



Our Lady of the  
Woods  
Religious  
Education Parent  
Handbook

September 2023

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Our Lady of the Woods Parish. Our parish supports parents as the primary educators of their children. We take seriously the obligation to assist them in the Religious Education of their children. In our program, the goal of each lesson for each grade is "to teach as Jesus taught." Jesus is at the heart of all catechesis.

Attendance at the Celebration of Sunday Mass is one of the major signs of our faith. Religious Education classes can never replace Sunday Mass. In addition to the example of faith by parents, Sunday Mass and Religious Education are essential elements. We encourage the parents to attend Sunday Mass with their children. All of our Masses are celebrated with faith and devotion.

Starting in September, we will celebrate Children of the Lord Program during the 9:30 Mass. Prior to the readings, a volunteer will come to the sanctuary and the priest will invite the children, ages 4 – 6, to go with the volunteer into a classroom and read the scripture readings for the day, discuss, and work on an activity. The children will return to their parents during the sign of peace.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF**

Kathleen Ericksen Religious Education Director

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Erin Kuta Religious Education Administrative Assistant

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Laura Koehler Religious Education Administrative Assistant

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## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTACT INFORMATION**

10731 W. 131<sup>st</sup> Street Orland Park, IL

(708) 361 - 4754

## **PARISH RECTORY STAFF**

Rev. Ed Mikolajczyk, Administrator

Rev. Robert Marchwiany—Associate Pastor

Deacon John J & Tere Macarol

Deacon Doug & Carolyn Szarzynski

### Saturday Mass

5:00 p.m.

### Sunday Masses

8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.

## **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

Saturday after 9:30a.m. Mass & after the 5:00pm Mass

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

“Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” CCC2226

The Our Lady of the Woods Religious Education Program is an essential part of the mission of the parish. The parish supports the parents who are the primary teachers of the Catholic Faith. The goal of the program is to form the students to be disciples of Jesus Christ, through a relationship with Him and the capability of living life with Catholic values. The program is rooted in the celebration of the Eucharist where the entire parish draws strength from both the Word and Sacraments.

## **GOALS OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

To promote and encourage: --Proclamation of the Good News as revealed through Jesus Christ --Worship of God through private and liturgical prayer --Service to the Christian and entire world community --Parents in their role as primary catechists of their children

## **Parish Religious Education Staff**

Each class is staffed by a Catechist. Our Catechists are volunteers who give generously of themselves and their time. All have a willingness to share their faith to help our children grow in the love of Jesus and build their relationship with the Lord.

All of our Catechists / Volunteers are required to:

- 1 – Be in good standing with the Catholic Church
- 2 – Attend Catechetical meetings
- 3 – Comply with the Archdiocese which includes Virtus Training

## **Registration**

All students (new and returning) must be enrolled for the Religious Education Program.

The enrollment form is available online at [www.religioused@ourladyofthewoods.org](http://www.religioused@ourladyofthewoods.org)

Requirements:

- 1 – Completion of a Registration Form
- 2 – Copy of a Baptismal Certificate for each child

**\*\*No child will be refused admission to Religious Education Program** because of the inability to pay the tuition. Parents for whom tuition would cause a severe financial burden should contact the Director to set up a payment plan.

## **Transfers In and Out**

Students in grades 1 – 8 who are transferring into the program from another parish should obtain transfer papers from their former parish indicating that the child has been regularly attending religious education. Parents should request these records as soon as possible from the previous parish as they are necessary for the appropriate placement of the child in the program.

## **Classroom Behavior**

We require that all students behave in an appropriate manner in order to create a productive learning environment. Disrespect towards Catechists or peers are not accepted behavior.

1 – If the cell phone is brought to class; the Catechist will collect it and it will be put into a bin during class. The cell phone will be returned at the end of the class.

2 – Please do not send or bring candy, food, gum or soda to class.

## **Conduct / Expectations of Behavior**

- Pay attention
- Listen to who is speaking
- Speak when it is your turn
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Show your love for God and others
- Do your best
- Respect your Catechist and peers
- Return your assignments

## **Grade Level Masses**

Each student is required to attend Weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. In addition, each grade level will come together at Mass on specific dates.

