

**Mother of Our Redeemer
Catholic Parish & School
Religious Education Department**

Family/Student Handbook

2024- 2025



Classes are held at:

Mother of Our Redeemer Catholic School
8445 N.W. 186th Street
Miami, Florida 33015

Phone No. 786-480-9858

Fax #: 305-829-3059

E-mail: lmartorella@motherofourredeemer.org

Religious Education Department Website: www.redumor.org

Church Website: www.motherofourredeemer.org

Administration:

Pastor:

Fr. Juan Pedro Hernández

Deacon:

Mr. Orlando Rojo

Director of Religious Education:

Mrs. Liliana E. Martorella



Welcome

Dear Parents, we are delighted to welcome your family to the Mother of Our Redeemer Catholic Parish Religious Education Program for the formal religious education of your child. **THANK YOU** for entrusting your child to us. We are eager to teach them about Jesus's love and how He desires personal relationships with them.

Your son/daughter's registration is a testament to your dedication to instilling a deep-rooted appreciation of the Catholic faith in your family and fulfilling the promises made at your child's Baptism. Your active involvement in our program is crucial and greatly appreciated.

“Parents are the primary educators of their children.” (*General Directory for Catechesis*) The example of Christian life set by parents/guardians is invaluable. Catholic families are encouraged to pray together, attend weekly mass, participate in parish activities, and contribute to the church's financial support through the use of weekly envelopes or online.

Religious Education is a ministry of the Catholic Church. We aim to assist families in Catholic faith formation and sacramental preparation. Our program offers continuous education for students from kindergarten through 12th grade or until their Confirmation Sacrament. The curriculum is based on Scripture, Roman Catholic doctrine, high school sacramental preparation, prayer, traditions, and principles tailored to each age group. The success of our program depends on the respect and cooperation between the students, parents, and staff.

Religious education takes place in the secure environment of our Mother of Our Redeemer Catholic School grounds. We understand the importance of safety, which is why all our staff and volunteers undergo thorough screening according to the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Miami Safe Environment office. Your child's safety is our top priority.

VISION STATEMENT

At Mother of Our Redeemer Catholic Parish, we aim to nurture in every child a heartfelt devotion to Christ and a profound comprehension of his purpose in the world. Our Religious Education program is committed to equipping children with a solid grounding in the principles of the Roman Catholic faith and motivating them to embody these beliefs with compassion and insight in their lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

Mother of Our Redeemer's mission in Religious Education is to help the children of the parish experience the presence of God in their lives and to learn about Jesus Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We aim to follow the ways of Jesus Christ through Catholic teachings, engage them in the learning process, and instill hope in their salvation.

Our program offers guidance and direction for the six fundamental tasks of catechesis:

- ❖ Promoting knowledge of the faith
- ❖ Liturgical education
- ❖ Moral formation
- ❖ Prayerful experiences
- ❖ Community atmosphere
- ❖ Missionary experience

Through these tasks, we aim to help every child develop an intimate relationship with God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the Catholic Church.

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To teach the Word of God, the fundamental beliefs, and traditions of the Catholic Church.
- ❖ To build a faith community.
- ❖ To encourage the student and family to pray and regularly attend Mass.
- ❖ To call the student and family to service within the community.
- ❖ To lead students to realize that Catholic Christian living responds to God's unconditional love.

Please keep us in your prayers as we strive to achieve our objectives.

Ours is a community effort involving families who profess their Catholic faith and live it, ministries who believe and proclaim by Word and example the Good News, professionals and volunteers who respond to the call of discipleship, and the entire parish family of Mother of Our Redeemer Catholic Parish who prays that the Holy Spirit will inspire and bless these efforts by saying,

“Loving Father, we pray today for our Catechists and volunteers. We thank you for your gift of ministry in your Church. Grant them your wisdom so that they may grow in the understanding and teaching of your Word. Grant them your wisdom so they may grow in understanding and teaching your Word. Grant them your love so they may be fruitful heralds of your Word and lead others to love you. Pour forth your Holy Spirit upon them to grant them wisdom about what is essential, knowledge of the truths of faith, understanding of their meaning, proper judgment about how to apply them in life, courage to persevere even in the face of adversity, reverence before all that is sacred and holy; and that loving zeal which leads others to a transforming encounter with your Son.

