



OUR LADY OF SORROWS
Religious Education
Family Handbook
2017-2018

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Contact Information

OLS Religious Education Department Office:

Our Lady of Sorrows Church
Religious Education Office
217 Prospect Street
South Orange, NJ 07079

Main Church Number: 973-763-5454

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- The Religious Education Department offices are located in the basement of the church. Go through St. Joseph's Hall to the double doors marked "Parish Offices". After being buzzed in, proceed down the hall to the double doors at the end of the corridor. Go through those doors. The Religious Education Department Offices are located on the left.

Parish Website:

- olschurch.com
- For items relating to the CCD program, including the yearly calendar and registration materials, please click on the "Religious Education" tab on the parish website home page. Information is updated periodically throughout the year.

Staff:

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Parish Mission Statement - Updated Fall 2017

We, the people of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, are a community of Catholic believers and disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ. Brought together in Baptism and nourished by the Eucharist, the source and summit of our faith, we strive, with the help of divine grace, to live the Gospel joyfully, faithfully and sacramentally everyday.

Believing fully in God's divine power and provision, we embrace our mission as disciples to proclaim to all nations the good news that **Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior**, knowing that salvation is for everyone and that in the Holy Spirit all things find unity and harmony. We seek to make the Church "a place of mercy freely given, where **everyone** can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel" (Joy of the Gospel).

Under the patronage of Our Lady of Sorrows, we seek to faithfully serve the Lord through serving others in our community and beyond and strive to do this with humility as we believe that everything we do is for the glory of God.

Program Goals

Our parish catechetical program seeks to support and enable, in a formal manner, the faith life initiated by the parents of the parish of Our Lady of Sorrows. In addition to supporting the Parish Mission Statement of Our Lady of Sorrows, we strive to bring each child in our program into a close personal relationship with Jesus Christ by 1. Promoting Knowledge of the Faith 2. Providing Liturgical Education 3. Supporting Moral Formation 4. Teaching Children How to Pray 5. Preparing Students for Community Life and 6. Preparing Students to Spread the Gospel to Others by Word and Example.

Registration

Our catechetical program offers religious instruction for children in Kindergarten through 8th grade. Registration forms may be found on the parish's website: www.sorrowschurch.com. They can also be obtained by contacting the Religious Education Department. Forms for returning students will be emailed to families each year in the spring upon the conclusion of the previous CCD school year. Returning students must register annually for the program.

At initial registration, families are also asked to provide a copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate if the registrant was baptized at a parish other than Our Lady of Sorrows.

Families must be registered at either Our Lady of Sorrows or St. Joseph's parish in Maplewood in order to attend religious education classes at OLS. Any family wishing to become members of the Our Lady of Sorrows parish can obtain the necessary paperwork at either the Parish Office or the Department of Religious Education Office. Registration is free.

Early registration helps to ensure that your child can be placed on the class day of your choice. We may not be able to accommodate date preferences for those families registering closer to the beginning of the religious education school year.

Class size is dependent upon the number of volunteer catechists that our program has each year. Obviously the more people we have volunteering the smaller our classes can be.

Each year we also ask that each family fill out a new Emergency Information Sheet. Please update your emergency contact information annually. Families are also asked to provide us with any additional information which will help us to provide your child with the safest, most effective religious education experience possible. Please let us know if there are any medical concerns which you think we should be made aware of. Medical information will be kept confidential unless permission to share it with individual catechists or substitutes is given by parents. Additionally, if your child has any learning support needs in school which you think his or catechist should know about, we ask that you share whatever information you think is necessary so that your child's needs can best be met.

Fees

Please see the table below for the fee schedule for the 2017-2018 school year:

Amount Due if Registered Before July 1, 2107	After July 1, 2017
1 Child \$140.00	\$160
2 Children \$230.00	\$250
3 + Children \$315.00	\$350

No child will be refused admission into the program due to financial hardship. Any families who need to pay in installments or who are in need of financial assistance are asked to contact the Religious Education Department. All requests will be kept confidential.

