame of faith alive through prayer and the sacraments: let us make sure we do not forget God.”
– Pope Francis

GOALS

The goals of the Religious Education Ministry at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish are:

1. Ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ and the Gospel
2. To give basic catechetical instructions, Catholic teachings of the Church, forms of prayer and awareness to the devotion to the Blessed Mother such as praying the rosary and others.
3. Full participation in the life of the Catholic Church
4. To foster community among the children, their families, and the parish community.

CHILD'S ROLE

Children have the responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit fully from the Religious Education sessions.

They are expected to:

- Be respectful of the catechist and aides and other children.
- Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
- Attend class regularly and complete any homework that is given.
- Follow discipline policies, emergency, and safety procedures.
- Share what they have learned and experienced in their religious education sessions with their parents and families.
- ***DO THEIR BEST.***

“To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift.”

– Steve Prefontaine

PARENTS' ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of their children.

They serve as models for their children. From the earliest years of a child's life, a parent's values are more caught than taught. Our staff is eager to work with the parents to help them fulfill this responsibility. We encourage parents' participation and cooperation in the following ways:

- Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your children. Talk about the Sunday readings and homily and what they mean to you.
- Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- Establish family rituals and celebrations. Bless your child/children. Pray with them. Help them memorize the traditional prayers of the Church.
- Attend parents' meetings and activities.
- Familiarize yourself with scheduled religious education sessions and events for children/youth in the parish.
- Assure your child's/children's punctual and regular attendance at all religious education sessions.
- Read and act promptly on all communications from the Religious Education Program Office.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

All students must register for class each year. The fee for the 2023-2024 School Year is \$80 per student. There is an additional \$10 fee for students enrolling in second year Confirmation. If enrolling multiple siblings, there is a \$5 discount for each sibling. The last day to drop and request a refund is on **November 4th**.

BAPTISMAL/COMMUNION INFORMATION

A baptismal certificate is required for all children who are preparing to celebrate First Reconciliation and First Communion, or who are being registered for the first time.

Besides the baptismal certificate, a First Communication certificate is required for all children who are preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS/PHONE

Please notify the Coordinator/Office Staff of any change of address or telephone number (home or cell) immediately so that the staff will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your child.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

FIRST RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION):

Children are prepared to celebrate this sacrament before they receive their First Communion. All parents are expected to assist in the sacramental preparation of their children and to attend the parent meetings for this purpose.

Expectations:

- Awareness that God loves them.
- They know right from wrong and our relationship with God and others can be broken through sin.
- They need to be able to put into their own words what they did wrong and try to say why they did it.
- They need to be sorry for what they did wrong.
- They need to want to tell Jesus they are sorry and want to make amends.
- Know a simple Act of Contrition in the language they use at home and at church.
- An understanding that the Sacrament of Penance is a special sign of God's forgiveness.

FIRST COMMUNION: Preparation is a two-year process beginning in first grade. Sessions are also available for older children.

Expectations:

- The candidate must demonstrate an active, regular life of prayer.
- Candidates must participate regularly in Sunday liturgy.
- Understand the Real Presence and parts of the Mass.
- Participate in faith formation classes on a regular basis.
- Have a desire to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.
- Demonstrate a Christian life of virtue and service.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

CONFIRMATION: This is a two-year program through which one is fully initiated in the Catholic Church. This sacrament is celebrated at a time when young people can make a personal commitment to take an active part in the growth of their faith. The student must make a free and personal decision. Teens are expected to fully participate in the program to make sure they have sufficient knowledge and understanding of Catholic beliefs, traditions, and practices.

Expectations:

- The candidate must be 8th grade or older (with exception).
- The candidate must demonstrate an active and regular life of prayer.
- Candidates must participate regularly in Sunday Liturgy and the life of the parish community.
- Understand the role of the Holy Spirit and discipleship in their lives.
- Have the desire to receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and act with them for mission.
- Demonstrate a Christian life of virtue and service.
- Service projects/Acts of Justice are required both as group projects and individuals with theological reflection as integral.
- The candidate must attend a Confirmation retreat.

The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

ATTENDANCE

Parents/guardians of children in grades 1 through 5 must bring their child to the classroom and pick them up at their classroom.

Children in grades 1 through 5 will NOT be admitted or released without being signed in and signed out by their parent/guardian.

ARRIVAL: Children should report to their classroom at 10:00 AM on Saturday mornings.

PICK-UP: Students should be picked up promptly after classes at 11:30AM.