”

We pray this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FAITH FORMATION TEAM

Class	Grades	Room	Day	Catechist	E-mail
Confirmation SN		5	Tue	Mrs. Darling (Julie) Gomez	mor.ccd.jgomez@gmail.com
Kindergarten	K	6	Tue	Ms. Daniela Cruz	mor.ccd.dacruz@gmail.com
Pre- Communion	2nd	7	Tue	Mrs. Tammy Alfonso Mrs. Mayra Morales	mor.ccd.talfonso@gmail.com mor.ccd.mmorales@gmail.com
Pre- Communion	3rd	8	Tue	Mrs. Kay Rodriguez Mrs. Maria E. Diaz	mor.ccd.ksosa@gmail.com mor.ccd.mdiaz@gmail.com
Pre- Communion	4th	9	Tue	Mrs. Ana Muriel Mrs. Sofia Sastre	mor.ccd.amuriel@gmail.com mor.ccd.sopsastre@gmail.com
Pre- Communion	5 th	10	Tue	Mrs. Esther Solache Mr. Rafael Solache	mor.ccd.esolache@gmail.com mor.ccd.rsolache@gmail.com
Pre- Communion	6th, & up	11	Tue	Mrs. Consuelo Saleh Ms. Lilianet Azze	mor.ccd.csaleh@gmail.com mor.ccd.lazze@gmail.com
Pre- Confirmation	7 th to 8th	12	Tue	Ana Cespedes Margarita Sastre	mor.ccd.anacatechist@gmail.com mor.ccd.ssastre@gmail.com
Pre- Confirmation	9 th to 11th	13	Tue	Mr. Jairo Cruz Mr. Salvador Sastre	mor.ccd.jacruz@gmail.com mor.ccd.salsastre@gmail.com
RCIA II	2nd & up	4	Wed	Mrs. Mayte Garcia Mrs. Gilda Gallardo	mor.ccd.mgarcia@gmail.com mor.ccd.ggallardo@gmail.com
Communion	2nd	6	Wed	Mrs. Marie Gopaul	mor.ccd.mgopaul@gmail.com
Communion	3rd	7	Wed	Mrs. Barbara Bedgood	mor.ccd.bbedgood@gmail.com
Communion	4 th	8	Wed	Mrs. Mayilet Fernandez	mor.ccd.mfernandez@gmail.com
Communion	5th	9	Wed	Mrs. Darline (Julie) Gomez	mor.ccd.jgomez@gmail.com
Communion	6 th	10	Wed	Mrs. Grace Gomez	mor.ccd.ggomez@gmail.com
Communion	8th & up	11	Wed	Mrs. Millie Mejia Mr. Johoel Mejia	moor.ccd.mmejia@gmail.com mor.ccd.jmejia@gmail.com
Confirmation	7 th to 9th	12	Wed	Mrs. Reyna Reyes	mor.ccd.rreyes@gmail.com
Confirmation	10 th to 2th	13	Wed	Mr. Ana Cespedes	mor.ccd.anacatechist@gmail.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

Administration

Our Pastor, Reverend Father Juan Pedro Hernandez, has appointed Mrs. Liliana E. Martorella as the Director of the Religious Education Program. She can be contacted at lmartorella@motherofoureedeemer.org

Hours of Operation

The Religious Education Office is open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. during classes, or by appointment. If you need to schedule an appointment, please feel free to email lmartorella@motherofoureedeemer.org or call (786) 480-9858. We will respond to your inquiry as soon as possible. Thank you!

Class Sessions

Tuesdays	06:00 pm – 07:30 pm (Kindergarten, 1st Grade, Pre-Communion, Post-Communion, Pre-Confirmation, and RCIA I)
Wednesday	06:00 pm – 07:30 pm: First Communion, Confirmation, and RCIA II

Arrival and Dismissal Policies with the COVID-19 Guidelines

The Archdiocese of Miami (ADOM) has not released any updates to the COVID protocol. Therefore, we will continue to follow their most recent version, which aligns with the updated CDC guidelines as of August 23, 2023.

MASK USAGE

In schools, parish offices and churches of the Archdiocese, MASKS ARE OPTIONAL with the exception of those completing EXPOSURE or ISOLATION PROTOCOLS when a well-fitting mask is required for 5 days following return to school. Mask usage is encouraged especially for those not vaccinated or immunocompromised, but remain the choice of the individual regardless of vaccination status.