Thinking of becoming a catechist? **Families of our volunteer catechists pay only \$25 for the entire family!**

Schedule of Classes

Monday:

Grades 1 - 6 meet from 3:45 - 5:15 pm, classes originate in the OLS School cafeteria
Grades 7 & 8 meet from 7:00 - 8:30 pm, classes originate in the OLS School cafeteria

Tuesday:

Grades K - 6 meet from 3:45 - 5:15 pm, classes originate in the OLS School cafeteria

Cancellation of Classes

The dates for the CCD year are set in advance and our calendar is based around the South Orange / Maplewood (SOMA) public school calendar as well as the Our Lady of Sorrows School calendar. Sometimes these calendars overlap, sometimes they don't (ie. Easter vacation). A calendar for the 2017-2018 school year can be found at the back of this handbook. It is also posted on the Our Lady of Sorrows Church website.

If the SOMA schools are closed for inclement weather, there will be no religious education classes held on that afternoon or evening and a notification email will be sent to all student households and volunteers by the religious ed department. If a decision is made to cancel classes for any reason (ie. power outage, street closures etc.) separate from the school district, an email will also be sent to all students households and volunteers.

Student Arrival - Afternoon Classes

CCD will begin promptly at 3:45 pm in the OLS cafeteria. Catechists and students should enter the building only through the double doors leading directly into the school cafeteria. All students are asked to arrive on time. Students who arrive prior to the start of the program are asked to wait with their caregiver until their individual catechist arrives. Students may wait on the playground prior to the start of CCD, but must be accompanied by a caregiver as no one from the Religious Ed staff will be available to monitor behavior prior to the start of CCD.

Any parent who needs to have their child arrive at CCD prior to the 3:45 start time on a regular basis should contact the Religious Education Department to make specific arrangements for care.

Student Arrival - Evening Classes

Evening CCD classes will begin at 7:00 pm. Catechists and students should enter the building only through the double doors leading directly into the school cafeteria. All students are asked to arrive on time.

Student Attendance Policy

The Archdiocese of Newark has mandated that each child enrolled in a parish religious education program receive thirty-five hours of instruction during the year. The Our Lady of Sorrows utilizes a spiral curriculum where each grade level builds upon the knowledge obtained the year before. As a result, regular class attendance is expected.

Attendance is taken each week by our catechists. Student attendance is then transferred to each child's permanent record. We understand that children get sick and that scheduling conflicts or transportation issues may affect your child's ability to attend class. We ask, however, that you make every effort to ensure your child's consistent participation in our program. If you know that your child will be absent for several weeks in a row, please contact your child's catechist or the Catechetical Coordinator to learn how to make up any missed material.

Please note that if a child misses 8 or more classes he or she will not receive credit for having completed that grade unless alternate arrangements are made with the Catechetical Coordinator to make up all missed work. The loss of credit may affect your child's ability to receive his or her sacraments in the usual time frame. It is the policy of Our Lady of Sorrows parish that the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are received in the second year of religious education, generally in the second grade. Children must have completed at least one year of formalized religious education and be currently registered at a Catholic School or in a parish religious education program before receiving these Sacraments.

Regular CCD attendance may also affect a player's ability to remain eligible to play for CYO sports teams. The OLS Religious Education Department regularly shares attendance information with CYO program administrators during the sports season.

In addition to on-going attendance in religious education classes, children should also participate regularly in Sunday Mass, Holy Days of Obligation and Reconciliation.

Please make every effort to arrive to CCD on time. This year we will be starting each session with a reading of the previous Sunday's Gospel and a short prayer service in the OLS cafeteria. Parents and caregivers are welcome to stay in

the cafeteria for the opening service. Snack will follow. We understand that the time immediately after school can be very busy and that sometimes lateness cannot be avoided. Just do your best.

Student Dismissal - Afternoon

***Parents of students who have are returning to the program, please pay special attention to the following section**

CCD ends at 5:15 pm. At the end of class, all 1-6 grade catechists will escort their students back to their cafeteria tables from their individual assigned classrooms. **With an increased focus on safety, all students must be signed-out of CCD in the cafeteria by a caregiver unless Religious Education Department staff have received written permission in advance that a particular student is authorized to walk home alone.** Please sign your children out of the program in the cafeteria next to their names on their class's attendance sheet. This new procedure will help the staff ensure that all students are accounted for at the end of each session.

