

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer
Parish Religious Education Program (PREP)

(Revised 4/18)

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This handbook acts as an agreement between Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish and the parents and their children who participate in the PREP program outlined within. By enrolling your child into our program, you agree to support and abide by the provisions outlined in this handbook. Parents are therefore encouraged to discuss these provisions with their children to ensure that all parties understand the requirements and obligations of their participation in the PREP program *(Rev. 3/16)*

Mary, Mother of the Redeemer
P.R.E.P. Office
1321 Upper State Road
North Wales, PA 19454
215-412-2251

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Mary, Mother of the Redeemer's P.R.E.P. Program. We look forward to another opportunity to minister to God's children and help them to know and feel His love.

Our curriculum for each grade of P.R.E.P., (Parish Religious Education Program) is determined by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. It is conveyed to our children by faith-filled *volunteers*, blessed with the gifts of teaching and love for children. Please support them in prayer and cooperation throughout the coming year.

Please take a few moments to review the following handbook. Upon review of this handbook, please sign the last page and return to your catechist. Our working together will ensure your child's safe and fruitful completion of another school year.

If the P.R.E.P. Staff can be of any help to you or to your children during this exciting time of faith formation, please feel free to contact us at 215-412-2251

Sincerely,

Mrs. Nancy Franks, Director of Religious Education
Mrs. Valerie Haynos, Administrative Assistant

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

Our staff is always available to answer any questions you may have about our Religious Education Program.

Msgr. John T. Conway, Pastor

Father William J. Teverczuk, Parochial Vicar

Father Daniel Arechabala, Parochial Vicar

Mrs. Nancy Franks, Director of Religious Education 215-412-2251 ex. 508

Mrs. Valerie Haynos, Administrative Assistant 215-412-2251 ex. 507

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish Community affirms the teaching of the Second Vatican Council which states that parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Our catechists supplement, in a more formal way, the education in faith that occurs in the home. With your help in the following areas, together we can make your child's PREP experience positive and productive:

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- Teach your child to pray in their own words as well as to learn the prayers required at their level (as well as review previous learned prayers). See: Curriculum
- Ask your child about their class and please continue to check your email for information from our office.
- Help your child be conscientious of assignments given to them.
- Have child come prepared for class, textbook and pen or pencil is needed, all other items are supplied.
- Join your child in participating in activities offered in his/her grade.
- If you wish to have your child carry his/her books in a bag, please remind them to carry a backpack.
- We welcome parents to join us for special Liturgies of the Word held during your child's PREP classes throughout the year.
- Check weekly Church Bulletin and website for important information regarding the PREP program.

CURRICULUM

The textbook used in our program is Be My Disciple, published by Resources for Christian Living. There are additional textbooks distributed during Sacrament years. Archdiocesan guidelines are adhered to for each grade level.

Prayers to be learned:

Preschool & Kindergarten	Sign of the Cross, Story of Creation
Level 1:	Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace Before and After Meals
Level 2:	Simple Morning Offering, Act of Contrition, Lord Have Mercy (Mass) and other Basic Mass Responses
Level 3:	Morning Offering, Apostles Creed
Level 4-7:	Angelus, Queen of Heaven, Prayers at Mass, Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, Acts of Faith, Hope and Love, Come Holy Spirit

ATTENDANCE

The Archdiocesan Office for Catechetical Formation requires a MINIMUM of 30 hours of religious instruction per grade, per year. The faith formation received in the program is ongoing in that each session builds upon the previous session. Therefore, it is imperative that children attend their program sessions regularly. If an absence occurs, please call the P.R.E.P. Office to notify us. We, in turn, will notify your child's teacher. If your child fails to report to a session and no phone call is received, then the absence will be recorded as unexcused unless a doctor's note is provided upon returning to the program.

After the third unexcused absence the program director will contact the parents via email to notify parents that the child may be required to repeat the grade level and that dismissal from the program could result should unexcused absences continue. Work missed during class must be made up. Please contact your child's teacher for any missed work.

ANY PARTICIPANT ACCUMULATING SIX UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL BE DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM. The participant may re-enroll the following school year. Upon re-enrollment the participant will be required to repeat the previous grade level that was not completed. This proceeding may delay the reception of sacraments.

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for a period of one year will be required to make-up the missed year upon re-enrollment into the program. (e.g., a student who leaves the program for a period of one year after completing grade 2 and re-enrolls in the program when they are in 4th grade will be placed into a 3rd grade catechetical class.)

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for two or more consecutive years must fulfill the following two requirements:

1. The participant will be placed into a grade level that is one below their current grade level. (e.g., A student leaves the program after completing 2nd grade and re-enrolls when he is in 5th grade. The student has missed two consecutive years of formation. Therefore, he would be placed into the 4th grade PREP session upon re-enrollment)

AND...

