



# *St. Mary of the Isle Parish*

Office of Faith Formation

315 E. Walnut Street \* Long Beach, NY 11561

(516) 432-0157 Ext. 15

*Msgr. Robert Brennan, Pastor*

*Mrs. Maryann Specht MPS, Director of Faith Formation*

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child(ren) to Religious Education, also known as Faith Formation here at St. Mary of the Isle Parish. Whether you are a returning family or a new family who has just joined us, we look forward to another great year ahead.

Enclosed is a handbook for you to refer to which covers the curriculum as well as the expectations and responsibilities of both students and parents together with administration.

I am, of course, available to discuss any aspect of Faith Formation with you as it concerns your child(ren). If you feel the need to meet with me, please do not hesitate to contact my office to make an appointment.

I wish you a blessed year ahead and look forward to working with you and your family.

Sincerely,

Maryann Specht, MPS (Mrs.)  
Director of Faith Formation

MS:jc  
Enclosure



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### **Mission Statement**

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***Our mission is to help parents and guardians to bring their children into a deeper relationship with Jesus and give them a basic knowledge and understanding of the Church and its teachings and providing a solid foundation in the sacraments.***

***St. Mary's philosophy is that it is essential that ALL Faith Formation Families be involved in the faith life of the parish which at a minimum means weekend mass attendance. In addition, the practice of the faith as a family unit is extremely important (i.e. Grace before meals, praying with your children, prayer at bedtime, etc.) All that is taught in Faith Formation Classes must be reviewed, practiced and emphasized in the home.***

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### **ADMISSION**

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Only children whose parents/guardians are registered in this parish will be accepted into the Faith Formation Program.

Each child must be registered every year. A new form must be filled out yearly. The first year a child is registered, a copy of the child's baptismal certificate must be attached. If the child was baptized in this parish, we must know the date of baptism. ***If a child has NOT been baptized, you must let us know at the time of registration, so arrangements for baptism can be made. Please also inform us if your child has not received First Holy Communion.***

Transfer Students require a letter of verification from former Parish which indicates levels of religious education completed.

Guests must be approved by the Director of Faith Formation before attending a specific class.

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### **REGISTRATION FEES**

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Fees are used for books, supplies, and other needs of the Faith Formation Program. All fees are to be paid in September. If there is a financial hardship, discuss it with the Director of Faith Formation, Mrs. Maryann Specht, MSP; or with the Pastor, Msgr. Robert Brennan

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### **ACADEMIC CONTENT/POLICIES**

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***"Fidelity to the magisterium of the Church."*** That means emphasis will be on the strict teaching of the Church. We will teach what is required by the Holy Father, the bishop of our Diocese, and the Pastor.

Children are required to know who Jesus is, our basic beliefs, and prayers. They must learn the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and the Sign of the Cross. Progress reports may be required on an individual basis.

All children are required to learn the weekly book and material assignments and to have a pen or pencil to write with.

Parents/guardians are required to make sure the child has the necessary book for class. Parents/guardians should review homework assignments, help the children to understand them, and make sure they are completed. If a textbook is lost, there will be a fee for replacing it.



### **CLASS SESSIONS**

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St. Mary of the Isle Faith Formation Program provides 26 one hour sessions to educate the children of our Parish in their faith. Attendance is very important.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Students must report to class on time. No more than **two (2)** absences per semester are permitted. Please be sure to notify the Office of Faith Formation if your child will be absent because of illness either by telephone 516-432-0157 Ext 15 or Email [smireled@optonline.net](mailto:smireled@optonline.net)

If at all possible, parents should try to know the child's teacher's name.

### **CANCELLATION OF CLASSES**

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Should classes need to be cancelled due to inclement weather or an unforeseen emergency; a bulletin will be aired on Channel 12 news. In addition, the Office of Faith Formation will leave a recorded message on the answering service.