5:30 p.m. Arrival

1. To drop off students for classes, parents should enter through the first gate of the Church, drive around the yard, and drop off their children at the main gate door of the school. Please maintain a speed of *15 miles per hour* and be very careful, as students from the morning school are still around. Do not drop off your child from the second road in front of the main gate, as this may cause accidents.
2. DO NOT leave your child alone if there is no one there to greet him/her.
3. Students are to use the stairs; they are not allowed to use the elevator without adult supervision. Therefore, upon arrival, all students will go to their classrooms as greeters will indicate and use either of the two stairs the school has.
4. If a parent needs to talk to their child's catechist, please do so at the time of pick up when all students are dismissed, and you can have a few minutes to talk to the catechist.
5. If you need to run an errand at the office, please park your car and walk to the office, after 6:00 pm. If the main gate door is closed, please ring the bell located at the school's main office door.

Late arrival: Arriving late is not acceptable. Students must be on time. They should arrive at least 15 minutes before classes start. The doors open at 5:30 PM. If students arrive after the class has started at 6:00 PM, they will receive a late pass. **Students arriving more than 15 minutes late will not be admitted to class.**

7:30 p.m. Dismissal

1. To pick up your children, parents may arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. Please park in front of the Church or in front of the basketball court. Walk to the school's main entry and wait in line with patience and respect for others, at the front door of the school, right where you drop off your child.
2. At 7:30 pm, the main gate door will be open for parents to enter the school in an orderly manner and go to their children's classrooms to sign out and pick them up. Please note that no one is allowed to park in front of the school main door/gate or in the handicap parking area at the auditorium side. This area needs to be kept clear for emergency purposes as it is a very narrow way.
3. First-floor classroom dismissal (rooms 4, 5, 6 & 7) will be through the back gate door facing the Church. Patio side doors are for emergency purposes only.

4. Second floor classrooms 8, 9, 10, and 11 will dismiss at the end of the day. Parents should enter the school and take either the elevator or the stairs near the elevator to reach their children's classrooms for pickup. After picking up their kids, they should walk to the end of the hallway, pass room 11, and exit through the stairs facing the Church.
5. Parents who have kids on both floors, please pick up your child first on the second floor, then go down to the first floor, through the stairs facing room number 14, and pick up your child in the first-floor classroom.

All students will be dismissed only to a parent/guardian or an authorized person as designated on the Registration Form. Older siblings may pick up younger siblings only if written authorization is on file in the Religious Education Office.

If a parent wants to permit another adult, not listed as an emergency contact, to pick up their child, the parent must give the said person a PIN that was provided to us during registration; without that, a child cannot be removed from school.

Early Release: Early release is to be an exception, not an every-week occurrence. An adult picking up a student out of normal release time must report to the Religious Education Office to sign the student out in the Early Release Book. An authorized person may be asked to show a valid photo ID and a PIN.

Late Pick up Policy: If students are not picked up at the designated time, they will be taken to the Religious Education Office five minutes after pick up time has ended. We will then contact the parent, guardian, or emergency contact. An authorized adult must come into the RE Office to sign their child out. In case of an emergency, please call the Religious Education Office at 786-480-9858 immediately. **There is a charge of \$15.00 per child for pickups that occur more than 15 minutes after the class has ended.**

During Class:

Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Only one person may use the bathroom at a time. Hands must be washed for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- Snacks are not permitted. You may bring water bottles, but only if necessary. Please consult your catechists for approval.
- Class attendance is mandatory and will be recorded weekly. Students are expected to attend every class. **Perfect Attendance Certificates** will be awarded at the end of the school year.

Excused Absence: Please be aware that only up to three absences will be accepted, provided a valid reason for each absence (such as a doctor's note). If the number of absences exceeds three, it may lead to removal from the program and/or a delay in the reception of sacraments. The administration will assess the child's readiness for sacraments when the scheduled sacraments are approaching, and the child is adequately prepared.

Continuous Formation: We offer kindergarten and first-grade classes. We encourage you to enroll your children in religious education classes after their First Communion until they are ready to begin preparing for Pre-Confirmation so they can continue their spiritual growth. The cost for these classes is \$50.00 per child per year.

Parish Liturgies:

Students and parents/guardians are expected to attend a "regular" weekly Liturgy on either Saturday or Sunday. Regular Mass attendance is necessary for your child's sacrament preparation. *The 5:00 pm Saturday mass is dedicated to our Religious Education Program.* Children may attend any of the other six masses based on their comfort. Your child will be assigned specific homework for each mass.

