

St. Mary Parish
Parish School of Religion
Family Handbook
2017-2018



Mission Statement

We believe that “the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people in touch,
in intimacy and communion, with the person of Jesus Christ”

Catechesi Tradendae, 5 – John Paul II

St. Mary Parish
Parish School of Religion
401 North Street
Chardon, OH 44024
PSR Office: 440-286-6531
PSR Attendance Line: 440-286-6531 x18
e-mail: psroffice@stmarychardon.org

Parish Fax: 440-286-3886
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Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary's Parish School of Religion. We look forward to working with you and your children this year. This handbook covers most everything you need to know about our parish's catechetical and spiritual formation program. Please look over it carefully and note all aspects that pertain specifically to you and your child.

*The parish catechists and the parish staff have planned a wonderful program; we are only part of the spiritual formation process - you as parents are the first and primary educators in the faith. In other words, **this process does not work without you!** In order to help your child to grow in his or her Catholic faith, parents must be a part of our team. Show good example by praying with your children, attending Mass and participating in the other sacraments with them. We hope to expose the children to a variety of Catholic traditions during the course of the year, but the exposure means so much more if these traditions are important to you and your family.*

While you are interested in religious instruction for your children, we would like you to know that the Parish School of Religion has a broad range of opportunities for education and spiritual formation here in our parish. For those who are curious about the Catholic Faith or who feel that the Holy Spirit may be encouraging them to join the Church you may be interested in joining us for RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults).

We are very glad that you are here; you as a parent are the most important part of our team and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Mrs. Jeannette Stone
Parish Catechetical Leader
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Goal of Catechesis in Grades 1-8

- Teach students what a Catholic believes and how a Catholic ought to live
- Involve students in the life of the parish, i.e., worship, service, community
- Assist parents in imparting the Catholic faith to their child as a living and life-giving faith
- Encourage parents to continue their own religious development

Role of Parents

Our PSR Program is designed to supplement what is being taught in the home, not to take its place. Parents are vital for nurturing the faith of their children. They are the first and primary educators of their children. As cooperative participants in our program, parents should:

- Attend Mass with their child on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- Teach their child the traditional prayers of the church
- Bring their child to class on time every week
- Maintain an open line of communication with their child's teacher and PSR Office.

Registration Procedures

St. Mary Parish School of Religion is open to all registered families of St. Mary Parish whose children either attend public school or are home schooled. **Families must be registered in the parish before enrolling their children in the Parish School of Religion.** Registration forms for students are to be returned with tuition fee to the PSR Office. All students new to our program must also include an official Certificate of Baptism. **Please note, no family will be turned away because of an inability to pay fees. In the event of financial difficulty, please contact the PSR Office.**

Attendance Policy

Faith formation is a lifelong experience and regular attendance is critical for success. A record of attendance will be kept on file during the child's enrollment. Students registered in PSR are expected to attend classes and miss class only when there is a serious reason. Frequent absences make it difficult for children to master the material designated for that grade level. Students are expected to submit make-up work covered in the missed class. Excessive absences or failure to turn in make-up assignments may result in a family interview with the Parish Catechetical Leader or Pastor. Please review the St. Mary PSR Attendance Policy for further details.

If your child will be absent, the parent must call the PSR Office Attendance Line at 286-6531 x18 prior to class. Please be ready to give the child's name, grade, teacher and/or room number.

PSR Cancellation

When Chardon Schools are cancelled due to inclement weather, PSR is cancelled for that evening. However, if inclement weather begins later in the day, a decision will be made no later than 5:00 p.m. Please check local television channels. **Please call 286-6531 if you are unsure of cancellation. The office will also attempt to send out mass emails announcing PSR class cancellation.**

Early Dismissal

If a student needs to leave PSR before class is over, a note must be given to the PSR Office prior to the start of class stating the time that the student must leave. Please pick-up your student at the PSR Office. Do not go to the classroom to pick up your student.

