



Welcome to the OLS CCD Remote Learning Program **(Subject to change)** September - December 2020

“Evangelizing means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself.” (On Evangelization in the Modern World, no 24) Christ’s love is with us always and it is our Christian duty to make that love known *“in every human situation”* - including a global pandemic. Indeed, it is in times of greatest distress and challenge that the certainty of Christ’s abiding love, justice and mercy is perhaps most comforting. Our children need to hear the message of the Good News during these turbulent times more than ever before, so we thank you for enrolling your child in the Our Lady of Sorrows CCD program.

This fall, the OLS CCD program is putting the “E” in E-vangelization and instruction will be largely remote through the end of 2020. While there are numerous challenges presented in converting an “in-person” CCD program into a virtual one, it is our fervent hope that through the partnership formed this fall between the parish, catechists and families that we can continue the vital work of bringing Christ’s message of peace and love to our children.

The Religious Education Department at Our Lady of Sorrows is here to make sure you have everything you need to continue the faith formation of your children from the safety of your home. We look forward to working with you to help your child encounter Christ.



Maintaining Contact with the Parish

While the OLS parish offices remain closed as a result of the pandemic, the Religious Education Department for Grades K-8 is still here to help you. Email is probably the best way to reach us, but calls are being forwarded from our OLS phone numbers. If at any point during the year you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Religious Education Department staff by phone or email. Our contact information is as follows:

Jen Noll, Catechetical Coordinator, jennollols@gmail.com, 201-345-7312 *(not forwarded yet)*

Colleen McDonald, Administrative Assistant, sorrowschurch@gmail.com, 201-645-6309

During these ever-changing times, it is also important to remain connected to the larger parish. The OLS website as well as the parish FaceBook page and YouTube channel are also great ways to stay abreast of new, parish-wide information:

Website: olschurch.com, great for basic church information such a staff and ministry contacts and the latest bulletin

Facebook: Our Lady of Sorrows Church: South Orange, NJ, great for the most up-to-date parish-wide information and updates (note- there are several different Our Lady of Sorrows pages - you want the one with around 800 members)

Youtube: Our Lady of Sorrows South Orange, great for watching the 10:00 am Mass live



Our CCD program offers religious instruction for children in Kindergarten through 8th grade. This year registration will take place in several phases. The initial Google Forms registration form will request all of the basic student information. Even though we are beginning our year remotely, we ask that you please include appropriate medical and learning data now so that we don't need to recollect it in the event that we move to in-person learning. Once families have completed the online registration form (found in the weekly e-newsletter and on the parish website under the "Religious Education" tab) they will be emailed separately for payment information.

Once registered, families will receive a second registration form where they will be able to indicate the type of instruction they would like for the fall: parent-led or catechist-led. Families requesting catechist-led instruction will also be asked their day preference for Zoom Conferences. (Please note - while all grades will be offered this fall, due to catechist availability we may not be able to offer all grades on both Mondays and Tuesdays as per usual.) Families wishing to lead their child's religious instruction themselves will continue to be allowed to do so as part of our official homeschooling program.

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, please email Colleen McDonald at: sorrowschurch@gmail.com or you can download a new parishioner registration at: olschurch.com

All families new to the program are asked to provide a copy of their child(ren)'s Baptismal Certificate if the registrant was baptized at a parish other than Our Lady of Sorrows. Returning students must register annually for the program.

The fees for the upcoming CCD year remain unchanged. This year we have removed the "late fee" as we know that families may need a little more time evaluating their schedules and learning options.



Please see the table below for the fee schedule for the 2020 - 2021 school year:

Register Before August 15, 2020

1 Child - \$140

2 Children - \$230

3+ Children - \$315

Register After August 15, 2020

1 Child - \$170

2 Children - \$260

3+ Children- \$345

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 Colleen McDonald. All requests will be kept confidential.

Families of our volunteer catechists pay a reduced fee for CCD. "Lead" catechists pay only \$25 and 'support' teachers pay only \$45 *for the entire family*. Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering.