2. In addition, parents will be required to home school their child for at least one missed year in addition to their child attending sessions regularly. (e.g., using the example above, the 5th grade student who missed two consecutive years of formation would be placed into a 4th grade session, and in addition to attending his weekly catechetical sessions, his parents must also provide home schooling for the missed 3rd grade material).

NB. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia REQUIRES a minimum of two consecutive years of formation *prior* to a child receiving a sacrament. Students who leave the program following First Holy Communion and re-enroll in grade 7 in order to receive Confirmation DO NOT meet this requirement. Therefore, their reception of Confirmation will be deferred. Reception of the sacrament in 7th grade would mandate the Archdiocesan 30 hours requirement during the 7th grade level *and* participation in 6th grade weekly PREP sessions.

LATENESS/EARLY DISMISSAL

Sessions begin promptly at their designated times. Therefore, any student arriving after the designated starting time will be considered late. It is strongly recommended that parents drop their children off ten minutes prior to the scheduled starting time in order to avoid having their child marked late. Lateness will be noted on Progress Reports. Chronic lateness will require a conference with a parent and might interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments. Class time is set for one hour and twenty

minutes. Class ends with community prayer. It is very disruptive to the class if students leave early. If on the rare occasion that a student needs to leave early, a note from the parent must accompany the student that night. Habitual early dismissal will require a conference with the parent and director and might interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Please do not drop off children more than 5 minutes prior to class time. Our catechists are requested to be here 15 minutes before class but many of them work and arrive within minutes of class time. We **cannot** have children unattended in the building for any period of time. You may use the circle driveway in the front of the school to drop off your child. You must remain in the car. There is to be no parking in this circle. ***THE SIDE DOORS WILL REMAIN LOCKED AT ALL TIMES. PLEASE USE THE FRONT DOORS FOR ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL.*** Again the safety of our children is our utmost concern.

- You are more than welcome to enter the building through the lobby doors and pick your child(ren) up at their classroom. We ask you to wait in the lobby area until the conclusion of prayers.
- You may have your child(ren) meet you in the lobby area at the conclusion of prayers. Please use the lobby doors to enter and exit. Your child(ren) should know to meet you there.
- We do not want any of our children simply “walking out to meet their ride in the parking lot.”

The lane in the front of the building will be completely blocked off at dismissal time.

This is for the safety of the parents and children walking to the various parking lots.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in these procedures.

SACRAMENT REQUIREMENTS

Sacraments can be received only when the following criteria are met:

-the student has had two (2) years of religious instruction prior to receiving the Sacrament

-the family is registered in the parish

-the family participates at Sunday Mass
-the parent(s) and candidate **MUST** participate in the required SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES (All meetings, retreats and practices).

For scheduled reception of sacraments, all meetings, retreats, and practices MUST BE ATTENDED

COMMUNICATION

Along with this handbook, you have received a Calendar of Events for this school year. Please plan ahead by putting the dates that concern your child and your family on your calendars now. All dates except the Sacrament of Confirmation have been scheduled. Confirmation is determined by the Bishops' Offices and will be conveyed by early autumn in the school year that the sacrament will be conferred.

Blackboard Connect: In order to be more environmental friendly and cost conscious we will be going "paperless" as much as possible this year. Any and all information from P.R.E.P. will be sent to you via email. A letter was sent home to all families requesting email and phone information. All weather related closings will be announced through this new Blackboard Connect system. If we do not have your email and emergency phone information please call our office as soon as possible so we can update our records.

Homework may also be assigned to reinforce lessons covered in class. Assignments completed *are* part of your child's assessment.

Report cards are handed out on the final day of each session. Mid-year progress reports will be distributed during the month of January. Final grades are recorded on the Archdiocesan Religious Education Permanent Record Cards, which are kept on file. Children in grades 2-6 will be given assessments throughout the year. Grades are also based on classroom participation, effort, and completion of assignments and conduct. Your child's catechist will indicate if a conference is necessary.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Our program abides by the policies and procedures as set forth by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and other program related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the

custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order.