### **PROGRAM CALENDAR**

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The program calendar and curriculum is made available to all parents and students on the first day of class. It is attached to every textbook for use by the parent and student. In addition, the program calendar and curriculum is also posted on the St. Mary of the Isle Faith Formation Website. [www.stmaryoftheisle.com](http://www.stmaryoftheisle.com)

### **TEXTBOOKS**

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All of the textbooks used in our Faith Formation Program conform to the guidelines published by the United States Conference of Bishops. In addition, all the supplemental materials used in our program are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.



## **COMMUNICATION**

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### **Director of Faith Formation to Parent/Guardian**

The Director will send important written communication to the parents/guardians via the students from Pre-K through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Material concerning 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will be mailed to the home. In addition, emails are sent to all families who provide correct email addresses.

### **Parent/Guardian to Director of Faith Formation**

Parents/Guardians can communicate to the Office of Faith Formation in the following forms:

Telephone: 516-432-0157 Ext 15

Email: [smireled@optonline.net](mailto:smireled@optonline.net)

Letter: 315 E. Walnut St., Long Beach, NY 11561

In Person: During class time in the Parish Hall (Monroe Blvd entrance)

### **Catechist to Parent/Guardian**

If it is necessary, catechists (teachers) can communicate with parents/guardians via letter, or telephone or discussion after class. There will be no meeting during class time.

### **Parent/Guardian to Catechist**

The parents/guardians can phone or write the catechist, or meet with him/her after class but not during class time.

## **ISSUES OF CUSTODY**

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The Office of Faith Formation will attempt to abide by any valid court-ordered direction which is provided to us. If there is an order of protection to be implemented, we will require two photographs of the person whom the court had ordered not to be in contact with your child.

You may be assured that with regard to custody, or any other issue, we will take every reasonable step to protect the children entrusted to our care.

## **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

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Our Faith Formation Program provides religious education for students no matter what their academic level may be. The Director of Faith Formation should be informed of any special needs a student may have so that arrangements can be made accommodate the student.



## **PHOTO/WEB PAGE POLICY**

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If a parent/guardian does not want a photo of his/her child on the Parish Web page please inform the Director of Faith Formation.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

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Rules to be abided during class:

- Student must come prepared for class with textbook and pencil
- Student must be courteous and respectful of the catechist at all times
- Walking out of class, speaking out, disturbing the class will not be tolerated
- Student must be courteous and respectful of fellow students. There is to be no hitting, punching, grabbing of another child's person or property.
- Running or ball playing in the hall is prohibited.

Action:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> offense will be handled by the student and the catechist
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> offense will be taken up by the student, catechist and the Director
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> offense will be handled by the student, catechist, Director and the Parent
- The 4<sup>th</sup> offense will mean dismissal from the class and transfer to the home study program.

Appeals:

If there are extenuating circumstances, they can be discussed with the Director of Faith Formation. Should the matter still be unresolved, the Pastor will have the final say.

## **DRESS CODE**

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Appropriate clothing must be worn at all time:

- No suggestive or questionable language on clothing.
- No bare midriffs or any shirt that exposes cleavage.
- No see through mess clothing unless a T-shirt is worn beneath.
- No sagging pants that expose undergarments.
- No pajamas or slippers.
- No hoods or caps/hats worn in church or parish building.
- No chains or attire that could be used as a weapon.



### **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Electronic devices are not allowed in class. Should a child have a need to carry a cell phone for emergency reasons, it should be powered-down and stowed away in a backpack or bag. St. Mary of the Isle Church and the Office of Faith Formation is not responsible for any lost or stolen electronic devices.

### **BATHROOM**

Because of the short duration of class, we encourage all students to use the facilities prior to the start of class. Parents should inform the Director of Faith Formation or Catechist if a particular student has a health issue that may require the use of the facilities during class.

### **VANDALISM**

Students caught vandalizing anywhere on the parish or school property will be responsible for the repair of damages. Depending on the extent of damage, the Parish Faith Formation program may remove the student from the program.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

Substance abuse will not be tolerated. Substance abuse is defined as the possession of, use of, selling or distributing any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance, which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, or injection. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance on parish property or at parish-sponsored events will be immediately suspended from the program. In addition, there is absolutely no smoking in or around the premises of the parish hall.

