



# St. Maria Goretti Parish

1601 Derstine Road, Hatfield, PA

## Parish Religious Education Program Handbook 2023-2024



“Catechesis describes the essential ministry of the (Catholic) Church through which the teachings of Christ have been passed on to believers throughout the ages...Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people, and adults which includes the teaching of the Christian doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, no.1, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) Keeping in mind that all the baptized have a right to catechesis, every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness (*General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 189). Catechetical and sacramental programs are inclusive of parishioners with disabilities and may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities.



Dear Parents,

**Welcome to the St. Maria Goretti Parish Religious Education Program!**

This booklet provides you with an overview of our Religious Education Program, its policies and procedures. This handbook is an agreement between the Religious Education Office of St. Maria Goretti Parish and the parents/guardians of children who participate in our PREP program. By your registration you agree to read and support the provisions outlined in this handbook. Please discuss its contents with your children as appropriate.

Our goal is to provide a program of formal religious instruction to support your role as primary educator of your children. We have a dedicated group of volunteer catechists who work hard to teach your child the Catholic Faith, the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and encourage a personal relationship with Jesus.

The time your child spends here in class is important and is only a part of their religious education. Your example of living our Catholic Faith through prayer, reception of the sacraments and weekly attendance at Mass is critical to your child's faith formation. The seeds that you plant now on "rich soil" will bear fruit for a lifetime. You and your everyday actions are your child's first and most important teacher!

We hope that you will be a part of our program by participating in scheduled opportunities for the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Confession, Christmas and Forty Hours Devotions.

God Bless you,  
Rev. John C. Nguyen  
Pastor, St. Maria Goretti Church



## **St. Maria Goretti Religious Education Office**

1601 Derstine Road, Hatfield, PA 19440

### **Staff:**

**Mrs. Maria Richardson**

**Director of Family Faith Formation, Religious Education,  
and Parish Services**

**Mrs. Jo Ann Prahler**

**Administrative Assistant**

**Mr. Tyler Grant**

**Faith Formation and Parish Liturgical Coordinator**

**Telephone: 215-721-6559 Fax: 215-721-4320**

When leaving a voice mail, please include your name, phone number,  
your child's name and grade.

Our office will be closed on Holy Days of Obligation,  
National and School Holidays.

## **PREP Schedule**

Grades K through 7th

Monday Session 2 - 6:15 PM to 7:30 PM

Sunday Family PREP 10:30 AM to 12:00 Noon

## **In Case of Emergency**

- We will Contact 911 immediately if a serious emergency or threatening behavior by a student or an adult occurs during PREP.
- In the case of evacuation, everyone will move into the parish Church.
- Water and snacks are stored in the Education Center for use in a Lockdown, Lock Out or Shelter In Place Emergency.

If you are made aware of an emergency situation while your child is in the Education Building, and you have any questions, please call the Parish Center at 215-721-0199. When it is possible, we will contact you using the information that you have provided at registration.

## **PREP Calendar**

The PREP calendar is available on the parish website.

Updates and changes will be announced via parent email

**Any important last minute changes are announced via email. It is your responsibility to make sure that we have your current email address. More than one per family is recommended.**

## Registration

Registration is on line and email generated. If you have not received an email from Parish Giving, call the PREP Office at 215-721-6559.

**Classes are filled on a first come, first served basis.** Please be sure to register early. It is the right of the Religious Education Office to close any class in any session due to class size.

### Registration Fee:

One Child	\$245.00
Two Children	\$345.00
Three or more Children	\$445.00

These fees are determined by the Parish Business Office and the Parish Finance Council.

No child will be denied a Religious Education at St. Maria Goretti due to financial hardship. Fee plans and fee waivers for PREP fees can be made available. All requests must be submitted in writing and all inquiries of this nature will be kept completely confidential. Fees can be discounted by serving as a volunteer!

The fee charged for our PREP serves to defray the cost of running our program including each student's text book, classroom supplies, art supplies, audiovisual purchases, resource materials and catechist training.