Parent's Formation:

Parents with children in the second year (First Communion, Confirmation, and RCIA II) have the opportunity to attend a series of uplifting conferences led by a dedicated priest during their child's time of formation. Attending two monthly meetings is required for your child to complete their preparation. Please follow the activities calendar on our website for more information.

Calendar of Events

A copy of the Religious Education calendar for each program can be found on our website, www.redumor.org in the left-sidebar menu.

Cellular Telephones

Catechist will pick up your child cell phone before class start, since students are not permitted to use them during class. Phone will be return it after class. If you have an emergency please call (786) 480-9858. For everyone's safety, adults, please refrain from using your cell phone while driving through the parking lot.

Book bags:

Students must bring a clear book bag to class; other types of bags won't be acceptable.

Emergency Information/ Inclement Weather

In the event of a weather or other type of emergency, Mother of Our Redeemer Parish will follow the lead of Miami-Dade County's Public Schools regarding the closure and reopening of classes. For more information on preparing for a hurricane emergency, please visit our website at www.redumor.org where you will find valuable information to help you be prepared.

In emergency conditions, such as a power outage on the Mother of Our Redeemer Campus, we will make every effort to contact families as soon as possible.

Parent Communication with the Office:

Communication between home and the Religious Education Department is vital. We aim to maintain an ongoing relationship with our students' families. *Please inform the Religious Education office of any changes in address or phone numbers, or of any family or health issues impacting the student.* Reach us by email at lmartorella@motherofourredeemer.org or by phone at 786-480-9858.

Concerns: We encourage you to come, call, email, or write to us if you have any concerns regarding your child or our program.

Archdiocesan Policy:

If you have concerns about a catechist, please try talking to the catechist first. If that doesn't work, you can then contact the parish Director of Religious Education. If you are still not satisfied, you should reach out to the Pastor. If all else fails, please contact the Archdiocese of Miami Department of Religious Education.

Parent/Catechist Communications:

Remind is an excellent tool for staying in touch with parents. Please install this app on your phone to access your child's catechist directly. Another way to communicate is by email, so please also have the catechist's email address on hand.

If you need to discuss a student's needs or progress, please write to the individual catechist or call the Religious Education Office to set up a conference.

Confidentiality:

Catechists, Religious Education volunteers, and staff will maintain the confidentiality of entrusted information, ensuring the safety and well-being of others.

Cooperation with Legal Authorities:

The religious education program will cooperate with local, state, or federal investigators or law enforcement officers involved in criminal investigations. We will make an effort to notify parents when their children are sought for interviews on the program's premises unless directed otherwise by investigators, particularly in cases of sexual or physical abuse. We will also try to have a representative present during such interviews unless prohibited by the investigators, especially in cases involving sexual or physical abuse.

Curriculum:

The Catholic Church's Catechism implements the curriculum and has been approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Empowering God's Children: In compliance with the Archdiocese of Miami Safe Environment requirements, the Teaching Boundaries and Safety Guide will be shown to parents/guardians. Please go to our website, www.redumor.org, on your left-hand side; under documents/forms, you will find this information in English as well as Spanish. This lesson is included in the curriculum; for more information, please check **pg. 20**.

Custodial Rights:

In cases of divorced parents, the religious education program will work with the parent who has legal custody of the child. The parent with legal custody will be responsible for matters such as absences, lateness, early dismissals, disciplinary issues, records of the religious education program, and authorization for sacraments. Both parents have the right to access in-person conferences and records and information about the child's religious education program, regardless of who the child's primary residential parent is, unless a court order specifically takes away these rights. In such cases, the custodial parent must provide evidence of the court order.

Dress Code:

All students must dress modestly for all Religious Education classes and events, especially for Mass. Please ensure that your child does not wear short shorts, gym clothes, bare midriffs, miniskirts, jeans with holes, or any attire that may be deemed inappropriate for a Catholic religious education program. The administration reserves the right to determine the appropriate dress code. We appreciate your cooperation.

Emergency Contact:

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to provide the Religious Education Office with accurate email addresses, phone numbers, and emergency contact information by filling out the provided Emergency Contact form via email or in person.

Emergency Treatment:

Please note that the emergency contact information provided will be used to notify a family in case of an emergency. If necessary, 911 will be called. Parents of children with severe allergies or disorders are responsible for listing that information on the Emergency Form provided to them via email or in person.

Fundraisers & Work of Mercy hours:

The Mother of Our Redeemer Religious Education program will sponsor our Church Festival. Parents will be asked to sell raffle tickets during the festival.

