

**St. Mary's Religious Education
Parent Handbook**

Grades 1—8

Effective September 2018

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary's 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. We encourage families to attend the Sunday Liturgy together. Faith formation takes place in the context of participation in the Sunday Mass.

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 parents to attend the Sunday 9:00 a.m. with their younger children. Middle school aged and above young people may prefer to attend the 5:00 p.m. Contemporary Mass of All Ages from September through May. All of our Masses are celebrated with faith and devotion. Attendance at any Mass is always appropriate. Our parish also is engaged in being the hands of Christ in service to others and invites everyone to service.

In Faith + Hope,

Fr. Brian

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

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Pastor

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ST. MARY'S RECTORY CONTACT INFORMATION

**One Church Square
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508-528-0020
508-528-1641 (Fax)
ST. MARY'S CHURCH**

SCHEDULED LITURGIES

Daily Mass

Monday—Friday

7:00 a.m.

Saturday

8:00 a.m.

Sunday Masses

Saturday

4:00 p.m.

Sunday

7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m. (September through May), 10:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m. (September through May)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday

3:00 pm.—3:45 p.m.

Main Church

MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

We, the community of St. Mary, a Roman Catholic Parish of the Archdiocese of Boston, within the Town of Franklin, exist to honor and glorify God.

By imitating the life of his Son, Jesus Christ, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we work for the fulfillment of his kingdom on earth.

We dedicate the gifts and talents unique to each member of the community to continued growth in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

As Christ's disciples we are called to be living examples of his teachings to everyone we encounter in our daily lives. We acknowledge the need for the active involvement of all our members in order to reach our full potential as a Christian Community.

Motivated by the Word of God, sustained by the gifts of the sacraments, enriched by one another, and committed to the mission described above this community pledges:

- To spread the Good news of Jesus Christ announcing his salvation
- To reach out to the needs of the poor, the homeless, the dispossessed, the addicted, and others needing social justice
- To attend to the ongoing faith development of our children, youth, adults, and the unchurched
- To foster an ecumenical spirit and a caring, loving community with our brothers and sisters of all creeds
- To support and encourage Catholic Christian values within the family, the workplace, and society
- To commit ourselves to the elimination of all that impedes the fullest development of each

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM (Grades 1-8)

“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 St. Mary’s Religious Education Program is an essential part of the mission of the parish. The parish supports the parents of the children 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, capable of living life with Catholic values. The program is rooted in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist where the entire parish draws strength from both the Word and Sacraments. The Religious Education Program is intended for the children of our parish who attend schools that do not have formal Religious Education.

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

TEXT BOOKS

St. Mary's Religious Education Program uses *Blessed—First Reconciliation* and *Blessed—First Communion*, by Dynamic Catholic for Grade 1 (First Communion 1) and Grade 2 (First Communion 2).

St. Mary's Religious Education Program uses the Sadlier, Inc. *We Believe* textbooks for Grades 3—6:

Grade 3—*We Are the Church*

Grade 4—*God's Law Guides Us*

Grade 5—*We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments*

Grade 6—*We Are God's People*

Also using Sadlier text books:

Grade 7—*We Live Our Faith As Disciples of Jesus*

Grade 8—*One Faith, One Lord*

Classes are held during the following times:

Sunday A: 8:30 a.m.—9:45 a.m.

Sunday B: 10:00 a.m.—11:15 a.m.

Our Sunday classes meet every other week. However, there are a few times during the year that classes are held back to back. This is to avoid having classes on long weekends and vacation weekends.

Monday: 4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Tuesday: 4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Wednesday: 4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.

Weekday classes are held every week.

ENROLLMENT

All students (new and returning) must be enrolled for the Religious Education Program. The enrollment form is available online (www.stmarysfranklin.org) during the registration period. The cost of tuition is \$115.00/child for Grades 1—8. There is a family discount for three or more children.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism

It is expected that all children enrolled in the Religious Education Program are baptized Roman Catholics. Children who wish to become baptized Roman Catholics may enter the program. Parents must contact the Religious Education Director to arrange time for instruction and preparation for their Baptism. Parents of children in grade 3 and above who have not received the Sacraments of Reconciliation or First Holy Communion must contact the Religious Education Director to arrange time for instruction and preparation to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

Students must complete First Communion 1(usually done in Grade 1) before entering First Communion 2 (usually done in Grade 2) . Preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion is the primary focus of the First Communion 1 and First Communion 2 Curriculum.