Illness/Accidents

Students who become ill or who are injured during a PSR night will be brought to the Religious Education Office. Should it be determined that the child should not return to class, a telephone call will be placed to the parent or guardian. Should medical attention be required, the child will be transported to the nearest emergency center for treatment after attempting to contact parents.

Arrival Procedure Grades 1-5

The back school door (#17) will open at 6:00 p.m. for PSR students to enter. Children may be dropped off using the back parking lot via the south drive (convent side) no earlier than 6:00 p.m. Drivers are to pull up parallel to the sidewalk and all the way to the end of the sidewalk near the church doors. Students will then exit the car onto the sidewalk and enter through the back school doors (#17). Class begins promptly at 6:15 p.m.

If you choose to park and escort your child(ren) into the building, please remember that **NO CHILD SHOULD BE LEFT UNATTENDED ON THE PARKING LOT.**

PLEASE NOTE: PSR IS NOT PERMITTED TO USE THE FRONT CHURCH/SCHOOL PARKING LOT AND DRIVEWAY—IT IS RESERVED FOR GYM/CYO USE ONLY. THE FRONT SCHOOL ENTRANCE WILL NOT BE UNLOCKED FOR PSR USE.

If you wish to wait for your child while classes are in session, you must wait in the Parish Library located off the Church's Gathering Space. School doors will be locked at 6:25 p.m.

Dismissal Procedure Grades 1-5

Grades 1 – 5 will dismiss from their classrooms at 7:30 p.m. For the safety of our students, parents must park and enter the building through the back (#17) entrance of the school. All other doors will be locked. The back entrance will be unlocked at 7:20 p.m. Parents who arrive before 7:20 should use the Church doors to enter and wait in the Parish Library until the school doors are opened.

Please stand *quietly* outside your child's door and wait for the catechist to open the door and dismiss the children at 7:30 p.m. **Please do not disturb the catechist or knock on the door or window while waiting.** Catechists will ask adults to step forward, sign the Sign-Out Sheet and give the name of the child(ren) they are picking up. If the catechist/aide is unfamiliar with the adult or it is the first time someone is picking up the child, they will be asked to show a photo ID. In the event that a parent/guardian is unable to pick up their child, please complete the **Pick-up Authorization Form** found in the back of this handbook and return it to the PSR Office. We will keep this form on file. If a child is being picked up by someone other than a parent/guardian, and there is no Pick-up Authorization form on file in PSR Office or parent letter stating that the student is permitted to go home with the individual, the catechist will bring the student down to the PSR Office at the conclusion of dismissal where a call will be made home. Students who are not picked up by 7:40 will wait in the PSR Office. **Please note that no parent/child is to leave through the emergency doors at the south end of the hallways or the doors exiting towards the playground.**

*Cones will be set up in the parking lot to create a "safe zone" for those exiting the building.
Please exit the parking lot to the BACK, creating one line exiting the north entrance.*

Arrival Procedure Grades 6-8

Students are encouraged to attend the 5:30 p.m. Mass before class. If they are not attending Mass that day, they may be dropped off at the **rear school doors (#17)** no earlier than 6:15 p.m. Cars should enter the back parking lot via the south drive (convent side) and pull up parallel to the sidewalk. School doors will be locked by 6:40 p.m. and reopened at 7:35 p.m. Parents who arrive before 7:35 should wait either in their car or use the Church doors to enter and wait in the church gathering space until the school doors are opened. Class begins at 6:30 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE: PSR IS NOT PERMITTED TO USE THE FRONT CHURCH/SCHOOL PARKING LOT AND DRIVEWAY—IT IS RESERVED FOR GYM/CYO USE ONLY. THE FRONT SCHOOL ENTRANCE WILL NOT BE UNLOCKED FOR PSR USE.