Harassment:

The religious education programs of the Archdiocese of Miami are committed to providing a discrimination-free environment. In line with this commitment, our parish does not tolerate harassment of employees, volunteers, or students. Such behavior is immoral and illegal and will not be accepted. Harassment encompasses unwelcome verbal, physical, and/or visual conduct that is based on a person's protected status, such as gender, color, race, ancestry, national origin, age, physical disability, mental condition, marital or veteran status, citizenship status, or other protected group status. The religious education programs of the Archdiocese will not tolerate harassing behavior that affects tangible job benefits, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment.

If any employee, volunteer, or student feels that they have experienced or witnessed harassment, they must immediately inform their Director of Religious Education. However, if the Director of Religious Education is the individual who is believed to be engaging in harassment, the employee, volunteer, or student should notify the Pastor, who will conduct an investigation. An appeal can be made to the Director of Religious Education Programs or the Vicar for Education. The Archdiocese prohibits any form of retaliation against individuals who report harassment.

Homework/Project Guidelines:

Homework is assigned at the discretion of the individual teacher. It aims to reinforce and broaden the child's grasp of the lessons and to keep parents informed and engaged.

Make-up Classes / Assignments:

Classes cannot be made up by attending a different session. If your child is absent, please ask the catechist if there is any necessary makeup work. Makeup work may be assigned at the catechist's discretion.

Insurance of Students:

The Archdiocese purchases general liability insurance that covers the students in our religious education programs when they are involved in program activities or traveling on parish-arranged transportation.

Items Brought From Home/ Lost and Found:

Please keep in mind the following information:

The Religious Education staff is not liable for lost, damaged, or stolen personal items. If items are lost, they will be kept in the office for two weeks. If not claimed within this period, they will be donated to needy people.

Learning Disabilities or Children's Special Needs

We welcome all children, regardless of physical, cognitive, or developmental limitations, and we provide assistance to those who may have special needs in adapting to our program. This is an inclusion program, meaning that your child will have classes with regular kids at his/her age. For more information or for a private discuss of your child needs please contact our Director Mrs. Liliana Martorella (786) 480 -9858. If our program is not able to fit the needs of your child, we will guide you to find a place where your child can have the appropriate preparation to receive the holy sacraments.

Medical/Medication Procedures:

The Archdiocese advises that Religious Education staff or volunteers should not administer medications to students. Parents are responsible for giving medications to their children outside the doctor's office or health institution. Students are not allowed to have over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, cough drops, or eye drops in their possession.

However, there are exceptions for inhalers, epi-pens, and medical testing devices. Written approval from a physician in the form of an "Authorization for Medication" is required. Parents must also submit a release freeing the Archdiocese, its staff, and volunteers from any liability related to the self-administration of these drugs. Once these documents are on file, students may carry prescribed inhalers, epi-pens, or medical devices, but these can only be used in the Religious Education Office.

If absolutely necessary, the religious education program may take responsibility for handling medication, but under specific guidelines:

- Medicines, including over-the-counter drugs, will not be given to students without written authorization from a licensed physician and the parent, along with a release.
- The parent must complete and submit an "Authorization for Medication" form from the physician's office. This form should indicate the medication's name and dosage.
- All medication must be brought to the Religious Education office along with the "Authorization for Medication" form. Prescription medication should be in the original bottle and labeled with the exact dosage. All medications will be kept in a secure location. Religious education personnel will not dispense medication, and students are responsible for administering their medicines.
- A written log of dispensed medication and the use of medical devices will be kept in the Religious Education office.

Parties

The Director of Religious Education will approve parties/celebrations. Requests are to be submitted before the students are notified. Foods are only to be consumed in designated areas; **NO FOOD IS ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOMS. NO PEANUT INGREDIENTS.** (Read labels)

Public Display of Affection

The Catholic religious education program promotes friendship, charity, kindness, love, and respect for self and others. However, inappropriate displays of affection, such as kissing or embracing, that imply more than superficial friendships are not allowed in the religious education program or at any religious education program event. The administration reserves the right to determine appropriate behavior in a Catholic religious education program.

Registrations

No person is excluded or otherwise subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, limitations, or national origin in receiving services within the religious education program.

Children will be registered into the Religious Education program on a first-come-first-serve basis, depending upon space available in the age-appropriate class and session requested. Registration fees are for one year. Please visit our website, www.redumor.org for more information. Fees must be paid by the time of registration.