Religious Education Department staff and volunteers will also be at the cafeteria doors reminding students and caregivers of this new dismissal procedure. They will also verify that students are being accompanied out of the building by a caregiver and will act as a back-up system to ensure that students without prior authorization to do so do not leave the premises unattended.

If there are any legal custody decisions affecting the right of any individual to pick your child up from the program, please provide Religious Education Department staff with a copy of the legal decision and a list of specific individuals authorized for pick-up.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and patience.

Student Dismissal - Evening Classes

Evening CCD ends at 8:30 pm. At the end of class, all students must sign themselves out of the building on the attendance sheet before leaving.

Monday evening middle school catechists will wait with their students on the sidewalk across from the parking lot to make sure that every student is picked up in a car or walked home by an adult. Students should not walk home by themselves at that time of the day.

If there are any legal custody decisions affecting the right of any individual to pick your child up from the program, please provide Religious Education Department staff with a copy of the legal decision and a list of specific individuals authorized for pick-up.

Early Dismissal

If you need to pick your child up from CCD before the end of class, please send him or her into CCD with a signed note indicating the new pick-up time and the name of the individual who will be picking your child up early. Students can be met in the cafeteria. Please sign students out on the attendance sheets located on assigned cafeteria tables.

Behavioral Expectations

At Our Lady of Sorrows we aim to treat each other the way that Jesus would want us to: with loving kindness, dignity and respect. The "Golden Rule" should be at the heart of every interaction we have with one another.

Parents are asked to ensure that their children attend classes regularly. They are asked to communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect their child's performance or behavior within the classroom with Religious Education Department staff and their catechist. Parents are also reminded that they have the primary responsibility for the education of their children in the faith and are encouraged to take an active role in their children's learning. Please remember that the catechists in our program are all volunteers who are generously giving their time and talents in service

of the Church and treat them with kindness and respect. The CCD program is always in need of assistance. Any parents wishing to become more involved in our program are encouraged to contact their catechist or Jen Noll.

Students are expected to behave in a Christian manner at all times by showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students. They are expected to attend class regularly and to actively participate in classroom activities and discussions. Students are expected to respect the property of the Our Lady of Sorrows school building and the property of their peers in both the school and the religious education program. The use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited. Students are not allowed be in possession of weapons of any kind.

Catechists are expected to provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that the children in their care can grow in their faith. They are asked to prepare a lesson plan for each class period and to teach the designated curriculum. Catechists should be good role models for their students and are asked to model appropriate Christian behavior at all times.

The Catechetical Program is expected to support families in the faith formation of their children. It will foster a learning environment which provides for mutual respect and reverence for the dignity of each person. The Religious Education Department will provide quality instruction by trained catechists and maintain communication that is regular and informative.



In the classroom, the catechist is primarily responsible for discipline. The catechist will handle all minor discipline problems.

A disruptive child is one who disturbs or interrupts the orderly course of events in the classroom and prevents other members of the class from learning about their faith during a catechetical session. Such behavior includes restlessness, disrespect and rude or inappropriate language and gestures. The definition also extends to acting as a catalyst for another's behavior.

Procedural strategies for disruptive students are listed here in order of action and implementation:

- Preliminary effort by the catechist in the classroom
- Intervention of the Catechetical Coordinator
- Parent notification by the Catechetical Coordinator
- Parent is requested to be in the classroom with their child
- Temporary home study
- Parent/Child visit with the Pastor to discuss improvement plan
- Long term home study

Corporal punishment is defined as any punitive touching (such as pushing, slapping, grabbing) and is strictly forbidden.

Students may not be disciplined by excluding them from the catechist's visual or physical space of supervision (ie. putting a child out in the hall).

