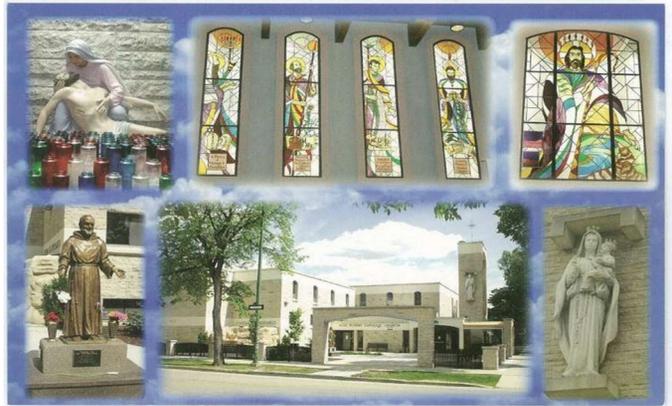




# *Parent Handbook*



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## **Introduction**

As members of the church, we are all given the responsibility of teaching the Catholic faith to our children. As part of our Baptismal promise, we accepted the obligation of training our children in the practice of the Catholic faith.

Parents are always the first teachers in a child's life for all things. Be it the first step, first word or first experience of faith, the parent becomes the role model and teacher.

To assist the parents with the role of faith education, we at Holy Rosary Church provide a faith formation program. Our program is run by volunteers from within our church community. These are lay people with no formal training to teach or in religion, they just want to help you teach your children about our faith. This Handbook was developed to provide families with information and policies about our program.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to guide our Church community, our Families, our program and our children to deepen the faith and continue our walk with Jesus Christ until we are reunited with God the father.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission at Holy Rosary Church in the Catechism program is:

- ✓ To nourish the lives of children and youth by building a strong spiritual foundation.
- ✓ To increase the knowledge of our religious fundamentals and inspire the growth of Sacramental awareness.
- ✓ To develop an awareness of stewardship

We view religious education as a total parish experience that engages not just the child, but also the parents, families, clergy, religious leaders and the parish community in our faith. The program reflects an integrated learning experience comprised of catechetical instruction, Mass attendance, and family faith practice.

Furthermore, we provide preparatory faith teaching for Sacrament of Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Our program exists to assist parents in their responsibility of forming their children in the Catholic faith into which they have been Baptized. This is in accordance of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, page 543, 2252: “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer and all virtues. They have the duty to provide as far as possible for the physical and spiritual needs of their children.”

### **We Believe**

The experience of God in the family enters each person at a fundamentally deep and lasting level. We do not have to import God into a family because he is already there. The family is the first and foremost setting where each of us is formed and encounters the love of the living God. Love is always present in the family and with that love come a natural teaching of God’s love.

We believe that the home is the most influential force in the life of a child and that the family has primary responsibility for forming the faith of children. Our faith formation program is a supplement to the family faith education. Our Catechists are faith filled people called by God to be a witness for Jesus Christ and to share the Good News of our faith to bring others closer to Christ.

### **We Provide**

- ✓ A safe and supportive place for the spiritual growth of each student.
- ✓ Give each student the opportunity to be heard, understood and valued as a child of God.
- ✓ Help each child recognize God’s love in all aspects of life.
- ✓ Learn to value themselves, their family, and their community.
- ✓ Encourage the children to become active members in the missions to help those less fortunate and to promote the mission of giving.

### **5 Simple Guidelines to promote your faith**

1. Attend Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and rest from labour
2. Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year, especially if there is unconfessed serious (mortal) sin.
3. Receive Holy Communion at least during the Easter season.
4. Fast and abstain on days of penance as established by the Church.

5. Provide for the material needs of the Church with time, talent and financial resources according to your ability.

**Corporal Works of Mercy**

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked.
- Shelter the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit the imprisoned
- Bury the Dead

**Spiritual Works of Mercy**

- Counsel the doubtful
- Instruct the ignorant
- Admonish the sinner
- Comfort the sorrowful
- Forgive injuries
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Pray for the living and the dead

**Catechists**

Each year, parents, and other parishioners volunteer to serve as catechists in our Children’s Faith Formation Program. They do a great job sharing their faith with our children. Some teach from the heart, others are helpers and substitutes and others still help behind the scene to promote our program. Each volunteer whether experienced or not is an important part and deserves our gratitude. Participation in a Safe Environment workshop and background checks are REQUIRED. This is to ensure that our children are safe and our volunteers are protected.

**Parents Volunteers**

The success of our program relies upon the support of many volunteers. Some require minimal commitment and others require special talents. By giving of your talent, time and commitment you are being role models to the children. It shows them that the church is more than a building it is in fact a community that grows together. Your help is also a great way to strengthen your own faith and make new connections. Don’t miss an opportunity to give and receive the faith gifts of giving.

## **Policy**

**Registration:** All children in our program must be registered. We offer online line and in person registration. A registration is not considered complete until all required information and payment is received.

**Financial:** No child will be denied Faith formation. If there is a financial burden we encourage families to discuss the situation with the Faith Formation Coordinator or parish priest. The Holy Spirit will guide us to find a workable solution.