Program Goals

Though the format of our CCD program has changed, its goals remain the same. 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.



Parent-Led Catechesis (aka: The Traditional Homeschooling Program)

Parents are the first and foremost educators in matters of the faith. In the past, many families have chosen to homeschool their children for CCD for the flexibility afforded to them by not being attached to a particular class day and time. Other parents simply enjoy being able to also act as their child's catechist and grow their own faith along with their child's. Under the "new" CCD format, parents who still wish to act as their child's catechist will be allowed to continue to do so. It should be noted, however, that the program will be a little more structured this year:

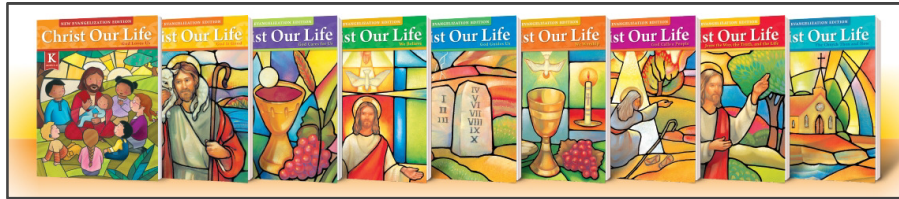
- As in the past, families entirely new to the homeschooling program will be asked to speak with Fr. Brian so that they have a better idea of what homeschooling truly entails.
- Families will be asked to use the Google Classroom platform so that staff members can monitor student progress and participation.
- Families will be asked to keep to the same chapter schedule as the rest of the CCD program.
- End-of-the-year exit interviews will continue to be required.



CCD Kits

All of our CCD students will be given everything they need for a successful start of their learning year. Every student will receive a drawstring bag so that they can keep track of their CCD materials at home. Should we be able to meet in person once again in 2021, students will be asked to keep their materials separate from those of other students and will thus need to bring their CCD kits to and from the OLS School with them. Each kit will contain a *Christ our Life* student workbook, prayer space starters (napkin coverings, cross, Our Lady of Sorrows prayer card, tea light) and folder with program information and any grade specific handouts or crafts. We urge you to ask your child to keep all of their CCD things together in their bag so that nothing gets lost amidst all of their other school materials.

CCD Kits will be distributed on Sunday, September 20th beginning from 9:00 - 12:00. Please make every effort to pick your child's kit up during his or her designated time slot.



Curriculum

The OLS CCD program uses the “*Christ Our Life*” (COL) book series for grades K-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.” 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. Visit www.loyolapress.com/christourlife for more information.

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

Kindergarten:	God Loves Us	5th Grade:	We Worship - The Liturgy of the Mass
1st Grade:	God is Good - Salvation	6th Grade:	God Calls a People - The Old Testament
2nd Grade:	God Cares - Eucharist and Reconciliation	7th Grade:	Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life
3rd Grade:	We Believe - The Catholic Faith	8th Grade:	The Church Then and Now and the Holy Spirit
4th Grade:	Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes		



Please be sure to check your inbox regularly for our weekly E-newsletter. Our newsletter is filled with important program updates and supplemental faith-based resources. It is sent out every Wednesday via Vertical Response. Mrs. McDonald also sends out a link to the newsletter on Fridays to all of our gmail users who sometimes find that the newsletter ends up in their SPAM mailboxes. Additionally, our newsletter can always be found under the “Religious Education” tab on the OLS website: olschurch.com. This year it will also be loaded into your child’s Google Classroom “Stream” each week.

This year in particular we urge you to make sure you read our newsletter frequently to be kept abreast of all CCD and sacramental preparation updates.



CCD “Pods”

Some families have expressed a desire to have their kids work together on CCD. If a family would like to “pod” with another family they are welcome to, but it will be up to individual families to organize. The early Christians met together in one another’s homes so there is a great precedent for the efficacy of small group meetings. Our early brothers in the faith, however, weren’t meeting in the time of a global pandemic. Ultimately it will be up to families based upon their comfort levels whether or not they want to “pod” with one another. Podding families also agree to accept any possible risk associated with coming in contact with non-family members.