Abuse Prevention and Reporting

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse. Department of Religious Education staff members and volunteers will also follow the policies of the Archdiocese of Newark with regard to matters of abuse. All employees and volunteers are required to read and to sign an acknowledgement that they have reviewed the Archdiocese of Newark's policy *Prevention of Abuse of Minors; Guidelines for Working with Minors, and Reporting of Incidents, Allegations and/or Concerns*. Anyone wishing to read this policy can access it on the Archdiocese's website at www.rcan.org.

All of our catechists and volunteers working closely with children are required to attend the program *Protecting God's Children*. This training session makes participants aware of the signs of child sexual abuse, the methods and means by which offenders commit abuse, and the five steps one can use to prevent child sexual abuse. Trained facilitators incorporate policies and procedures into the training- defining child sexual abuse, addressing the reporting of child sexual

abuse, the screening and selection of employees and volunteers, and victim advocacy. Recertification is required after a period of three years.

All volunteers also complete a volunteer application and submit to a criminal background check by a credit reporting agency.

Medical

All student medical and emergency contact information will be kept on-site in the cafeteria with Department of Religious staff during regular CCD hours. This medical information will remain confidential unless permission to share it has been given by the parent.

Department of Religious Education Staff are certified in the administration of First Aid and CPR. Any student in need of medical attention will be directed to staff members for assistance.

Catechists and staff members in the CCD program do not dispense or administer medication to students. Additionally, students are not allowed to self-administer medication. In cases of great need, if a child needs to receive any type of medication during CCD time, arrangements must be made by the parent, in advance and in writing with Department of Religious Education staff.

If your child has allergies which require the use of an Epi-Pen, please provide Department of Religious Education staff with written permission authorizing the administration of an Epi-Pen and to make arrangements for the safe storage of Epi-Pens during CCD.

Please make sure that your emergency contact information is up to date. Please inform the Religious Education Department of any changes.

Snack for Afternoon Classes

Unlike past years there will no longer be a program-wide snack assigned for each week. Catechists are asked to assign a different student to bring in a snack and a beverage each week for the entire class as well as any necessary paper goods like cups and napkins. It is up to the catechists' discretion if they wish to provide specific snack recommendations. Please be on the lookout for Snack Reminders or catechist emails regarding snack.

A few general food requests though:

- All snacks should be nut-free
- Families of students with any food allergies to either check the label of the snacks provided or to send in a snack from home
- Please provide healthy food choices (fruits, vegetables, crackers, pretzels etc)
- Please provide a beverage to go along with your snack (water or 100% fruit juices are preferred)
- Please save sweet treats for celebrations like birthdays or holiday celebrations
- Please refrain from bringing in sweets during Lent

Caregivers of younger students are asked to assist catechists in setting up snacks on their child's assigned snack day.

The Religious Ed Department will have back-up snacks and drinks on hand in the Resource Room if needed.

Snack for Evening Classes

Given the close proximity to the dinner hour, there is no designated snack time for evening CCD students. If middle school catechists wish to incorporate a snack into their class time, however, they may do so at their discretion.

Social Media / Publicity Policy

Religious Education Department staff and catechists are not allowed to post the likeness of any student on social media without the express written consent of his or her custodial parents. Any catechists wishing to use a student's likeness for classroom purposes must first have a publicity waiver signed by a parent.

Cell Phone Policy

In general, students should refrain from using cell phones, except in case of emergency, during class time. It is up to the individual catechist to determine the specific cell phone policy for his or her class. If the use of cell phones becomes a problem, your child may be asked to place his or her cell phone in a basket at the start of class. Students may use their cell phones at the beginning or end of class to communicate with parents or caregivers.

Curriculum

All students will have access to a workbook for their use during class.

The CCD program will be using the Loyola Press "*Sunday Connection*" resource materials for its beginning liturgical services. Families wishing to delve a little deeper into each Sunday's Gospel may also want to use this feature to enrich their family's discussions. You can access this material by visiting www.loyolapress.com. Click on the "Catholic Resources" tab and then "Liturgical Year". The "Sunday Connection" button will lead you to this great Gospel resource.

Kindergarten

The basis for the OLS CCD Kindergarten program is Loyola Press's "**God Loves Us**". This book is "designed to nurture and enrich the faith and spirituality of children. With abundant opportunities for prayer, developmentally appropriate lessons as well as Scripture, saints, family resources, colorful art, and engaging music".