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-curricular activities are a privilege, not a right.

- Only children who have had fewer than two (2) absences may participate, unless approved by the Director of Faith Formation. Any child who has had a parent/guardian called in because of discipline problems may not take part in the activity.
- Any retreat(s) that are held off the premises are a privilege, not a right. Any child with behavior problems will not be permitted to go on a field trip unless a parent or guardian accompanies the child.
- Permission slips are required for every trip and will be distributed 2 to 3 weeks before the date of the trip.
- The Parish is not liable for any unforeseen accidents
- Parent/guardian volunteers are required on every field trip.



## **CHILD ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY**

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Children from Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade must be dropped off inside the school hall. Children may be dropped off 10 minutes before class and must be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of class. No child is to leave without adult accompaniment. There is to be no “hanging out “ when there are no classes.

It must be understood, that failing to pick up your child on time from class is unacceptable whatever the excuse. If it occurs twice, your child will be put on home study, which means; it will become the parent’s responsibility to teach the child at home.

“Walkers” (6<sup>th</sup> Grade and older only):

The child must be 6<sup>th</sup> Grade or above to be allowed to walk home. A permission slip is required to be filled out and signed by the parent or guardian prior to the child leaving. This permission slip will be kept on file for that year only. Each year a new permission slip will need to be filled out and signed.

Any student arriving late or leaving early must be signed in or out by a parent or guardian.

## **HOME SCHOOLING**

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Our Faith Formation program follows the guidelines set forth by the United States bishops in the National Directory for Catechesis and the Office of Faith Formation of the Diocese of Rockville Centre in regard to home schooling. Home schooling is done on a case by case basis and parents must contact the Director of Faith Formation prior to the start to of the school year to make arrangements.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT**

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As Roman Catholics we are expected to follow the Precepts of the Church that we attend weekly mass and Holy Days of Obligation. Parental involvement in the faith formation of a child is of the utmost importance.

We also welcome your help to build our religious community and to have an effective Faith Formation Program. To accomplish this, we invite parents/guardians to give 2 hours of community service to St. Mary of the Isle Parish. This can be in any area of parish work, under the guidance of any of our staff members. Forms are available for completion after the work has been performed; these should be given to the Director of Faith Formation. If 2 hours of service cannot be given, you may give a \$20 donation to the Office of Faith Formation in lieu of service.

Parents/guardians are also invited to be a catechist (religious instruction teacher) or hall monitors. Please contact the Director regarding the type of service that interests you.



## **RECORDS**

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A copy of a baptismal certificate for someone baptized at St. Mary of the Isle may be obtained from the rectory if it is needed. If you need a copy of school records, a letter should be sent to the Director of Faith Formation indicating which records are needed. If the records are required by a court order, a copy of that court order must be submitted to the Office of Faith Formation.

## **CATECHISTS**

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All Catechists and aides in our Faith Formation Program comply with all "Safe Environment" requirements such as, background checks, background screening, Virtus training, and sign a Code of Conduct. Catechists are expected to keep information pertaining to the students confidential, unless necessary to prevent harm to the child or others.

## **SUPERVISION**

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St. Mary of the Isle Faith Formation program prides itself in offering a safe educational environment to all of our parish children. The Director of Faith Formation is responsible to maintain compliance with all "Safe Environment" checks, training and codes. In addition, the Faith Formation Director ensures the all students are properly supervised at all times.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND FIRE DRILLS**

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Each session will have one fire drill per year. The evacuation plan is posted in each classroom and each Catechist has a copy in their folders.

## **MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND ACCIDENTS**

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Parents need to inform the Director of Faith Formation of any existing medical conditions a student may have so that the appropriate paperwork can be filled out and a specific plan can be followed for the student. If an accident occurs on the premises, the Director of Faith Formation needs to be notified so that an Accident Report can be completed.