Grade 1 – Sunday, March 10, 9:30

Grade 2 – Holy Thursday Liturgy's Procession, March 28, 7:00PM

Grade 3 – Sunday, October 29, 9:30

Grade 4 – Sunday, October 1, 9:30

Grade 5 – Sunday, February 4, 9:30

Grade 6 – Sunday, November 12, 9:30

## **Sacramental Meetings**

### **Grade 2** –

Reconciliation Parent Meeting – November 13 & 15

Reconciliation: Tuesday, November 28, 7:00PM

First Communion: Saturday, April 20, 12:00 & 2:30

### **Grade 8**

Confirmandi Retreat: November 12, 2:00PM

Confirmation /Sponsor Mass: November 12, 6:00PM

Confirmation interviews: February 13, 6:00 – 8:30PM

Confirmation Practice: March 14, 6:30PM

Confirmation: March 17, 2:00PM

## **Grade Level Curriculum**

Our Lady of the Woods Religious Education Program uses

Grade 1 Blest are We curriculum

Grade 2 Sacraments of Reconciliation & Eucharist

Grade 3 Finding God curriculum - Fishers of Men – Church & Holy Spirit

Grade 4 Finding God curriculum- Beatitudes & Ten Commandments

Grade 5 Finding God curriculum- sacraments & Worship

Grade 6 Finding God curriculum - I am Who I am – The Old Testament

Grade 7 Jesus Videos & Chosen – Journey toward Confirmation DVD Series

Grade 8 Chosen – Journey toward Confirmation DVD Series



## **Class Attendance / Absence**

**(708) 361- 9435**

### **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is a key to the success of the Religious Education Program. Updates and important information regarding the program will be sent electronically. Please keep your email address updated with us.

The Catholic Church teaches that we are called to have a communal relationship and a personal relationship with Jesus. Our communal relationship is lived out by attending Mass each Sunday, by being of service to our neighbors, and by loving God and loving our neighbor.

- If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call the religious education office.
- **Each child is expected to attend at least 80% of the classes; which is 16 classes. If your child misses more than 16 classes, then the child will be expected to repeat that religious education grade level.**

## **Preparation for Celebrating Sacraments**

Preparation for the Sacraments is an integral and important part of the Religious Education Program. They are celebrations that mark important phases in a child's faith journey and therefore, parental involvement in the Sacramental preparation of children is of the greatest importance.

- Nurture the spiritual life of the child
- Encourage an active family religious' life
- Regularly attend Mass each week and Holy Days of Obligation
- Participate / attend Parent Information Meetings
- Read parent letters and review take home materials with your child/ren
- Ensure that the child has completed any related requirements as assigned

## **The Story of the Eucharist – Panel**



**THE EUCHARIST IN SCRIPTURE**

**THE MASS YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

**LIVING THE EUCHARIST - CHRIST TRANSFORMS US**

**[HTTPS://OURLADYOFTHEWOODS.ORG/EUCHARISTIC-BANNERS](https://ourladyofthewoods.org/eucharistic-banners)**

### **LEARN MORE:**

**1 – THE VEIL REMOVED MOVIE**

**2 – Scripture**

**3- Living the Eucharist – Sacrament as Family**

**4 – Eucharist holds past, present, future implications**

**5 – Eucharistic Miracles – Carlos Acutis**

**7 – The Role of the Priest**

**8 – The History of the Eucharist**

**9 – Frequently asked questions about the Eucharist**

## **Guidelines for Service Hours**

Grade 6 .....4 hours Minimum; 1 hour in each of the 4 different service hour category.

Grade 7 .....4 hours Minimum; 1 hour in each of the 4 different service hour category.

Grade 8 .....20 hours Minimum; 5 hours in each of the 4 service hour category or 1 service project.

\*\*Students must complete a "Service Hour Sheet" for each act of service.