**Formation Time:** Our classes meet every Sunday from September to May. Classes begin at 11:00 am and run for 45 to 50 minutes. The class is dismissed so that ALL children can attend Mass with their families to continue the faith education.

Please respect the class start and end times as disruptions of later comers and early departures can cause lost opportunity for faith formation and diminishes the order of the program. It is also disrespectful to the Catechists and other children.

**Participation:** We believe that children will only get something out of our program if they are committed to be part of it. Each child is encouraged to attend all classes and to fully participate in the process. To avoid Boredom is to fully participate and contribute to the class.

## **Take Home and Communication**

**Homework:** While we realize that students have schoolwork and extra activities, it may be necessary to send faith work home to be completed. This may be required as class time is limited and does not allow for extended time to complete some activities. As well some assignments are best done at home as they promote family discussion and family faith development. We encourage parents to work with the child to complete these assignments.

**Communication:** All announcements will be sent home with the children, emailed to registered accounts, posted on our Church website or Church Facebook page. Parents are responsible to ensure they are informed of events, class cancellation, special events or meetings.

Behavior & Discipline: Please speak to your children and ensure they understand that our Catechists are volunteers who give freely of their time to share their faith. They deserve to be treated with respect.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a Christian manner and show respect for all volunteers and other students in our program. NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES SHOULD BE USED IN CLASS UNLESS THEY ARE USED FOR CLASS ACTIVITIES. ANY DEVICE IMPROPERLY USED OR DISRUPTING THE CLASS WILL BE TAKEN AWAY UNTIL THE END OF CLASS.

Disruptive behavior will be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Catechists will remind the child of proper behavior and will expect cooperation from the student.
2. The Coordinator will handle continued disruptive behavior by discussing the matter with the student and if necessary with the parents.
3. In cases of on-going discipline problems, parents will be required to meet with the Coordinator to discuss the situation and find common solutions which could include parents being in the classroom with their child or the child being removed from the program.
4. In cases of extreme situations or where solutions cannot be agreed upon, the Church priest will be consulted and have final power of the matter.

Medication: If your child requires medication, we ask that these be dispensed before or after class. If however this is not possible the medication must be in its original container and clear instructions must be provided.

Allergies: From time to time snacks will be shared in the classroom. If your child has any allergies, we ask that you advise the program and the Catechist of these situations. Also if your child carries an Epi-pen or other allergy medication, please let the Catechist know.

Guests: Children are welcome to bring guests to class. However, they will be required to respect our policies and are subject to the same class rules. If possible please give us prior notice that you are bringing a guest.

## **Curriculum**

Our program uses the Finding God curriculum program printed by Loyola Press. While other material may be used for certain teaching aids, the Finding God program has been approved by the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. Loyola Press offers family activities and

additional online resources on their website. We encourage families to access these free resources to help you help your child with questions and faith learning.

The cost of registration includes all material the child will need during the program. We thrive to provide the best program for the least cost. Crafts is a big part of some classes and it is also a fun creative way for the children to learn. The Catechist may send home notes to ask for certain supplies. Please help with these requests as they do contribute to keeping our program viable.

If you have craft or school supplies that you no longer need, please consider donating them to our program. We are always looking for pens, pencils, crayon, glue and other supplies.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Our program offers preparation for age appropriate Sacraments to children who are Baptize:

First Reconciliation at age 7

First Holy Eucharist at age 7

Confirmation at age 12

Children and Youth in our program must display knowledge of our basic faith such as:

Basic Prayers (Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

General sense of the parts of the Mass (Introductory Rites, Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist, Concluding Rite)

Be able to provide some of our basic beliefs (stories from the bible)

Family interviews will be conducted by the Coordinator. This will be an opportunity for the family and the child to meet with the Coordinator, establish a sense of the child's reasoning ability and form a faith commitment relationship. This will ensure that your child will receive the best formation from our program and ensure that the parents maintain the principal role of faith educators for their children.

Tools will be provided to families of children that are not sufficiently prepared to enter the Sacramental preparation program.

### **Special Sacramental Preparation of Children age 7 to 18**

Children who are Baptized but have missed the age of a Sacrament, can participate in the appropriate preparation of the Sacraments. The Coordinator will determine the best option to meet the child's needs. This could include:

- 1) Being placed in the regular Sacramental Preparation class
- 2) Combination of class and individual instructions
- 3) One on One sessions with a Catechist or Priest
- 4) A combination of the above or other appropriate method to help the child properly prepare for the Sacrament.

All children, youth, sponsors and families are required to attend workshops, meetings and retreats that form part of the Sacramental preparation.

Adults over the age of 18 who are wanting to complete their Sacraments of Initiation should contact the church RCIA program.

Parents that have children who are not yet Baptized, should discuss the matter with the Catechism Coordinator prior to registration.



## **Mass Schedule**

### **Sundays**

**9:00 AM English**

**10:30 AM Italian**

**12:00 PM English**

**4:30 PM English**

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