CHILD SAFETY CLASSES

The Archdiocese of Boston mandates that every parish implement a prescribed Child Safety Program for Grades 1-8. The Child Safety Program will discuss ways to stay safe at home, with friends, and with adults they may encounter in unfamiliar situations. Our Safety Classes, taught by our Safety Director, Barbara Brunelli, M. Ed, are incorporated into the regular scheduled classes. This will be done directly and indirectly in various ways and modalities within the school year. All questions regarding the Safety Program should be directed to the Religious Education Director.

PROTECTING CHILDREN

All of St. Mary's clergy, staff, and teachers, and volunteers go through a three-part process that focuses on the protection of our children and provides a safe environment for the people we serve:

- The Office for Background Screening performs a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system for all clergy, staff, and volunteers who are 18 years of age and older.

--A prevention and awareness training program is mandatory for all volunteers who are involved with our children. This Program is called "Protecting God's Children" and is administered by the Catholic Risk Retention Group. This class consists of presentations, printed material and videos that focus on the prevention of abuse and the protection of children.

--A "*Code of Ministerial Behavior*" is signed by all clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with the children of St. Mary's Parish. This states that they will uphold Christian values and conduct at all times.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

Children must arrive promptly for the beginning of class. Students will line up in the courtyard area of the school and will be met by Religious Education Staff members. The catechists will meet their students in their classroom. At dismissal the catechists will escort the students back to the courtyard where they will meet their parent/guardian or other adult designee. If the adult has not arrived, the child will stay with the Religious Education Director until the adult arrives. No child will be left alone or allowed to leave without an adult.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to your child's development and learning in the Religious Education Program. We do understand that there may be situations that prevent a child from attending class, such as sickness, an injury, an unavoidable appointment, or a family commitment. However, children are expected to attend every class.

If your child will not be attending class, please call the Religious Education Office (508-528-1450) or email the office at reled.director@stmarysfranklin.org and leave your child's name, grade, and reason for their absence. A member of the Religious Education Staff will be calling the homes of all absent students to verify the child's absence.

Students are not allowed to have more than two unexcused absences each year. Sport teams, club obligations, etc., are not reasons for long extended absences. Classes are held 3—4 days a week and we would be happy to arrange to have your child switch his or her classes to a different day so that they can participate in both. Parents are asked to contact the Religious Education Director to make arrangements for a child who has a long term disability or illness.

RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOR

It is the expectation that children will come to class ready and prepared to learn and to participate in the class discussions in a thoughtful, prayerful, and respectful manner. If a child becomes disruptive, he/she will be asked to leave and must meet with the Religious Education Director to complete the lesson. If the behavior continues, the parent will be asked to accompany the child to class.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Information on students who have health issues, allergies, or are on medications must be noted on the registration form and parents must notify the Religious Education Director of these and any other health issues.

CLASSROOM TREATS

Snack foods and beverages will not be provided for the children. We ask that you not send in food or drinks (except water bottles) as we have many students with allergies, celiac disease and diabetes.

USE OF THE CHURCH

At different times during the year teachers will be taking his/her students over to the church. We will no longer send out notices requesting permission for your child to participate. By registering your children in our program, permission is being given for your children to go to the church with his/her class. They will always be properly supervised and will be back to the school in time for dismissal.

VIDEOS

From time to time, we will incorporate videos into the curriculum. These videos will contain important messages about the Catholic faith or have a very positive lesson to teach the children. Movies used in Religious Education will always be approved by the Religious Education Director and will be rated either "G" or "PG".

CLASS CANCELLATION

In the event of inclement weather, please watch for the cancellation on Channel 5 or www.bostonchannel.com. An email will also be sent out to all parents and the cancellation will be posted to our website www.stmarysfranklin.org. It is very important to be sure we have your most recent email address.

COMMUNICATION

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