Registration Fees: *A \$50.00 fee will be charge for each returned payment transaction.*

	First Year	Second Year
One Child	\$ 200.00	\$ 250.00
Two Children	\$ 230.00	\$ 330.00
Family of three and more	\$ 260.00	\$ 410.00
K, 1 st Grade and Post Comm.	\$ 50.00	

Family rates only apply to siblings and do not extend to other relatives.

Make your payments online at www.redumor.org. Look for the We Share Online giving icon (in red) at the upper left corner of the main page.

All Religious Education fees are to be paid. However, no child will be refused Religious Education because of family hardship. If you have a financial need, please contact Mrs. Liliana Martorella at lmartorella@motherofouredeemer.org or by phone at (786) 480-9858. Each case will be treated separately. In matters of admission to the program or the reception of a sacrament, the pastor is responsible for a final decision.

Attention: Registering for our Religious Education classes does not automatically register your family with Mother of Our Redeemer Parish. If you wish to become a parishioner of Mother of Our Redeemer Catholic Parish, please fill out a Parish census form, which is available in the church office. The parish census confirms your eligibility as a Catholic Godparent or Catholic Sponsor.

Student Requirements: Please ensure that your child attends all classes, actively participates in community service projects, and attends Mass every weekend and on holy days of obligation. After Mass, your child will receive a Mass attendance slip, which should be given to their catechists on the next day of class. During each class, they will also engage in activities related to their Mass journey, so they must attend Mass to participate fully in the following class. If your child has three or more unexcused absences from class, it may lead to the postponement or dismissal from participating in sacraments.

Parent Requirements: Parents must attend orientation (Open House), parent workshops/conferences, scheduled Masses, and requested events.

Student Withdrawal:

A student's education is a partnership between the parents and the religious education program. The Church considers parents to be the primary catechists of their children. Just as parents have the right to withdraw their child if desired, the religious education program administration reserves the right to require a student's withdrawal if the administration determines that the partnership is irretrievably broken.

Student Official Records:

The official student file contains attendance, sacramental records, health records, and emergency information. Only this information will be shared with a new religious education program.

Reporting Physical/ Sexual Abuse:

In Florida, residents are required by law to contact the Florida Department of Children & Families Hotline to report any reasonable cause or suspicion of child abuse, whether physical, sexual, neglectful, or abandonment. Calls to the hotline are confidential, and reporters are protected by the law if they make a report in good conscience. It's important to note that false reports are punishable by law. The professionals at the hotline will assess the evidence provided to determine if an investigation is necessary.

HOTLINE: 1-800-96-ABUSE

Safety / Security:

For the safety of everyone, our Parish ensures that all adult volunteers have been approved through the Safe Environment program of our Parish and the Catholic Diocese of Miami. They also participate in the VIRTUS program to protect children from potential harm.

Please enter the building only through the front door of the School, and supervision of students is only available 10 minutes before class begins. *For the safety of the children, please avoid dropping them off earlier, as we are not equipped to supervise them.*

All visitors during class hours are required to sign in at the Religious Education Office and obtain a Visitor's Badge. Thank you for helping us ensure a safe environment for everyone.

Sacramental Preparation:

Baptism of Infants and Children up to 6 years old: Arrangements may be made through the Church Office. Please call at (305) 829-3059

RCIA for Kids (Between 7-16 years old in need of Baptism):

To be in keeping with the Catholic Church's general guidelines regarding the established age of reason and to verify the intention to prepare and carry out the duties of Christianity, any child seven to twelve years old will prepare for Baptism by participating for two years or more in the **Children's Catechumenate** offered through the Religious Education Ministry. Classes for students and Family sessions are combined to best prepare the child for the reception of Baptism and First Eucharist. During the second year, after showing an appropriate degree of readiness, the unbaptized child will receive both sacraments during the Easter Vigil Mass. Sessions are on Tuesdays afternoons.

First Communion and Confirmation:

The Archdiocese of Miami suggests two or more consecutive years of formal religious education for the reception of the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation, respectively. Children must be of an age of reason, seven years or older, and in 2nd grade or above, to receive the sacraments.

At Mother of Our Redeemer, children traditionally prepare for First Communion by attending Religious Education classes in 2nd grade and receiving sacraments in 3rd grade. Confirmation preparation is traditionally in 7th grade, with the students receiving Confirmation at the end of 8th grade. Mother of Our Redeemer Religious Education also offers programs for students who have not received the sacraments at the traditional age.

