



**St. Maria Goretti Parish**  
1601 Derstine Road, Hatfield, PA  
**Parish Religious Education Program**  
**Home Based Catechesis Handbook**  
**2024-2025**



“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 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 agreed 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.

The time your child spends learning 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**

**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.

# **ST. MARIA GORETTI PARISH GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED CATECHESIS OF CHILDREN AS RECOMMENDED BY THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**

## **I. HOME-BASED CATECHESIS**

“Catechesis describes the essential ministry of the 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.” (National Directory for Catechesis, no.1) Home-based catechesis is understood as the work of Catholic parents/guardians who undertake the formal religious education of their own child(ren) for any length of time and in their home.

## **II. DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS**

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia recognizes that the Church’s teaching consistently affirms that parents are called to be the primary educators of their own children.

- “Since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children.”

(Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Christian Education, no. 3)

- “Parents have the first responsibility of the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues.”

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2223)

- “Parents are the first and most important educators of their own children.” (John Paul II, Letter to Families, 16)

- “Parents have the right and the duty to choose the kind of educational environment that they determine best suits their children’s educational need. Therefore, home schooling is a viable option for the general education of children.” (National Directory for Catechesis, no.61)

### III. PASTORAL APPLICATION

Although home-based catechesis is a viable option, the words of Pope John Paul II must also be considered: “Catechesis can be given anywhere, but I wish to stress ... that the parish community must continue to be the prime mover.” (Catechesis Tradendae, no.67) Parents who choose to provide the religious instruction of their own child(ren) in their home must recognize that “Catechesis must be complete and authentic. The bishop of the diocese, the pastor of the parish, the parents, and the children all have God-given responsibilities that must be respected in considering home-based catechesis.... Parents who choose...to be the primary catechist of their children must adhere to the guidelines for catechists as outlined by the diocesan bishop.” (National Directory for Catechesis,no.61) Home-based catechesis is a cooperative and collaborative effort between the parents and parish leadership. This relationship helps parents who choose home-based catechesis to be a part of the total catechetical effort of the parish and “should not feel alone in this task.” (National Directory for Catechesis no. 61) Categories of a Catholic family who chooses home-based catechesis are:

1. Parents who choose to have their own child(ren) home-schooled for all academic subjects and choose to provide formal religious education in their own home, assuming the role of catechist for only their own child(ren).
2. Parents who send their child(ren) to public or private non-Catholic school and provide formal religious education in their own home, assuming the role of catechist for only their own child(ren). The Archdiocese of Philadelphia does not recognize home-based catechesis of children in a home other than their own, and therefore,

does not permit groups of children gathering for catechesis other than at the parish.

#### IV. PARISH GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are provided to assist parishes in ministering to families who choose home-based catechesis:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will register in their parish and declare their option for home-based catechesis for their own child(ren). The names of the children under instruction must be clearly identified.

(See Appendix A.)

2. Before the home-based catechesis begins, the parent(s)/guardian(s) are to meet with the Director of Religious Education to ensure that the catechesis provided in the home is the catechesis of the Church. This dialogue is essential to the complete and authentic catechesis of their own children in their homes.

3. The DRE will provide the parents with a copy of the Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Guidelines for the grade level(s), approved textbooks, and a set of expectations which include:

- Meetings throughout the year with the pastor or his delegate to review the child's progress.
- Liturgies, prayer services, activities, retreats, programs, meetings or other parish opportunities in which the child and/parent(s)/guardian(s) attendance is expected.

4. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to use the textbooks and supplemental catechetical materials which have been approved by the DRE for use in the Parish Religious Education Program.

5. Should the parent/guardian seek permission for use of another text which is not included on the approved textbook list, a copy must be provided to the DRE for review. All materials must be approved by the Office for Catechetical Formation.

6. Families providing home-based catechesis will be included in any informational mailings pertaining to the parish religious education

program and/or the preparation and celebration of the sacraments. They are to be welcomed in all parish catechetical program activities.

7. Since their children are being initiated into the Catholic Church, parent(s)/guardian(s) have an obligation to involve their children in the life and mission of the Church. They should participate in:

- The spiritual life of the parish, particularly in the Sunday Eucharist.
- The charitable works of the parish.
- The catechetical and faith formation opportunities on the parish and archdiocesan levels.

8. The Catechetical Certification Policy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia fosters the professional development and the spiritual, intellectual, and human formation of volunteer catechists by requiring them to:

- Enroll in core courses provided by the Catechetical Institute
- Attend elective credit opportunities offered by the Office for Catechetical Formation.

The Director of Religious Education has provided a copy of this Catechetical Certification Policy to parents/guardians who serve as catechists for their child(ren) and recommend their adherence to this policy.



## **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.

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 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.
- We must be able to reach you via phone and email for important updates or emergencies.
- Attend Mass weekly with your child.
- Take responsibility for your role as your child's (children's) primary educator about faith.
- Class time is important. Please schedule yourself to adequately cover all material
- 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.





## **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. Cancelled classes will also be posted on our web site.



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. Be only where you have permission to be in the building.
3. Display appropriate classroom behavior.
4. 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.
5. Appropriate dress is required. No tank tops, offensive t-shirts, bare midriffs, cutoffs or short shorts.
6. 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.
7. Gum chewing is never allowed in the Parish Education Center.
8. Food and drink are not permitted in the classrooms.



## **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.

## **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.

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..... 7:00am & 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