The current remote learning plan extends from September through December 2020. At the end of the calendar year, a plan for the rest of the school year will be announced based on the restrictions in place for schools at that time. There will be 11 weeks of remote instruction through the end of 2020:

Week of:	Chapter	Type of Catechist Instruction
September 20th	One	"Live" 40-minute Zoom Conference
September 27th	Two	10-minute Recorded Instruction
October 4th	Three	"Live" 40-minute Zoom Conference
October 11th	Four	10-minute Recorded Instruction
October 18th	Five	10-minute Recorded Instruction
October 25th	Six	10-minute Recorded Instruction
November 1st	NO CCD	NO CCD - Vote!
November 8th	Seven	"Live" 40-minute Zoom Conference
November 15th	Eight	10-minute Recorded Instruction
November 22nd	NO CCD	NO CCD - Thanksgiving!
November 29th	Nine	"Live" 40-minute Zoom Conference
December 6th	Ten	10-minute Recorded Instruction
December 13th	Eleven	10-minute Recorded Instruction

In addition to the eleven weeks of instruction through the end of 2020, there will be four in-person, outdoor CCD "Events". These "events" will seek to maintain your child's feeling of attachment to the parish and the CCD program as a whole by providing them with some "face time" and opportunities for meaningful interaction. These events will take place outdoors. Participants will be required to wear masks and maintain proper social distancing.

Date	Event Description
Sunday, September 20th	Catechist "Meet and Greet" / CCD Kit Pick-up - Families can meet their catechists during the designated time slot for their child's grade while picking up their materials for the year.
Saturday, October 17th	Living Rosary - The month of October is dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary (the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is October 7th). Your family can help make this devotion a part of your lives by participating in our outdoor living rosary.
Sunday, November 1st	All Saints' Day Walk-a-Thon - Dress up as your favorite saint and help our parish raise money for the St. Vincent de Paul Society which provides economic assistance to local individuals in need.
Sunday, November 29th	Advent Service Project TBD



Our remote CCD program is administered through Google Classroom. Google Classroom will enable us to provide students with appropriate grade-based content while also allowing us to track student progress and participation.

Each student will need a gmail account in order to participate in the remote learning program. Each family will be asked to create a unique gmail and password for use in this year's religious education program for each child. (Students can use parent accounts, but please be aware that you may be receiving more emails than you expect as Google Classroom sends out an email every time an update is made to a Google Classroom class you have signed up for.)

Your child's Google "Stream" contains all of the latest CCD program updates - be sure to check it out. A link to our weekly newsletter will be uploaded weekly as well as a video recording of our weekly Prayer Service and Gospel Reading corresponding to the Sunday gospel. Additionally, you can also locate the link to the Zoom Conference being offered for your child's grade in their "streams" as well.

Your child's Google "Classwork" is largely organized by chapter. Each chapter has two separate sections: one for parents and one for students.

Parent Section - While our catechetical staff is here to direct student learning, some additional responsibility for the faith-based education of our students will fall on families this year. In order to assist you in supporting your child's learning (or, in the case of our parent-led homeschoolers, leading your child's learning), each chapter has some built-in supports:

- **At Home "Teacher's" Manual** - The manual is a short, step-by-step guide to leading a chapter lesson from start to finish. It directs parents about how to start, when you have your child read aloud, what questions to ask them to start a discussion - all of the basics you might need to help your child work through the chapter. The discussion questions are a great way to reinforce chapter concepts and to help you gauge your child's attitudes and opinions on a variety of topics that might not come up in everyday family conversation. Give it a try!
- **Study Guide** - This guide contains all of the main points to be conveyed in each chapter. It's the highlight reel or "Cliff's Notes" version of the chapter. Take a quick look at it before you start so that you can be sure you know the main ideas before beginning or use it after you finish your lesson as a checklist to see if you've hit all the major points.
- **Key Terms** - Certain words have very specific definitions when they are used in the context of the Catholic faith. Be sure to look at the key terms for each unit so that you are certain that you are using the vocab word correctly.