Dismissal Procedure Grades 6-8

Once the bell rings at 7:45 p.m. students are free to exit the classroom. Please plan to arrive on time. For the safety of our students, dismissal will happen only through the back (#17) entrance of the school. **Please park and walk in to meet your student or park and wait for your child to come to you. Do NOT form a line outside the school to wait for your child.** Students who are not picked up on time will be sent to the PSR Office to wait. If you arrive after 7:55 p.m., please go to the PSR Office and claim your student.

Discipline Policy

All students will be treated with dignity and respect. In order to provide a safe environment and an effective program, some rules for behavior are necessary. Each classroom will have a set of rules set by the classroom teacher. All students are required to be respectful and display a Christian attitude in the way they dress, speak and behave. **No food or drink (including gum) is permitted in the classrooms.** If a student does not follow these basic rules, the following disciplinary process will be used:

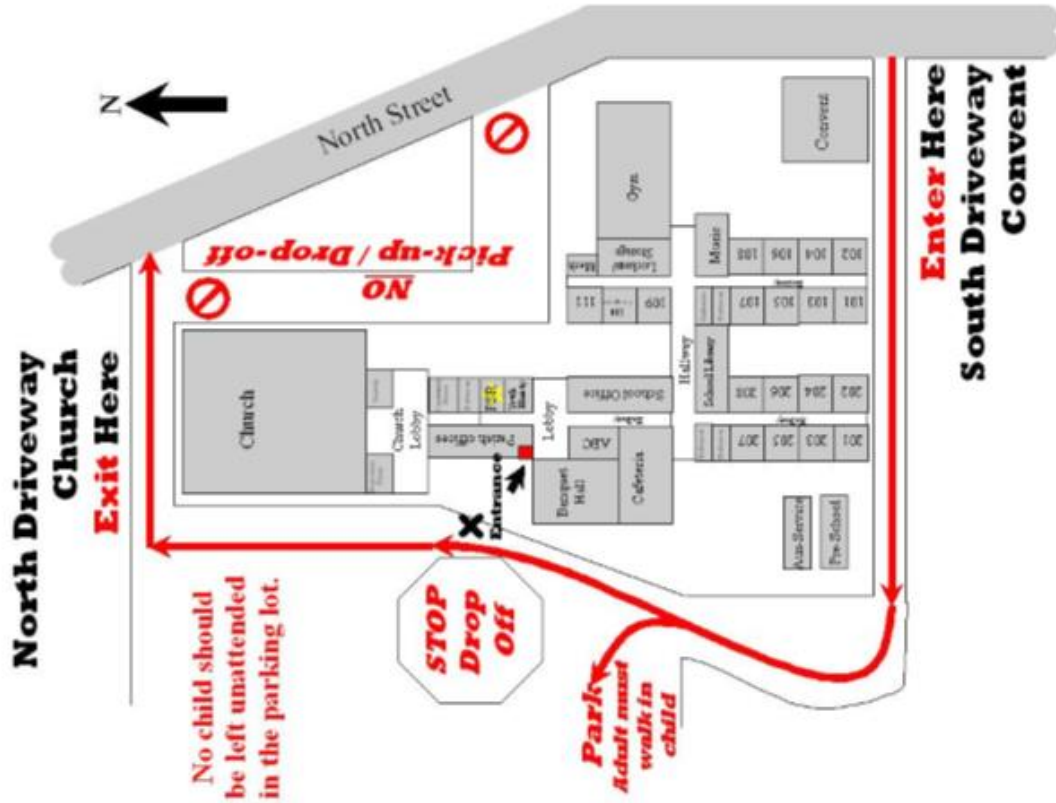
1. Teacher will remind student of appropriate behavior in a positive manner
2. If inappropriate behavior is consistent and disruptive to the learning of other students, the student will be sent to the PSR Office to meet with the Parish Catechetical Leader. The student may be required to develop a plan of action to correct the disruptive behavior and have it signed by their parents/guardian in order to return to the regular classroom. Any time a student is sent to PSR Office, a parent will be notified by a Disciplinary Action Plan or a phone call by the Director of Religious Education and/or the classroom teacher.
3. If a student's behavior does not improve as a result of the above, the parish reserves the right to have the student removed from the classroom.