### **Service Hour Category:**

**Community**– Any "free" service you do as an individual to help out the community in which we live. For example: raking leaves, tutor in afterschool programs, offer services such as mowing, shoveling or babysitting a neighbor, Peace Memorial Village, Orland Food Pantry, Corporal Works of Mercy

**Church** - Any "free" service you do as an individual to help out our Church. For example: serving at Mass, clothing or food drives, Parish Spaghetti dinner, Fish Fry dinner, cleaning up outside – snow shoveling.

**Family** - Any "free" service you do as an individual to helping them – beyond what your normal chores. For example: raking leaves, cutting grass, babysitting for a young child, helping with an elderly family member.

**Liturgy (Mass)** - Any "free" service you do as an individual to help out the Church in which we live. For example: greeter, usher, help with collections, alter server

## **Service Hours Sheet**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Hours completed \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

1 - Service Hour Category: Circle the Category:

**Community**

**Church**

**Family**

**Liturgy (Mass)**

2 - Each student will write/type a reflection paper about their service opportunities. This should be at least 1 page (14 font) and to include:

- Describe the service, what did you do?
- What impact it has had on your lives?
- How does this project fulfill your call to be the body of Christ?

Signature of person in charge \_\_\_\_\_

## **Sacrament of Confirmation Service Project Proposal**

Once you have discerned your gifts, design a service project that uses your gifts or talents. Write a proposal. Give specifics. What do you plan to do? Who will you invite to participate? What supplies will you need? How long will it take to complete? Be sure that you are able to complete your project before Christmas Break. Include any information on your proposal that you think is relevant to the project. Submit your proposal to Mrs. Ericksen no later than Columbus Day.

### Remember:

- Service is based on the example of Christ who came to **SERVE**.
- Your service is not a job to be done or to be paid for, but it is selflessly and lovingly helping those in need.
- You should reflect on your service project and to keep in mind and heart of Christ, fulfill the needs of others, and build up the Christian community.

### Reflective Paper:

- Upon completion, you must include a "Reflection paper" This must be at least 1 page (14 font) including:
  - Their service opportunities – where and how long?
  - Describe the service, what did you do?
  - What impact it had on your life?
  - How does this project fulfill the call to be the body of Christ?
  - What is your spiritual gift?
  - What is the title of your service project?
  - What is your service project?
  - How will your service project benefit others?
  - What supplies will you need?
  - What adult help will you need?

Approval Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director of Religious Education Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **Sacrament of Confirmation: Service Project Proposal**

Here are some examples of how to apply your gifts to a service project.

**Spiritual Gift: Administrative or Leadership** – the gift to work with the Holy Spirit to plan and organize tasks, following on all of the details, seeing a project through from beginning to end.

**Possible projects:** Organize a service project or special event such as a food, toy or coat drive. Find an organization or food pantry, determine what they need the most, make a flier to hand out to your family and friends. Collect the items and find out when to drop them off.

**Spiritual Gift: Creative Ability** – the gift to work with the Holy Spirit to spiritually impact others by way of music, writing, art, drama or craftsmanship, bringing God’s beauty into the world.

**Possible projects:** Create a work of art for an elderly grandparent that lets them know you are thinking of them. Invite your friends to create get – well cards for children at Hope, Lurie Hospitals or Ronald McDonald House.

**Spiritual Gift: Encouragement or Intercession:** The gift to work with the Holy Spirit to affirm, uplift, and restore confidence to others in a way that is personally helpful and promotes growth.

**Possible projects:** Become a mentor to a sixth grade student at your school, form an anti-bully committee and invite your friends to say no to cyber-bullying. Volunteer to help coach younger children in a sport that you play.

**Spiritual Gift: Teaching or Wisdom:** The gift to work with the Holy Spirit to effectively communicate information, ideas and skills, so others learn, grow, and mature as disciples of Christ.

**Possible projects:** Develop a plan to incorporate prayer into your daily routine. Include morning and evening prayer, grace before meals and the Sunday obligation. Take note of how these practices are impacting your life and write that down. Think of a way to share that information with others, so that they too may decide to incorporate these practices.

**These are just a few examples of how to create a service project based upon your individual gifts. I can’t wait to see what you come up with and if you need any help, don’t be afraid to ask your parents, your catechists or Mrs. Ericksen to help you.**