Grades 1-6, 8

The OLS CCD program uses the "**Christ our Life**" (COL) book series for grades 1-6 and 8. The COL series uses a spiral curriculum "revolving around the four fundamental themes of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: Creed, Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer. Catholic social teachings are woven into every grade level." Scripture, doctrine, prayer, and Church teachings are integrated into every lesson. The latest version of the series focuses on "The New Evangelization" and seeks to help children to share the light of Christ with others. Loyola Press, publishers of the COL curriculum, has a website with many additional resources available for families as well as chapter overviews for each grade. Check it out. Additional information about the *Christ our Life* series can be found at: www.loyolapress.com/christourlife.

The following topics are highlighted in each of the following grades:

K:	God Loves Us	4th Grade: God Guides Us - Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes
1st Grade:	God is Good - Salvation	5th Grade: We Worship - The Liturgy of the Mass
2nd Grade:	God Cares - Eucharist and Reconciliation	6th Grade: God Calls a People - The Old Testament
3rd Grade:	We Believe - The Catholic Faith	8th Grade: The Church Then and Now - Holy Spirit and Church History

Grade 7

The OLS CCD program uses a different book series, published by Our Sunday Visitor, for Grade 7: "**Faith Fusion: Knowing, Loving, and Serving Christ in the Catholic Church**". Faith Fusion aims to "bring the Catholic faith to life in words and images, and provides a complete review of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for middle school students. At the heart of every lesson is a clear and consistent focus on Scripture and Tradition, connected to the students' lives through prayer, reflections, activities, and stories of faith lived in the example of saints and other holy people. Throughout each lesson in Faith Fusion, the focus is on providing a direct connection between the student's life and the teachings of the Church for a lifelong foundation of faith and relationship with Christ. Faith Fusion provides a complete immersion into the Faith by also presenting the Church's Social Teachings, beliefs and practices, traditional prayers, Church history highlights, and much more."

Additional information about the Grade 7 curriculum can be found on the Our Sunday Visitor's website: www.osv.com. Search for "Faith Fusion".

ACRE Exam

The Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) is an integrated, multi-level survey instrument (not a standardized test) developed by the National Catholic Education Association. It is designed to provide parish, school and diocesan religious educators with valuable information on the participants' knowledge of the faith, liturgy and sacraments, moral formation, prayer, Christian community, missionary spirit. Information regarding participants' religious beliefs, attitudes and practices; and perceptions of themselves, their parish community and their school or parish religious education program is also gathered.

This exam is administered to all 5th and 8th grade students (including homeschooled students) during the second half of the year.

Service Projects

There are two OLS CCD program-wide service projects:

- OLS Food Pantry - The CCD program will offer support for the food pantry throughout the year. Families will be encouraged to drop off non-perishable food items in a collection box. Students will also be able to practice stewardship by participating in a coin collection for the food pantry. Additionally, a food drive will be held in November to help the food pantry in the creation of Thanksgiving dinner baskets. Students in the program are asked to bring in instant mashed potatoes, stuffing mix, sweet potatoes, corn and green beans based on their grade level.
- OLS CCD Christmas Service project - Each year the CCD program will work in conjunction with the OLS School to create Christmas "goodie bags" for homebound members of the OLS community. Students are asked to bring in specific small holiday gift items based on their grade level.

Catechists are also encouraged to engage their students in additional meaningful, age-appropriate classroom service projects if such activities fit into their lesson plans.

Communication

Between Catechists and Families:

Each catechist will receive contact information for the students in his or her class. Catechist communication regarding individual classroom happenings varies in frequency and type depending upon the catechist. If you have any questions or concerns about what's happening in class, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's individual catechist.

Between the Religious Education Department and Families:

The Religious Education Department uses email as its primary form of communication with families. From time to time, paper flyers for upcoming events and service projects will also be used to publicize activities and to provide snack reminders. If you need to get in touch with Religious Education Department staff for any reason, please use the contact information provided at the beginning of this handbook or see Jen Noll or Colleen McDonald after CCD. You can also schedule an appointment to speak with us in the office.