During the two years of preparation parents/guardians and students will be invited to attend various programs/meetings, which will nourish and strengthen faith and spirituality. These programs are extremely important, and every effort should be made to attend.

RCIA for High School Students and Adults:

Catholic faith formation is a process that prepares the young adult for full initiation through the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This discernment process is based on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Sessions are every Thursday from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Mother of Our Redeemer School ground. Focus is on the Bible, the Eucharist, and how to live your life as a Catholic. Please Contact the Church office (305) 829-3059 for more information.

School Property:

Accidental/deliberate damage to any church property during Religious Education classes or events must be reported immediately to the Religious Education Office. Willful or intentional damage to school property may result in dismissal from the Religious Education Program and parents will be responsible for paying all damages incurred by your child. Please explain to your child that they are using the desks of morning MOR students, and they need to respect and care for the items of others.

Service Projects:

Community Service projects approved by the Director allow students to share their time, talent, and treasure with the greater community ~ to be the hands and feet of Christ.

Confirmation Candidates are required to participate in Corporate and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Parents are encouraged to accompany their sons and daughters on projects. Details are included in the Confirmation packet distributed at the Confirmation Meeting for Parents and Candidates.

Spiritual Nights of Reflection/Retreats and Parents Workshops:

All First Communion and Confirmation Candidates participate in designated spiritual retreats and nights of reflection. Parents as well, will be attending to workshops on designated nights. Notification will be given regarding dates and times.

Student Photos/Videos:

Throughout the Religious Education year, catechists and staff may take pictures/videos of the children engaged in various aspects of our children's program. Please indicate your permission to have your child's photo taken by signing the Photography/Video release forms provide to you by the Religious Education Director.

Substance Abuse Policy:

The use or possession of illegal drugs or illegal mood-altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug-related paraphernalia, or the abuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs by any student on parish property or while attending or participating in any religious education sponsored activity is forbidden. Transgression of this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from religious education program, even for a first offense.

Any student selling drugs on church property or at religious education events will be immediately expelled. All Archdiocesan religious education programs are committed to a drug free environment.

Textbooks:

Students will receive individual workbooks, children in their confirmation program, will also receive a Bible. If a book is damaged or lost during the year, a new one will be issued at a replacement cost of \$40.00. Students are to bring their books, Bibles, and supplies to class each **session**.

Student Visitors: (This policy is temporarily cancelled due to pandemic)

With permission from a parent or guardian (using a designated pin), a one-time visit to an age-appropriate class at the discretion of the Director is permitted. The student visitor reports to the Religious Education Office first, presents parental permission (PIN), signs the Visitor Log, and receives a Visitor Badge. Please return Visitor Badges before leaving the building. (Visitors may not wander the facility without authorization.) Return Visitor Badges to the office before exiting the building.

Volunteers:

Volunteers are essential and contribute to the success of our Religious Education Program. We invite parents/guardians, grandparents, and other adult and teen parishioners to participate in our Religious Education ministry. All volunteers must fulfill the Archdiocese of Miami Volunteer requirements.

Each volunteer must complete a Volunteer Application form, be interviewed by the Director, sign a Volunteer Code of Conduct, be fingerprinted by the Archdiocese of Miami, and attend a VIRTUS Workshop, "Protecting God's Children." Volunteers are also invited to attend Religious Education meetings and workshops. The Archdiocese of Miami offers a Catechist Certification program.

Mother of Our Redeemer volunteers are responsible for reading the information provided to them.

Weapons Policy:

Weapons are not permitted anywhere on church grounds or at religious education sponsored events. Students who bring weapons, who are in possession of weapons, or who threaten others with weapons or items used as weapons will be expelled from the religious education program.

TEACHING SAFETY - EMPOWERING GOD'S CHILDREN

All students in our Religious Education program will participate in a safety lesson provided to us by the Archdiocese of Miami. **Classes will be on Oct 22nd and Oct 23rd respectively.** These lessons are part of an ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from the potential of sexual child abuse. These *Teaching Safety* lessons were developed by the creators of the *Protecting God's Children*TM program.

This safety lesson will be taught by the child's catechist or a member of our Religious Education ministry. Our purpose for teaching these lessons is to assist the parents in keeping children safe and to reinforce what to do, if a potentially dangerous situation presents itself.