Student Section - Students in grades 1-8 have two items "assignments" for each chapter:

- **Loyola Press Online Chapter Reviews** - You no longer need to go hunting the Loyola Press website to locate the chapter assessments for your child's grade and chapter - just click the Online Chapter Review assignment and complete the chapter review. Follow the instructions listed to submit your results. **Completion of the Online Review counts toward student attendance.**
- **Video and Short Answer Response** - One of the benefits of remote instruction is that it's easier to show kids appropriate video content that corresponds with the information contained in each chapter. Short videos have been added for each chapter to help supplement the student workbook. Please have your child watch the video and respond briefly to the question prompt. **Completion of the short answer response counts toward student attendance.**
- **Catechist Added Content** - Catechists may add additional background material, coloring sheets, crafts etc. to your child's "classwork". **Completion of these items is highly recommended, but will not count toward student attendance.**

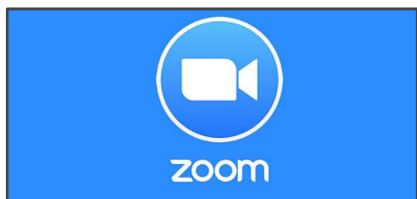


Student attendance and participation will be monitored via Google Classroom. The Archdiocese of Newark mandates that students in its religious education programs receive thirty-five hours of instruction each year. This is clearly a difficult standard to access in a remote program without the use of some sort of outside tracking tool. Students will be marked “present” each week when they have completed the two “assignments” in Google Classroom for the corresponding chapter: the Loyola Press Online Chapter Review and short answer video response. At the end of the year, student attendance, based upon this submission of student work in Google Classroom will be transferred to each child’s permanent record.

We understand that children get sick, families travel and life, in general, can be rather unpredictable these days. If your child misses a week of instruction, we ask that you work with them to complete any missing chapters as soon as possible. Recorded catechist instruction should add a level of flexibility to most families schedules.

If a child has 5 or more incomplete chapter weeks for the year, he or she will not receive credit for having completed that grade unless alternate arrangements are made with the Catechetical Coordinator to make up the 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.

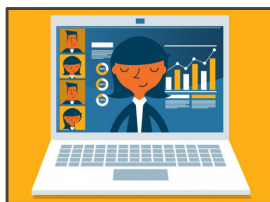


While catechists will not be taking attendance on Zoom calls, we encourage you to make every effort to have your child attend the monthly Zoom Conferences with their classmates. In general, Zoom conferences are scheduled for the first CCD class of the month. They will be approximately 40-minutes long. We will try to stagger the Zoom times so that families with multiple children in the remote program have a better chance of not having multiple children on a device at the same time. **Zoom times tbd.** Links to the Zoom Conferences for each grade will be added to your child’s Google Classroom “Stream”.

For student online safety and the maintenance of proper online behavior, students are asked to comply with the Archdiocese of Newark’s Online Behavior Policy (attached). If two catechists with Protecting God’s Children certification cannot be on the Zoom conference at the same time, the Zoom will be recorded in order to maintain parish compliance with Safe Environment policies.

The Zoom calls are a great way to maintain a connection with your child’s catechist, classmates and the parish in general. They will also help draw your child’s attention to the main points of the lessons being presented for the month. There’s a lot of material to cover, so the time is sure to go by quickly! Please try to log into your child’s Zoom on time. **In order to comply with Protecting God’s Children policies for safe online interactions with adults, families will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing catechists to record Zooms.** These recordings will only be used for

catechetical purposes and will not be made available to anyone outside the parish. The purpose of recording Zoom Conferences is to insure that Protecting God's Children standards are being met when only a single adult is leading a conference. Conferences with more than two PGC certified individuals do not need to be recorded.