The St. Maria Goretti Religious Education Program does not discriminate on basis of race, sex, and national origin, physical or mental challenge.



## SCRIP

The SCRIP Program of St. Maria Goretti Parish is a way for PREP parents to reduce the fees of the program. SCRIP is gift certificates or gift cards from local stores sold to you at face value. Purchasing SCRIP enables you to earn credit toward your PREP fees. SCRIP is sold in the narthex of the Church after all Masses on Sunday and in the Parish Center Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. SCRIP may be used to pay Kohl's credit card bills. Check the store for more details.

A portion of your purchase is automatically credited to you and a portion of your purchase is credited to the parish. Everyone wins! Please exemplify stewardship by using SCRIP on a regular basis. Consider volunteering to sell SCRIP after Masses. Your help is appreciated. Contact the Parish Center for details.

SCRIP credits for each calendar year are issued to our office in February to be applied toward the next year's registration fees. Any discrepancy must be discussed with the SCRIP office as the Religious Education Office does not have access to the information.



## **Role of Parents**

- We must be able to reach you via phone and email for important updates or emergencies.
- We must have information regarding Baptism and other Sacraments on file. A copy of the Baptismal certificate is required if your child was not baptized at St. Maria Goretti Parish.
- Attend Mass weekly with your child.
- Take responsibility for your role as your child's (children's) primary educator about faith by asking questions, helping them prepare for mid-term and final assessments, and participating in family events.
- Collaborate with your child's catechist by sharing faith at home and helping with homework assignments, projects, test review, etc.
- Class attendance is required. Please bring your children to class on time. Late arrivals are very distracting to the teacher and class. Three absences per year are considered excessive by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Attendance records, including late arrivals and early dismissals, are kept as part of the student's permanent record.
- Your child's picture may be used according to the waiver that you signed at registration. If you have any problem or concern with this, please be sure to remind your child's teacher and administrator at each event.
- The law holds that parents do not cease to be parents when they no longer have custody of their children. The PREP office must be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the noncustodial parent, including what information should be sent to the noncustodial parent and in what circumstances.





## Parking

All vehicles must be parked in a designated parking area upon arrival and dismissal. You may not stop or park directly alongside the Education Center regardless of whether safety cones are in place.

## Arrival

All children must enter through the main doors of the Education Center. Children are not permitted to use the Drexel Hall doors or the side door before or after class. We ask that children do not arrive earlier than 10 minutes prior to their class time. If a catechist is not in the room, students must wait quietly in the hall outside the classroom.

## Dismissal Procedure

Parents/Guardians are asked to enter the Education Center to pick up each child from the classroom no earlier than 5 minutes before the end of class. After Closing Prayer and announcements, parents may proceed to the child's classroom. No child will be allowed out of the classroom without an adult whose name is on their release form regardless of grade level.

**Older children may not pick up younger siblings.**

Students may not leave class early without a written note from a parent/guardian presented to the catechist prior to the beginning of class AND a Parent/Guardian must pick up their child at the classroom door. No student will be permitted to leave their classroom or the building early without an adult! Please note that sports practices or games do not constitute a valid reason for early dismissal from class





## **Inclement Weather Policy**

**PREP classes will be cancelled automatically if the Souderton School District schools are dismissed early or closed due to bad weather and you will be notified by email.**

You will receive an email at least one hour prior to class if class is cancelled for any reason.



Please do not call the Parish Center for class cancellation information. Please use your discretion if class has not been cancelled and the road conditions have deteriorated in your area. Always decide to be safe.

## **Calendar**

It is the responsibility of each family to make sure they have a copy of the PREP calendar. It is available on the parish website, in this booklet and on the school lobby bulletin board. Its purpose is to provide families with an overview of the activities planned for the catechetical year. We look forward to seeing you for the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Confession, Christmas Pageant and Forty Hours Devotions.