ABSENCES: Promptness and attendance at every class is important for the sake of continued understanding and development of faith of our children. ***If it is necessary that your child miss a session, a call or text to the office is to be made in advance along with a signed note from the parent/guardian to be submitted when the child returns.*** When leaving a message, please state your child's name, grade, and reason for being absent.

EXCUSED ABSENCES: An excused absence is only allowed if the child is absent for a medical reason, family emergency, a death in the family, sacramental ceremony (e.g. baptism, wedding), and a mandatory school event.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: Any other absence besides the excused absences mentioned above will be considered as unexcused. ***Sports games, family parties, and family vacations are NOT considered as excused absences.***

ATTENDANCE

MAXIMUM ABSENCES: Only 3 excused absences or 2 unexcused absences will be allowed, after which the student may be dropped from the Religious Education Program.

LATE ARRIVAL: Students should arrive in their classrooms by 10:00 AM. A student will be considered late if they arrive between 10:01 AM and 10:15 AM. Each late arrival will be marked as 1/2 an Unexcused Absence. Therefore if a student is late twice, it will be considered as one unexcused absence. However, should a student arrive after 10:15 AM, they will automatically receive an unexcused absence for that day.

EARLY RELEASE: If your child must leave the session before the usual dismissal time, a dated written request or authorization signed by the parent or guardian is required. Children will only be released to parents, guardians or persons annotated on the child's emergency card. The student will be accompanied to the office by the Catechist Aide where a parent or designated guardian will sign out and pick up their child/children. No child under the age of 18 will be allowed to leave the premises on their own, unless their parents/guardian notifies the office by submitting a written consent allowing the student to leave on their own at the designated time. Early release will only be allowed if the child has a medical appointment or if an emergency situation arises. Sports and attending a party is not considered as an emergency situation, therefore your request for an early release will not be granted.

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”
— Exodus 20:8

MASS ATTENDANCE

Catholics are obligated to attend Sunday Mass (or the Vigil Mass on Saturday) to fulfill God's law (**Third Commandment**). Thus, **weekly Mass attendance is expected and will be monitored regularly.**

Students may attend Mass at any parish of their choice and are not limited to attending Mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. For guidance, visit <https://masstimes.org/> to find Mass times near you.

OLPH MASS SCHEDULE	SATURDAY 4:00 PM Vigil Mass
	SUNDAY 7:00 AM, 8:30 AM, 10:00 AM, 11:30 AM, 1:00 PM (Spanish), 6:00 PM

- Attending Mass is how we worship and give thanks to God.
- Christ becomes fully present in the Eucharist, which we receive during Mass.
 - “This is what happens in the Eucharist. The power of Calvary—the sacrifice that takes away sins, heals, and transforms—becomes present and available to us. It can be applied to our need.”
- During Mass, we commemorate how “Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice to bring us salvation and give us his spirit.”

— From <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/why-go-to-mass>

EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURES

The safety of the students and staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well being of both students and staff members. In the event of an emergency lockdown, major fire or natural disaster, all students will be safely kept within the church grounds until it is safe to release the children to a parent or designated guardian listed on file. Parents/Guardians are not allowed to retrieve other children other than their own, except if they are listed as designated guardians of those other children. No child under the age of 18 will be allowed to leave the premises on their own, unless previous written consent is given by the child's parent(s) or guardian.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY/ACCIDENT/ SUDDEN SICKNESS

In case of an accident or sudden illness, the Director or delegate will give appropriate care and notify parent/guardian. The Director or Catechist may not give any medication without written parental permission.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF DISEASE & ILLNESS

If your child has a minor cold or cough, please use your best judgment if you will allow them to attend classes. Please teach and remind your children to practice good hygiene and preventative actions to keep their sickness from spreading to others. Also, please be sure that your children have adequate supplies to take care of themselves (i.e: tissue, hand sanitizer, cough drops, etc.) If the child's sickness is severe and/or contagious, we request that they remain at home until they are well, as to prevent their sickness from spreading to the rest of the student body.

Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 can return after 5 days of isolation if:

- They no longer have a fever, AND
- Their symptoms are getting better, AND
- They have a negative test collected on or after day 5.

Both PCR/NAAT/molecular and antigen tests are acceptable. Students who test positive will be asked to immediately isolate at home for at least 5 days. If the child is not retested, they must stay home for 10 days after the start of symptoms and may return after the above three bullets are also true.

