



*St. Mary of Mount Virgin  
St. Theresa of  
the Infant Jesus*

Parish Religious Education  
Program (PREP)

Parent Handbook

2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR

## **ABOUT THE ST MARY OF MOUNT VIRGIN RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION PROGRAM**

The Director and Staff of the Religious Education Program of St. Mary of Mount Virgin Parish and St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus Parish realize that the home is basic to the religious education and moral development.

We gently remind you that through Baptism of your child, *you asked to have your child baptized and in doing so you accepted the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor" and "On your part, you must make it your constant concern to bring him/her up in the practice of the faith."* Thus our Staff serves to assist parents with their awesome responsibility, not replace it.

Each child is considered as a unique human person created in the image and likeness of God. It is our goal to:

- Help the children to know and love Jesus Christ
- Encourage the children to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ through the study of Sacred Scripture, Catholic teachings, liturgy and prayer.
- To help each student develop a relationship with God,
- a good self-image,
- and respect for authority and family.

In order to provide the students a climate of learning and a real sense of a caring community the following guidelines and policies are to be followed.

### **GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND POLICIES**

**MASS ATTENDANCE:** An integral part of our Religious Education Program is that our students attend and participate fully at Mass on Sundays or Saturday Evenings and Holy Days of Obligation. Learning in class can be truly effective only when one meets the Lord sacramentally at the altar.

### **PARENTS: PLEASE RETURN THE FORM BELOW**

**I have read the General Program Guidelines and Policies and understand my child's responsibilities as well as my responsibilities in making sure that my child gets to Religious Education Classes and to Mass on Sundays.**

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**Parent's Signature**

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shanks". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping underline.

**St. Mary of Mount Virgin/  
St. Theresa of the Infant Jesus  
Parish Religious Education Program Staff**

Father Robert Santa Barbra, Pastor

Amelia Johnson, Parish Catechetical Leader

Grade 8: Josephine Marchetta

Grade 7: Maryann Pagliaro

Grade 6: Ann Coscione

Grade 5: Michelle Axtt

Grade 4: Marybeth Piscetelli

Grade 3: Suzanne Marcaurele

Grade 2: Connie Corbin

Carolyn Clark

Grade 1: Lisa Gonzalez

Remedial: Catherine Feaster



- Children's Mass is celebrated monthly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at 10:00 AM mass throughout the school year. For children in grades 2-8 we ask they sign the PREP Mass Attendance Logbook in the back of the church. We strongly urge that children in grades 9-12 attend as well and provide the appropriate example as well as assistance to their younger brothers and sisters in Christ.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** Your child's regular attendance at Religious Education classes is very important. Since we only have a limited number of classes for the year, your child is expected to attend all classes. These classes should take top priority over all other programs and activities. Absence from three classes may result in a student's repeating the grade level and a conference between the Director of Religious Education and the parents regarding this matter. PLEASE CALL THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE at 732-545-5090 IF YOUR CHILD CANNOT ATTEND CLASS ON A GIVEN DAY.

**Please note: It is also expected that students attend Religious Education classes in consecutive years.**

**PREPARATION FOR CLASSES:** Children must arrive on time for class. For the safety of the children the doors to the school will be locked 15 minutes after the start of class. Children arriving late are to be escorted by a parent to the school and ring the bell to gain entry. Punctuality is very important. Students coming late interrupt classroom routines and instruction time. Therefore, no tardiness is excused. The teacher records tardiness on the attendance sheet and three of these will be considered as one absent day. Students should bring their textbook, a pencil, and any assignment from the previous week.

**HOMEWORK:** A high level of interest will be maintained and a greater amount of learning will occur if students are required to do homework which reinforces the classroom lesson. An assignment will often be given and as much as possible, the parents should be involved in this work. Parents are requested to sign the completed work. A child who is unable to submit homework will be given a warning. If this should occur for the second time, a note will be sent to the parents to be signed and returned to the DRE (Director of Religious Education). The third time this occurs, the parents will be asked to meet with the DRE and the Catechists.

**TESTING:** While the main objective of the Religious Education program is to foster love of God and neighbor, there should be some assurance as to a level of knowledge and understanding of our religion (the faith which we profess) and its basic practices. Therefore, testing (written and oral) will be done on a regular basis (e.g., once a month).

**REPORT TO PARENTS:** Progress reports will be given to parents two times during the school year. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's Catechist to inquire about their progress. It is important that the Catechist knows the parents as this contact will be most helpful to him or her. Reports will be based on: unit test, class participation, attendance, knowledge of material taught, and homework.

**CATECHIST:** A Catechist is a ministerial role of witness and service to the parish. Each Catechist is commissioned by the Bishop, through his delegate, the Pastor. The Diocese strongly encourages certification of all Catechists. Opportunities for certification will be provided and all Catechists are urged to take part. Parents are reminded that our Catechists are volunteers (they are not paid with a salary), respect them and be grateful for the work they do for our children.

**PARENTS' PARTICIPATION:** Volunteers are needed throughout the year to help with the innumerable details inherent in a Religious Education program. You are urged to give as much of your time as you can. Your involvement will reinforce the importance of the Program, and will help to improve the quality of your child's experience in it. The more parents we have involved in the program, the more successful and effective our program can be. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact your child's Catechist or the Office of Religious Education at 732-545-5090.

**BULLETINS:** Please read the weekly PARISH BULLETIN for Religious Education news and our special Newsletter, for notices or special events and items of interest in the Program. Or check the Church's website: [www.StMaryofMountVirginChurch.org](http://www.StMaryofMountVirginChurch.org) for detailed information.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** Some catechists will opt to also post assignments for their particular class on the Church website:  
[www.stmaryofmountvirginchurch.org](http://www.stmaryofmountvirginchurch.org)

The Church website contains a great deal of information there to assist you in your efforts at home to develop your child's Catholic spirituality. Make use of this valuable resource—it was built with you in mind!

**SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS:** Children will receive the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (or in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of preparations), and the Sacrament of Confirmation in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. All children must participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades prior to entering the sacramental programs.

**DISCIPLINE:** The Religious Education classes will take place in an atmosphere of learning with a Christian setting. Each student is expected to uphold *proper decorum showing respect for the Catechist(s) and his/her fellow students*. Normal discipline problems will be handled by the classroom Catechist. A Catechist may dismiss a student from the classroom for major discipline problems. When this occurs, the student must meet with the Director of Religious Education before returning to the class. The Director will fill out a first offense discipline slip stating the reason for the disciplinary action. This will be filled in the Religious Education Office. In the event that the student is sent to the Director for a second offense, the parent will receive, via the mail, a second offense slip stating the problem. This slip is to be signed by the parent and returned to the Director. At this point, a meeting involving the parents, student, Catechist and Director is encouraged. A third offense will mean dismissal from classes and the student will be trained at home. Exceptions to the above policy will be considered after a meeting with the student, parent, Catechist and Director.

**EMERGENCY CLOSING:** Please listen to announcements over WCTC 1450 AM or WMGQ 98.3 FM for emergency closings.