Homeschooling Policy

The Church has long recognized the role parents have played in bearing the primary responsibility for the education of their children. At Baptism, parents accept the serious responsibility for the formation of their children in faith. Indeed, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (#2223) states that, "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by *creating a home* where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for *education in the virtues*." Thus, those parents who desire to be both the informal and formal catechists of their children have the ability to do so through the OLS homeschooling program.

The National Directory for Catechesis states that, "If Catholic parents choose to provide catechesis for the children in their home, that catechesis must be both complete and authentic...Parents who choose to be not only the primary educators of their children but also their catechists must adhere to all guidelines for catechists as outlined by the diocesan bishop." To that end, parents and students participating in the OLS homeschooling program will:

- Be provided with the same USCCB approved curriculum for their studies that is used in the OLS CCD program
- Be provided with information about how they can participate in additional community, service and faith formation opportunities open to other children of the parish
- Have access to the same resources for lesson planning and preparation as students in the OLS CCD Program
- Be presented with opportunities for adult continuing education and certification offered by the Archdiocese and the parish

Families wishing to participate in the OLS homeschool program must register their children with the OLS Department of Religious Education. The fee schedule is the same as the OLS CCD program. Please see the “Fees” section on page 3.

According to the Archdiocese of Newark’s policy governing parish homeschooling programs “children who are catechized in the home-school setting should be interviewed by the pastor or his delegate to evaluate their progress and insure that a thorough and complete catechesis is being provided.” (*Catechetical Administrative Manual* section 923.00) In order to ensure that a timely and thorough catechesis is being maintained, members of the OLS homeschooling program are asked to:

- Provide Religious Education Department staff with completed worksheets (or online chapter reviews) after the first of the year and at the end of the school year
- Schedule a year-end meeting with the OLS Catechetical Coordinator in May or June 2018 to discuss both the homeschooling process and the key material pertaining to the student’s specific grade level in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the catechesis being provided in the home
- Take the ACRE exam (applies only to 5th and 8th grade students)

Sacramental Preparation

According to the regulations of Archdiocese of Newark, a child must receive the sacraments in their home parish (the parish in which his or her family is registered). This is true for all children- including those who attend Catholic schools.

In order to register for the preparation of the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, the baptized children of OLS must have received at least one previous year of formal religious instruction *and* be currently enrolled in a religious education program. Traditionally, these Sacraments are celebrated for children in second grade. So, in order to make these Sacraments at the traditional time of second grade, a student needs to be enrolled in religious education classes beginning in 1st grade. Students must also meet the attendance requirements for 1st and 2nd grade in order to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in 2nd grade. Both the child and the parent(s) should be actively participating in the Sunday liturgy and parish life. Enrollment for both of these Sacraments takes place each fall at the first of two required parent information meetings.

In accordance with guidelines from the Archdiocese, preparations for First Reconciliation must take place before First Eucharist. Preparation for each Sacrament must be separate and distinct.

First Reconciliation

“The preaching of Jesus Christ begins with the words: ‘Reform your lives and believe in the good news.’ (Mark 1:15) In response to this call Christians accept the good news of God’s love for them and seek to cultivate a spirit of conversion and repentance throughout their lives...The Sacrament of Penance celebrates the reality of our ongoing conversion and our fundamental reconciliation with God.” (*Archdiocese of Newark, Catechetical Administrative Manual, section 0580*)

The Our Lady of Sorrows sacramental preparation program for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is, in keeping with the acknowledgement that parents are the primary catechists of their children, a home-based course of study. Parents must attend a **mandatory** meeting in the fall. An overview of the Sacrament will be given at this meeting along with an explanation of the specific policies and procedures for reception of the Sacrament. First Reconciliation workbooks and worksheets will also be distributed at this meeting. Please mark your calendars now with not only this meeting, but with all of our important First Reconciliation dates.

