

August, 2017

Dear Parents,

At first it seemed that summer would never arrive and now here I am welcoming you and your children to another year of Religious Education! I do hope that you had time for rest and relaxation.

As you may know, our office stays open for most of the summer. Registering and placing 1300 students into classes can be quite daunting for our small staff. But, as evidenced by the attached, we have been able to do just that.

This year, once again we are blessed with over 150 volunteers who help meet the needs of the students each week. Did you know that we have 78 catechists who give of their time and talent to teach our students about our faith? Many catechists do not even have children in the program! This fall we will honor 8 more catechists who have reached their 10th anniversary of teaching and 2 catechists who have taught our First Communion students for 25 years! We are very grateful to each and every one of them for all that they do.

A few things have been brought to light this year that I must speak about:

- Many students are arriving late and many are being picked up early. This is very disruptive to our program. Catechists spend time preparing lessons and are constantly being interrupted. This is very frustrating. **PLEASE** do not place your child on a day where they may have other activities scheduled. Please help your child see that their Religious Education is a **PRIORITY!** If a child is constantly late or leaving early often, or decides that they want to join an activity that will have them miss consecutive classes, the time that they miss will have to be treated as absences and will have to be made up over the summer.

- As you can imagine, cell phones are also a problem. In classes where there are problems, I am asking the catechists to place a basket on the teacher's desk and have the students place their phone in it on entering the classroom. Too much instruction time is wasted with student's texting, playing games, etc. I have had many instances where the parents are texting their child!! WHY?
- If your child has special needs, whether it is a learning disability or severe medical need, such as an epi-pen, please let us know so that we can address this issue together.
- Our parking lot policy has not changed. We are grateful for your cooperation. Our concern is for the safety of your child, so please continue to follow the attached instructions.

As we have done in the past, we are asking parents to **not** send their children into class with a snack unless they are attending on the weekend. If a child is attending during the week they can have a snack at home before arriving. For students who are attending on Saturday or Sunday, we are asking parents to provide their child with a **nut free snack, enough for only their child.** (This is one time where sharing is not always best.) Thank you for your understanding. Of course they all may bring water bottles.

Once again this year we will teach "Safe Environment" which is required by the Archdiocese of New York. This will take place sometime in February. We will notify you of the date before the lesson is taught to your child. You can find "Opt Out" forms on the church's website.

As always, we thank you for allowing us to partner with you on this special journey. Enjoy these last days of summer, see you in September.

Sincerely,

Sara Koshofer CRE