****We will follow COVID-19 guidelines as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).****

PROCEDURES FOR A MISSING STUDENT

All teachers of each class take attendance in the morning and submit their attendance reports to the office so the teacher and the office are coordinated on which students are present and absent.

Before and after a teacher leaves their classroom, they do another headcount to make sure all students are present. If a student has to leave the classroom, they are always accompanied by a Catechist Aide and/or a classmate.

In the event a student becomes missing, the teacher will immediately notify the office. The teacher along with an office aide will search the church grounds for the missing student while another office aide and the catechist aides monitor the rest of the class. If the student is still not located after 15 minutes, the parents/guardians of the missing student will be notified. If the student does not return at the end of the class period, the parents will be requested to continue the search. If appropriate, the police will also be notified.

Skipping class and leaving the church grounds without permission will not be tolerated and will lead to a conference between the Student, Parents, Teacher, and Director of the Religious Education Program to decide the future participation of the student in the program.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

To provide an atmosphere conducive to learning and to have a safe, caring environment, each student is expected to abide by these rules:

- Students are expected to be respectful and cooperative with all teachers and aides.
- Be respectful of one another, one another's belongings, and school property.
- No gum, soda, or food during sessions.
- No unauthorized usage of phones and/or other electronics during class.
- Students are expected to bring their textbooks to class each week.
- Observe proper behavior in any church activity.
- Blinds and windows are only to be opened/closed by catechists or their aides.

*More than anything, students are encouraged
and expected to do their best!*

HARRASSMENT

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Religious Education Program believes in the sanctity and integrity of all persons, that we are created in God's image and are of inestimable value. Any form of harassment is completely contrary to this belief and we, the staff, are committed to providing an environment free of harassment.

ANTI- DISCRIMINATION & ANTI-BULLYING

Our Program is committed to each student's success in learning within a caring, responsive, and safe environment that is free from discrimination, violence, and bullying. Our Program works to ensure that all students have the opportunity and support to develop to their fullest potential and share a personal and meaningful bond with people in the Religious Education Program community. Each student has a right to:

- Learn in a safe and friendly place
- Be treated with respect
- Receive the help and support of Program staff

DANGEROUS MATERIALS

The Coordinator or staff member has the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of the participants in the Religious Education Program. This includes the right to inspect property of individuals suspected of possessing alcohol, drugs, weapons and other illegal materials. If alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons, or other dangerous materials are found, the police, the parents/guardians, and the Pastor will be notified.

GANGS

The Our Lady of Perpetual Help Religious Education Program is a gang-free environment. No evidence of gangs or gang-related activities will be tolerated.

Persons participating in any gang-related activities while on parish property or in conjunction with program-related activities will be subject to immediate disciplinary action that may include dismissal from the program.

CHILD ABUSE

As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

Parents/Guardians and catechetical staff work in partnership in helping children/youth grow in faith, therefore good communication is essential. If problems develop, they should always be solved at the lowest level whenever possible. If a parent/guardian wishes to talk with a catechist, they may do so after the session or they may make an appointment with the catechist by calling the Religious Education Office. Parents/guardians may also call or visit the office if they wish to talk with the coordinator and/or director.

Catechists and/or Religious Education Office will communicate with the parents/guardians by phone, mail/email, or by sending home notes through the student.

E-mail: olphreoffice@gmail.com

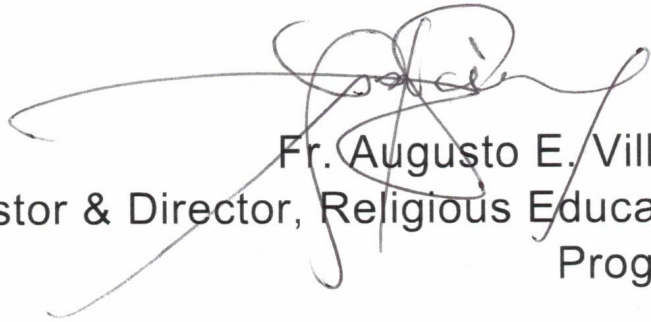
Phone: (650) 466-8523

Address: 60 Wellington Ave, Daly City, CA 94014

RIGHT TO AMEND

The Pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish and the Director of the Religious Education Program, together with the Coordinator of the Religious Education Program, have the right to amend this handbook for a just cause. Parents will be given prompt notification if changes are made.

This Family Handbook has been approved
and amended on
September 21, 2023 by:



Fr. Augusto E. Villote
Pastor & Director, Religious Education
Program



RenaeLeen Ricasata
Coordinator, Religious Education Program