Parents have the option of attending one of two scheduled First Reconciliation parent meetings this year:

- **Wednesday evening, October 4, 2017 at 7:00 pm**, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church
OR
- **Thursday afternoon, October 5, 2017 at 1:00 pm**, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church

Our parish uses the Loyola Press published curriculum **God's Gift: Reconciliation** for its home-based course of study. Students receive a workbook with stickers. This book "captures children's hearts and minds with ample learning opportunities. Scripture and doctrine are foundational to the program, as is prayer, which is offered throughout each chapter and helps young learners develop a prayer relationship with God. Lessons are explored through reading, conversation, prayer, and fun-filled activities that appeal to all learning styles. Each chapter follows a four-part structure - Engage, Explore, reflect, Respond - that fully involves both the heart and the mind. Scripture stories and links to Scripture enrich the lesson and connect children to the Bible. Prayers - a fundamental feature of this program - are presented in multiple forms and with child-friendly text."

The registration fee for First Reconciliation for the 2017-2018 school year is \$55.

All children making their First Reconciliation are invited to attend the First Reconciliation Inscription Mass for a special blessing. This year's Inscription Mass will be held on: **Sunday, October 15, 2017 at the 9:30 Mass with Children.**

Students will have approximately two months to complete their home-based course of study for First Reconciliation. Parents may find it helpful to set aside a special time each week to work with their child on his or her book in an unhurried, prayerful manner. Families are provided with the magazine "*God's Gift Together*" which contains articles, lesson plans and tips for making this time of preparation more meaningful for everyone involved. Additional resources for families can also be found at the Loyola Press website: www.loyolapress.com/godsgift. **Parents and students** should bring their completed coursework with them to the **mandatory** First Reconciliation Retreat.

This year the First Reconciliation Retreat will be held on: **Saturday morning, December 2, 2017 at 8:45 am - 12:00 pm in the Upper and Lower Church.**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on: **Saturday morning, December 9, 2017 at 10:00 am in the Upper Church.**

First Eucharist

"As people of God, we are privileged to come to the table of the Lord and be nourished with Christ, the Bread of Life. We celebrate the sacred meal which Jesus gave to His Church on the night of the Last Supper. The Eucharist is the heart of Christian life." (*Archdiocese of Newark, Catechetical Administrative Manual, section 0571*)

The Our Lady of Sorrows sacramental preparation program for the Sacrament of First Eucharist is also a home-based course of study. Please note that registration materials for First Eucharist are given out at the fall parents meeting for First Reconciliation so that parents can review their calendars and select one of four offered dates the works best for their family's schedule. Parents must also attend a First Eucharist **mandatory** meeting in the winter. An overview of the Sacrament will be given at this meeting along with an explanation of the specific policies and procedures for reception of the Sacrament. First Eucharist workbooks and worksheets will also be distributed at this meeting. Please mark your calendars now with not only this meeting, but with all of our other important First Eucharist dates.

Parents have the option of attending one of two scheduled First Eucharist parent meetings this year:

- **Wednesday evening, January 31, 2018 at 7:00 pm**, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church
OR
- **Thursday afternoon, February 1, 2018 at 1:00 pm**, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church

Our parish uses the Loyola Press published curriculum **God's Gift: Eucharist** for its home-based course of study. All students receive a workbook with stickers similar to the one used to prepare for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation.

All children making their First Eucharist are invited to attend the First Eucharist Inscription Mass for a special blessing. This year's Inscription Mass will be held on: **February 11, 2018 at 9:30 Mass with Children**

Students have a little under two months to complete their home-based course of study for First Eucharist. **Parents and students** should bring their completed coursework with them to the **mandatory** First Eucharist Retreat.

This year the First Eucharist Retreat will be held on: **Saturday morning, March 24, 2018 at 8:45 am - 12:00 pm in the Upper and Lower Church.**

There are four dates in 2018 for the celebration of First Eucharist:

- Saturday evening, April 28, 2018 at 5:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Wednesday evening, April 25, 2018 at 5:15 pm, Upper Church
- Saturday evening, May 5, 2018 at 5:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Wednesday evening, May 2, 2018 at 5:15 pm, Upper Church
- Sunday afternoon, May 6, 2018 at 12:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Tuesday evening, May 1, 2018 at 5:30 pm, Upper Church *note start time difference
- Saturday evening, May 12, 2018 at 5:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Wednesday evening, May 9, 2018 at 5:15 pm, Upper Church

Right to Amend:

This family handbook is a primary means of communication and is meant to provide you with helpful information. It is not meant to include all the rules and guidelines for the Archdiocese of Newark or the Our Lady of Sorrows parish. The OLS Religious Education Program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Families will be advised in writing if changes are made to the information contained herein as soon as practicable.