If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

BEHAVIOR

Respectful behavior toward staff, catechists and classmates is required at all times. Parents are urged to remind their children that the time they spend in P.R.E.P. is just as important to their development as the time they spend in their other classes at school. Rules that apply in school, apply in P.R.E.P... Students who consistently disrupt the classroom environment will be dealt with accordingly. Each teacher, at his/her discretion, may choose to follow the procedure outlined below:

- At the first occurrence of a situation in which a student is disruptive to the point that he/she must be removed from the classroom, the child will be sent to the office, and the office will notify the parent of the situation before the next class.
- At the second occurrence of the situation described above, parents of the student will be notified of the situation and asked to pick-up their child. The student and parent will meet with the director before being re-admitted to class. At this time, a discussion will occur concerning the need for a parent to attend classes with his/her child until the behavior problem has been resolved.
- At the third occurrence in which the student is disruptive to the point that he/she must be removed from the classroom, the participant will be removed from the session and dismissed from the program. The parents or guardians will be immediately notified by the program director and required to pick up their child. Following a conference with the program director, parents, participant, and catechist, the parents will be provided with the option of having their child repeat his or her current grade level the following school year, attend each class session with his/her child or opting to complete the current year's material by home-schooling their child. In either case, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made.

Property must be cared for and used properly. Please remind your child that they are sharing space with day school students. Materials for PREP students are supplied

therefore; there is no need for PREP students' use of day school students' supplies and materials. Defacement of desks and other parish property will result in necessary restitution.

CELL PHONES, PAGERS

We realize that devices such as pagers and cell phones have become a necessary tool in keeping communications open with children, especially for working parents. However, it is the policy of this program that such devices may not be used during class time. If a child brings a pager or cell phone to the program, the device must be turned off and left in the child's backpack.

BULLYING POLICY

A safe, secure and respectful educational environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards and build appropriate relationships with others. Mary, Mother of the Redeemer PREP refuses to accept any behaviors that hinder or undermine such an environment. Therefore, acts of harassment, hazing, intimidation and bullying (including cyber bullying and the like) are unacceptable behaviors and are prohibited in our programs. The religious education program personnel cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under their direct supervision. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the religious education program and the rights and welfare of the students and is within the control of the religious education program in its normal operations, it is Mary, Mother of the Redeemer PREP's intent to prevent bullying and thus, will take action to investigate, respond, discipline and remediate any acts of bullying. Administration and the catechetical staff are to demonstrate appropriate behavior by treating others with civility and respect, and being aware of and not tolerating harassment, intimidation, hazing and bullying, etc. If incidents do occur, students should be able to report and know that the inappropriate behavior will be dealt with promptly and effectively. There will be no retaliation against a victim, reporter or witness.

Policy

Bullying involves actions or words against another for the purpose of inflicting physical or emotional harm or discomfort or damage to a person's reputation that is intimidating or threatening and affects the learning and school environments. The following describes types of bullying but is not an exhaustive list.

- Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, or throwing something
- Getting another person to hit or harm student
- Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks or threatening in person or by other means
- Demeaning and making another the victim of jokes
- Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- Excluding or rejecting the student
- Intimidating (bullying), extorting or exploiting
- Spreading harmful rumors or gossip

If the bully is threatening harm, a student should tell a catechist, adult volunteers and/or the Program Director immediately so that action can be taken to remediate the situation. Parents and the Pastor will be notified of the situation, and Law Enforcement Officials will be contacted if warranted (e.g., someone threatened with a weapon, terroristic threats, etc.).

TUITION

Tuition is a necessary and required part of our PREP program and ensures that our program can provide children with the most current and best resources for their formational needs.

Tuition is due in full at the time of registration. However, being sensitive to the needs of our families, other payment options are available upon request. Anyone who cannot pay their tuition in full at the time of registration or who has difficulty making payment due to hardship should contact the program director to discuss the matter and to make other arrangements.

Families may not register for the upcoming school year if there is any back tuition due. All fees must be paid prior to registration. Class selection and time will not be guaranteed unless all registration fees are paid or other arrangements for payment have been made.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Please notify Mrs. Franks of any allergies, conditions, special learning needs that your child might have so that we are able to provide a safe and positive learning experience for him/her. These allergies, conditions and special learning needs should be noted on registration form.

CANCELLATIONS

In the event of severely inclement weather or large snowfall, P.R.E.P. classes will be cancelled for that evening. MMR PREP follows the North Penn School District. If the MMR Day School is cancelled for inclement weather, the PREP classes will be cancelled that evening as well. Our Blackboard Connect system will be implemented in the case of school closings. *If at all possible*, cancellations will also be posted on the MMR website (www.mmredeemer.org).

FINAL NOTE

The program director reserves the right to amend this handbook for just cause. In the event of any such amendment, parents will be given prompt notification of the changes made.

"God, send your angels to bless these children: Michael from the East to make them strong; Gabriel from the West to make them wise; Raphael from the South to make them warm, loving, and caring; a Guardian Angel from the North to protect each child always. Bless these children, angels dear, from whom God's love commits us here."

Adapted from Praying with Jesus, Arthur Zannoni