## **REPORTING ABUSE**

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Any and all cases of abuse should be brought to the attention of the Director of Faith Formation, Pastor and Office of Child Protection.

## **RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY OF ALL**

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Everyone – parents/guardians, persons designated to deliver and pick up a student, students, catechists, the Director of Faith Formation – is required to treat anyone he/she meets at St. Mary of the Isle Parish with respect and dignity. There will be no tolerance of any type of harassment; sexual, racial, religious, ethnic, or any other.



## **SACRAMENTAL RECEPTION REQUIREMENTS**

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The Sacraments are important milestones on our faith journey. However, the reception of them is a privilege we earn, not a right. We have certain requirements that must be met before a Sacrament may be received at St. Mary of the Isle.

A minimum of two (2) consecutive years of Faith Formation must be completed before a Sacrament may be received. There will be testing, required reports, and compositions, depending on the grade level of the student.

### **Excessive absence may delay the reception of a sacrament.**

Tuition must be paid in full before the Sacrament is received, unless other arrangements are made.

## **FIRST COMMUNION**

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The child must know the Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father, and Apostles' Creed; as well as understand who Jesus is. Attendance at weekly Mass is expected.

There will be a retreat for those preparing to receive First Eucharist. At this same time, a prayer service will be held for the parents/guardian. Attendance is mandatory.

Proof of baptism must be provided before the Sacrament may be received. If the child was baptized at St. Mary's, a request from the rectory can be submitted, if the child was baptized at another church, a copy of the baptismal certificate from that church must be provided to the Office of Faith Formation.

## **FIRST RECONCILIATION**

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This Sacrament is received in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade at St. Mary of the Isle. In addition to the prayers needed for First Eucharist, the child should know the Act of Contrition, Grace before and after meals, and the Rosary. Four hours of community service are required.



## **CONFIRMATION**

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The preparation for Confirmation takes two (3) years.

In the first year (6<sup>th</sup> grade), students are required to know the use and importance of the Bible.

In the second year (7<sup>th</sup> grade), students are required to know all the previous prayers and should also know morning and evening prayers, and the Memorare. A 7-hour service project, which must be cleared with the Director of Faith Formation, must be performed. All class work must be completed as well as any homework given. The students must be familiar with the material covered.

In the third year (8<sup>th</sup> grade), the student should be familiar with all the above prayers as well as the Beatitudes, and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. The child should be aware of their relevance to daily life.

A 15-hour service project, which must be approved by the Director of Faith Formation, must be completed during the school year. A Christian autobiography must be completed by December. At the same time, the student's Confirmation Information Sheet should be completed and returned.

By January, the child must have completed a report on the saint whose name he/she will take for Confirmation, and must also inform us of whom the sponsor is.

There will be a conversation with either the Pastor or the Director of Faith Formation to assess if the student is ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

In addition, every Confirmation candidate must attend a retreat.

## **POLICY CHANGES**

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The Office of Faith Formation retains the right to alter any of these policies. Any such changes will be available through the Director of Faith Formation and parents will be notified of changes.

The staff of St. Mary of the Isle is here to help you and your family on your spiritual journey. We will do all we can to work with you in fulfilling our mission.



**Family Prayer**

*O dear Jesus, grant your special graces to our family. Make our home a shrine of peace, purity, love, labor and faith. Protect and bless all of our family.*

*O Mary, loving mother of Jesus and our mother, intercede for our family and all the families of the world. Ask Jesus to guard the cradle of the newborn, the schools of the young and their vocations.*

*Blessed St. Joseph, holy guardian of Jesus and Mary, assist us in all the necessities of life. Ask of Jesus that special grace which He granted to you, to watch over our home, so that with Mary and you, heaven may find our family unbroken in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Amen.*





**PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

By signing below I acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Religious Education Parent Handbook of St. Mary of the Isle Parish. I agree to abide by the policies set forth in the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

Administration/Handbook Folder/Parents