For more information on the Teaching Safety Program, visit the VIRTUS *Online*TM website at:

<http://www.virtus.org/virtus/touchingsafetyprogram.cfm> or go to our website www.redumor.org on your left hand side, under the documents/forms tab look for *Teaching Boundaries and Safety*

An overview of the lesson plan is available in the R.E. Office.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Conduct Inside or Outside the Religious Education Program

A student who engages in conduct, whether inside or outside the religious education program that is contrary to the moral code of the Church may be asked to leave the program.

Parental Responsibilities

The Mother of Our Redeemer Religious Education program recognizes that the ultimate responsibility for a student's behavior rests with the parents/guardians. Students are to respect authority, which includes adherence to rules, regulations and procedures.

Behavioral Expectations of Students and Adults

The Ten Commandments will guide all behavior.

Respect is to be given to all adults and students at all times.

All individuals involved in the Religious Education ministry will exhibit appropriate behavior in speech and in actions.

Discipline Code

All discipline is based on Christian principles. Our objective is to reinforce positive behavior. All children and adults are to be treated with respect.

Preventative Discipline

Create an environment in which the student is involved in constructive, creative and age appropriate lessons and activities.

Redirection

The student is redirected to engage in appropriate class participation.

Consequences

Consequences for disruptive or inappropriate behavior during class will be appropriate to the offense. All attempts will be made to handle this situation within the classroom setting.

Short term Separation

The student may require a brief separation from the classroom setting. A member of the catechetical team will accompany the child to the Religious Education Office. The Director will speak with the child and determine if and when the student may return to the class. (If a student repeatedly exhibits inappropriate behavior, parents will be notified.)

Removal from the Program

Behavior that endangers the safety of the child, other students, and/or the catechetical team will not be tolerated. In such instances, the parent will be called and requested to immediately pick up the offending student. At this time a conference with the Director and/or the catechist will be scheduled.

Religious Education Program Policy and Director of Religious Education's Right to Amend

Any student action that is not in keeping with the philosophy/ objective of Mother of Our Redeemer Religious Education program is subject to the review of the administration and may lead the parish to dismiss the student from the religious education program.

Since situations can arise that were not foreseen at the time of writing this Handbook, the religious education program reserves the right to initiate, change, or modify the policies as needed. Parents and students will be notified of any amendments. The Director of Religious Education and/or Pastor is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations and may waive any disciplinary rules for just cause at his/her discretion.

Archdiocesan **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The Office of Religious Education at Mother of Our Redeemer is committed to promoting a safe, healthy, caring, and respectful learning environment for all. As such, bullying is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Therefore, this policy prohibits any unwelcome verbal or written conduct or gestures directed at a student by another student that has the effect of:

- (1) physically, emotionally, or mentally harming a student;
- (2) damaging, extorting or taking a student's personal property;
- (3) placing a student in reasonable fear of emotional or mental harm;
- (4) placing a student in reasonable fear of damage to or loss of personal property; or
- (5) creating an intimidating or hostile environment that substantially interferes with a student's educational opportunities or the Catholic mission of Mother of Our Redeemer Parish.

I Definition

- a. **Bullying** may involve but is not limited to: teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking, innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other verbal or written conduct. Cyber-bullying

includes the following misuses of digital technology: teasing, intimidating, or making false accusations about another student by way of any technological tool, such as sending or posting inappropriate email messages, instant messages, text messages, digital images or website postings (including blogs and social network sites).

b. This definition includes students who either directly engage in an act of bullying or who, by their behavior, support another student's act of bullying.

II Scope

- a) This policy prohibits bullying that occurs either:
 - i. on parish premises before, during, or after Religious Education hours;
 - ii. on any bus or vehicle as part of any Religious Education activity; or
 - iii. during any function, extracurricular activity or other Religious Education-sponsored event or activity.

III. Reporting Complaints

a. Each student and parent has a duty to report any bullying to the Office of Religious Education immediately. If a student experiences (or a parent witnesses or learns of) any incident of bullying, the incident must be promptly reported to the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education. The DRE/CRE will provide the student/parent with the Bullying Complaint Report Form which must be completed, dated and signed by the complaining party so that the Office of Religious Education may initiate further inquiry, when appropriate.

IV. Disciplinary Action

- a. Any student found to have violated this policy may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include: temporary removal from the classroom, loss of privileges, detention, counseling, parent conference, suspension, expulsion, and/or notification to appropriate authorities. The disciplinary action may be unique to the individual incident and may vary in method and severity based on the director's discretion.
- b. False reports or accusations of bullying also constitutes a violation of this policy and may subject the offending party to appropriate disciplinary action.