## **PREP Rules and Responsibilities**



Rules can be stated in the context of our call to follow the words and example of Jesus to respect each person as a child of God and to be treated with respect, dignity and love. Students have the following responsibilities to be sure all have a safe and positive faith experience here at St. Maria Goretti:

1. Show respect to catechists, other students and adults involved in the program.
2. Treat all people and property with respect. Do not climb on furniture, window sills, etc. Any type of profanity will NOT be tolerated in any form.
3. Be only where you have permission to be in the building.
4. Display appropriate classroom behavior.
5. Be respectful of the study/quiet time of others.
6. Use of, or possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco is strictly prohibited. Such items will be seized and both police and parents will be notified immediately. The child will be immediately removed from the environment and will not be permitted to return to PREP classes.
7. Appropriate dress is required. No tank tops, offensive t-shirts, bare midriffs, cutoffs or short shorts.
8. The personal use of cell phones during class is strictly prohibited; this includes text messaging as well as phone calls. If your child carries a cell phone it must be turned off during class time. Any cell phone being used during class will be held by the catechist until the end of the session.
9. Gum chewing is never allowed in the Parish Education Center.
10. Food and drink are not permitted in the classrooms.



### **Class Disruptions**

In order to provide a meaningful learning experience and make the most of the short amount of time we have to teach our Catholic Faith we have a Zero Tolerance Policy for class disruptions. Any child causing class disruptions will be sent to the Religious Education Office where a parent will be called to discuss the situation and ask for assistance in resolving this matter. Please discuss with your child(ren) the importance of paying attention, following the rules and being respectful of others during PREP class.



## **Protecting God's Children**

In compliance with the mandate of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People that in order to maintain a safe environment for all God's children, education and awareness are key to the prevention of child sexual abuse. Therefore, under the requirement of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia all children will be receiving the “**Keeping God's Children Safe**” lessons that contain age appropriate information to keep them safe. You will be notified via email of the date and content in advance. If you do not want your children to participate, you are required to sign a form which can be obtained at the Religious Education Office and must be returned prior to the scheduled lesson.



## Catechists

All Catechists at St. Maria Goretti provide Criminal Background checks and Child Abuse clearances. All Catechists are required to be trained by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in the “Safe Environment Program” to keep our children safe and any other programs as designated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia including the addendum which covers appropriate behavior concerning technology and also Mandated Reporter training. They are also committed to their own continuing education and formation in our Catholic Faith.

All Catechists are volunteers and spend many hours per week preparing for and teaching your child’s PREP class. Please remember our dedicated team in your prayers.



Children may have homework each week. Good study and work habits formed in the home contribute to a child’s religious development. Daily prayer and examination of conscience fostered in the home also have a significant role in your child’s faith formation.



## **Sacramental Preparation**

Children preparing to celebrate the Sacraments enter into an intense period of formal preparation in Grade 2 where they will celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of First Holy Communion. Other children of an appropriate age who have completed 6 years of religious education prepare in 7<sup>th</sup> grade to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. A series of Parent Nights, Parent/Child Workshops and/or Parent/Child Retreats are a required part of this preparation.

## **Final Note**

St. Maria Goretti Parish reserves the right to amend this handbook. In the event of any changes during the year, parents will be given notification of those changes.

Thank you for all you do for your children. God bless you!

## **Weekly Mass and Reconciliation Schedule**

All students in the PREP program are expected to participate in Sunday Mass. Religious Education classes cannot and do not substitute for the Sunday Mass. The commitment to attend Mass every Sunday is important to the faith life of your family.

### **Weekend**

Saturday Vigil..... 4:30pm  
Sunday..... 7:30am, 9:30am, 11:30am  
Vietnamese Mass..... 2:30pm

### **Weekday**

Monday thru Friday..... 8:30am  
Saturday September through April only.....8:30am  
Lent - Monday through Friday..... 7am & 8:30am

### **Holy Day**

7:00pm Vigil, 7:00am, 8:30am, & Noon

### **Reconciliation**

Saturdays 3:00pm – 4:00pm or any time upon request.

Call the Parish Office 215-721-0199