**CCD Calendar
2017-2018**

MONDAY	TUESDAY
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September 25 (Opening Day)	September 26 (Opening Day)
October 2 (Opening Paraliturgy in Chapel; grades 1-6)	October 3 (Opening Paraliturgy in Chapel; grades 1-6)
October 16	October 10
October 23	October 17
October 30	October 24
November 6	November 14
November 13	November 28
November 20	December 5
November 27	December 12 (Reconciliation in Church for Advent; grades 3-6)
December 4 (Advent Evening of Reflection in Church; grades 7&8)	January 9
December 11 (Reconciliation in Church for Advent; grades 3-6)	January 16
January 8	January 23
January 22	January 30
January 29	February 6
February 5	February 13
February 12	February 27
February 26 (Lenten Evening of Reflection; grades 7&8)	March 6
March 5	March 13 (Reconciliation in Church for Lent; grades 2-6)
March 12 (Reconciliation in Church for Lent; grades 2-6)	March 20
March 19	March 27
March 26	April 17
April 16	April 24
April 23	May 1 (Closing Mass in Church; grades K-6)
April 30 (Closing Mass in Church; grades K-6)	

Other Important Dates

9:30 Mass with Children

- October 15, 2017 (at First Reconciliation Inscription Mass)
- November 12, 2017
- February 11, 2018 (at First Eucharist Inscription Mass)
- April 15, 2018
- June 17, 2018 (Father's Day)

Epiphany Pageant

- Practice for Grades 4 through 8 - Main Roles
Wednesday Evening, January 3, 2018, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm, Upper Church
- Practice for Grades K through 8
Friday Evening, January 5, 2018, 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm, Upper Church
- Pageant
Sunday Afternoon, January 7, 2018, meet in St. Joseph's Hall 3:00 pm, Pageant begins at 4:00pm
- Pizza Social, following pageant, St. Joseph's Hall

First Reconciliation

- MANDATORY Reconciliation Meeting for Parent(s)
Wednesday evening, October 4, 2017 at 7:00 pm, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church
OR
Thursday afternoon, October 5, 2017 at 1:00 pm, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church
- Inscription Mass
October 15, 2017 at 9:30 am, Mass with Children
- MANDATORY First Reconciliation Retreat for Parent(s) and Child
Saturday morning, December 2, 2017 at 8:45 am - 12:00 pm, Upper and Lower Church
- Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday morning, December 9, 2017 at 10:00 am, Upper Church

First Eucharist

- MANDATORY Eucharist Meeting for Parent(s)
Wednesday evening, January 31, 2018 at 7:00 pm, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church
OR
Thursday afternoon, February 1, 2018 at 1:00 pm, Ann Seton Room - Lower Church
- Inscription Mass
February 11, 2018 at 9:30 am, Mass with Children
- MANDATORY First Eucharist Retreat for Parent(s) and Child
Saturday morning, March 24, 2018 at 8:45 am - 12:00 pm, Upper and Lower Church
- Sacrament of First Eucharist
 - Saturday evening, April 28, 2018 at 5:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Wednesday evening, April 25, 2018 at 5:15 pm, Upper Church
 - Saturday evening, May 5, 2018 at 5:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Wednesday evening, May 2, 2018 at 5:15 pm, Upper Church
 - Sunday afternoon, May 6, 2018 at 12:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Tuesday evening, May 1, 2018 at 5:30 pm, Upper Church *note start time difference
 - Saturday evening, May 12, 2018 at 5:30 pm Mass, Upper Church
Rehearsal - Wednesday evening, May 9, 2018 at 5:15 pm, Upper Church