Catechist Recorded Sessions

Our short, catechist recorded instructional videos aim to give you some scheduling flexibility. We know families need help with at-home catechesis. We also know that family schedules and screen time needs may prevent kids from being able to conduct Zoom Conferences every week. In response, we've added a series of simple, 10-minute catechist recordings to help direct student learning for the week, maintain the presence of the parish during lessons and provide kids with a different learning format.

Please keep in mind that our catechists are not trained actresses and actors - they are simply volunteers who have graciously volunteered to share their faith with your child. Many of them have never recorded themselves in videos or used technology of this type before - so please be patient and kind with your constructive criticism. Making interesting and informative video recording when you are a novice without the benefit of professional lighting is much harder than all those YouTubers have led us to believe!



Sacramental Preparation

According to the regulations of the 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. The Our Lady of Sorrows sacramental preparation program for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist is, in keeping with the acknowledgement that parents are the primary catechists of their children, a home-based course of study. Students begin their preparation for these sacraments in the fall. Families of students ready to celebrate the sacraments this year will be contacted by staff members with more information.



Tips for a Successful Remote CCD Year

Maintain a Regular Schedule.

Choose a day for CCD - and then stick to that day. We recommend trying to keep to the traditional Monday / Tuesday schedule in case we are able to return to in-person classes in the coming year. But if your work schedule prevents you from helping your child on Monday or Tuesday afternoon, pick a day of the week that works better for your family and try to do CCD every week at the same time. The recorded sessions should allow families increased scheduling flexibility. Weekdays too busy? Turn Sunday into a true day of worship. Attend / watch Mass and then encounter the Lord together in the CCD material.

The *Christ Our Life* curriculum follows the Church's liturgical calendar rather closely. As a result, regular, weekly participation is not only expected - it is also the most effective way of using the student workbook.

Set up a "Prayer Space" at the Beginning of Each Lesson.

We always begin CCD with our Opening Prayer Service and Gospel reading. I encourage you to carry on this tradition at home. Our pre-recorded service will be loaded into your child's "Stream". Use the items provided in your kit to make CCD time at the computer look and feel different than it does when your child sits down to do his or her schoolwork. CCD aims to change not just the mind, but the heart as well. Try adding sacramentals that help to remind your child of Christ's presence in your family's life: the cross that hung above your bed as a kid, grandma's Rosary beads, the prayer card from an aunt's funeral...

Establish a CCD Routine.

In our unpredictable world, routines are more important than ever. Try to make CCD time look and feel the same each week. Once you've picked your day and time, establish rituals. Get out your CCD kit. Set up your prayer space. Watch our Opening Service. Discuss the gospel. Watch the recorded instruction or participate in the Zoom Conference. Finish reading through the chapter and discussing its contents. Watch the video for the chapter in Google Classroom and respond to the short answer prompt. Complete the Loyola Press Online Chapter Review and submit your results. Close with a prayer. Pack everything back up into your drawstring bag. High five and hug.

Get Involved.

We know you're busier than ever and that there are demands being placed upon you from more sources than ever before. But we are called to put God first in all things because it is only once we focus on Him that we are able to appropriately align the other parts of our lives. Take an active role in CCD this year. You just might find that reconnecting with your faith helps you to gain a little more clarity in other areas of your life. Adding your own insights and experiences to the lesson also helps to make the topics even more relevant and special for your child bringing you closer to one another and the Lord!

Don't forget prayer.

Prayer works - try it! Prayer is a way of communicating with God - and just like there are a variety of ways to communicate with one another, there are endless ways to pray. No two relationships here on earth are the same and everyone's relationship with God looks a little different. So try to find a method of prayer that works for you and then help your child develop his or her own. Start and end CCD with prayer - either traditional or from the heart - and then try extending your prayer time to other parts of your day.

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 if changes are made to the information contained herein as soon as practicable.