

# **St. Mary's Religious Education Parent Handbook**

**Effective September 2021**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary's Parish. Our parish supports parents as the primary educators of their children. We take seriously the obligation to assist them in the Religious Education of their children. In our program, the goal of each lesson for each grade is "to teach as Jesus taught." Jesus is at the heart of all catechesis. We encourage families to attend the Sunday Liturgy together. Faith formation takes place in the context of participation in the Sunday Mass.

Attendance at the Celebration of Sunday Mass is one of the major signs of our faith. Religious Education classes can never replace Sunday Mass. In addition to the example of faith by parents, Sunday Mass and Religious Education are essential elements. We encourage parents to attend the Sunday Mass with their younger children. All of our Masses are celebrated with faith and devotion. Attendance at any Mass is always appropriate. Our parish also is engaged in being the hands of Christ in service to others and invites everyone to service.

In Faith + Hope,

*Fr. Brian*

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF**

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Pastor**

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## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**PARISH RECTORY STAFF**

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**ST. MARY'S RECTORY CONTACT INFORMATION**

**One Church Square  
Franklin, MA 02038  
508-528-0020  
508-528-1641 (Fax)**

**Sunday Masses**

**Saturday  
4:00 p.m.**

**Sunday  
7:30 a.m. + 10:30 a.m.**

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION  
By appointment—call 508-528-0020**

## **MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH**

We, the community of St. Mary, a Roman Catholic Parish of the Archdiocese of Boston, within the Town of Franklin, exist to honor and glorify God.

By imitating the life of his Son, Jesus Christ, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we work for the fulfillment of his kingdom on earth.

We dedicate the gifts and talents unique to each member of the community to continued growth in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ.

As Christ's disciples we are called to be living examples of his teachings to everyone we encounter in our daily lives. We acknowledge the need for the active involvement of all our members in order to reach our full potential as a Christian Community.

Motivated by the Word of God, sustained by the gifts of the sacraments, enriched by one another, and committed to the mission described above this community pledges:

- To spread the Good news of Jesus Christ announcing his salvation
- To reach out to the needs of the poor, the homeless, the dispossessed, the addicted, and others needing social justice
- To attend to the ongoing faith development of our children, youth, adults, and the unchurched
- To foster an ecumenical spirit and a caring, loving community with our brothers and sisters of all creeds
- To support and encourage Catholic Christian values within the family, the workplace, and society
- To commit ourselves to the elimination of all that impedes the fullest development of each

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

“Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” CCC2226

The St. Mary’s Religious Education Program is an essential part of the mission of the parish. The parish supports the parents of the children who are the primary teachers of the Catholic Faith. The goal of the program is to form the students to be disciples of Jesus Christ, capable of living life with Catholic values. The program is rooted in the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist where the entire parish draws strength from both the Word and Sacraments. The Religious Education Program is intended for the children of our parish who attend schools that do not have formal Religious Education.

### **GOALS OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

To promote and encourage:

- Proclamation of the Good News as revealed through Jesus Christ
- Worship of God through private and liturgical prayer
- Service to the Christian and entire world community
- Parents in their role as primary catechists of their children

## TEXT BOOKS

St. Mary's Religious Education Program uses *Blessed—First Reconciliation* and *Blessed—First Communion*, by Dynamic Catholic for Grade 1 (First Communion 1) and Grade 2 (First Communion 2).

St. Mary's Religious Education Program uses the Sadlier, Inc. *We Believe* textbooks for Grades 3—6:

Grade 3—*We Are the Church*

Grade 4—*God's Law Guides Us*

Grade 5—*We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments*

Grade 6—*We Are God's People*

Also using Sadlier text books:

Grade 7—*We Live Our Faith As Disciples of Jesus*

Grade 8—*We Live Our Faith As Members of the Church*

Confirmation Program (Grades 9 + 10) *Decision Point*-Dynamic Catholic

## ENROLLMENT

All students (new and returning) must be enrolled for the Religious Education Program. The enrollment form is available online ([www.stmarysfranklin.org](http://www.stmarysfranklin.org)) during the registration period. The cost of tuition is \$115.00/child for Grades 1—10. There is a family discount for three or more children. During Grade 9 we collect an additional Confirmation Fee of \$75.00 to cover the entire cost of Confirmation.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

### **Baptism**

It is expected that all children enrolled in the Religious Education Program are baptized Roman Catholics. Children who wish to become baptized Roman Catholics may enter the program. Parents must contact the Religious Education Director to arrange time for instruction and preparation for their Baptism. Parents of children in grade 3 and above who have not received the Sacraments of Reconciliation or First Holy Communion must contact the Religious Education Director to arrange time for instruction and preparation to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

### **First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion**

Students must complete First Communion 1 (usually done in Grade 1) before entering First Communion 2 (usually done in Grade 2). Preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion is the primary focus of the First Communion 1 and First Communion 2 Curriculum.

## **CHILD SAFETY CLASSES**

The Archdiocese of Boston mandates that every parish implement a prescribed Child Safety Program for Grades 1-8. The Child Safety Program will discuss ways to stay safe at home, with friends, and with adults they may encounter in unfamiliar situations. Our Safety Classes, taught by our Safety Director, Barbara Brunelli, M. Ed, are incorporated

into the regular scheduled classes. This will be done directly and indirectly in various ways and modalities within the school year. All questions regarding the Safety Program should be directed to the Religious Education Director.

## **PROTECTING CHILDREN**

All of St. Mary's clergy, staff, and teachers, and volunteers go through a three-part process that focuses on the protection of our children and provides a safe environment for the people we serve:

- The Office for Background Screening performs a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system for all clergy, staff, and volunteers who are 18 years of age and older.
  
- A prevention and awareness training program, "Protecting God's Children" is mandatory for all volunteers who are involved with children. It is administered by the Catholic Risk Retention Group. This class consists of presentations, printed material and videos that focus on the prevention of abuse and the protection of children.
  
- A "*Code of Ministerial Behavior*" is signed by all clergy, staff, and volunteers who work with the children of St. Mary's Parish. This states that they will uphold Christian values and conduct at all times.

## **VIDEOS**

From time to time, throughout the year, we will incorporate videos into the curriculum. These videos will contain important messages about the Catholic faith or have a very positive lesson to teach the children. Movies used in Religious Education will always be approved by the Religious Education Director and will be rated either "G" or "PG".

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is the key to the success of the Religious Education Program. Updates and important information regarding the program will be sent electronically through Constant Contact. Please keep your email address updated with us.