Updating Student/Family/Emergency Information

It is extremely important that the PSR Office has current student, family and emergency information on hand. Please remember to contact the PSR Office if your address, email and/or your home, work, cell or emergency phone number contact changes during the year by using the PSR Update/Change/Suggestion Form at the back of this handbook or emailing the changes to psroffice@stmarychardon.org.

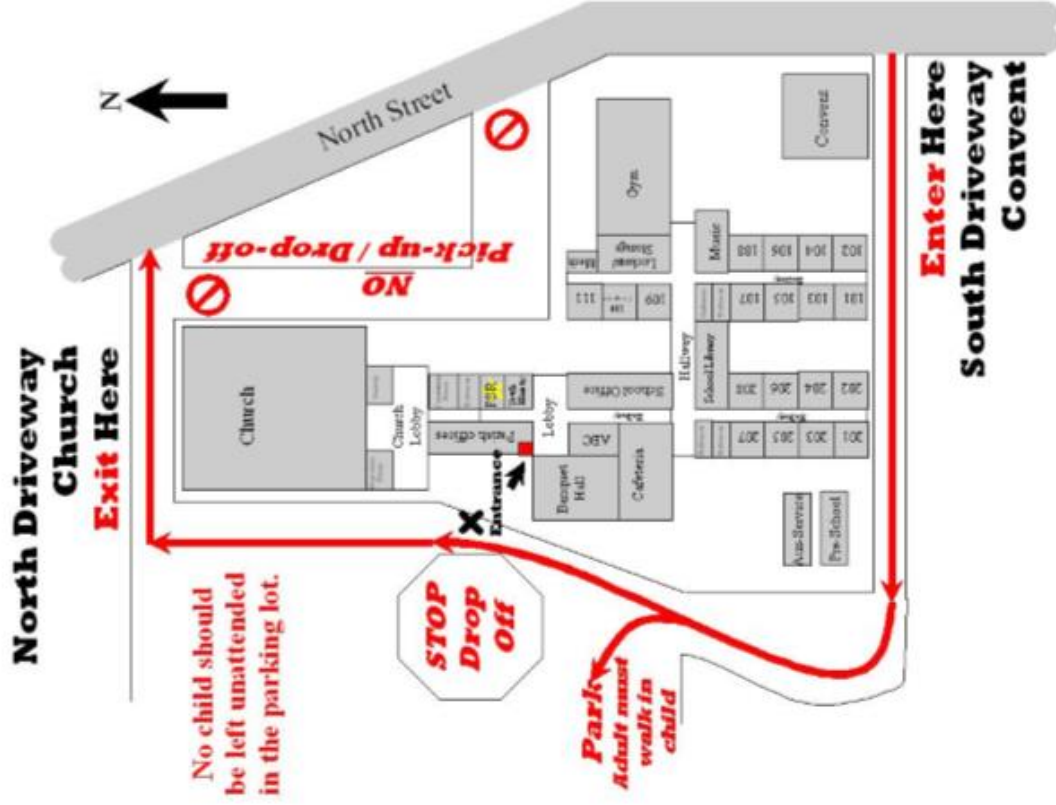
Map for Arrival

School door (#17) opens at 6:00 pm, Monday
and 7:35 pm, Sunday



Map for Dismissal

School door (#17) opens at 7:20 pm, Monday



Dress Code Policy

Clothing should be appropriate for Church/school. All clothing should be neat, and free of holes.

- No item of clothing may be worn which displays ads or promotions for alcoholic beverages, tobacco, or any other drug, or which advocates violence, racism or sexual misconduct or displays inappropriate or offensive language or images.
- Shirts should be respectful and modest; bare midriffs, halter tops, mesh shirts, “spaghetti strap” tops, muscles shirts/tank tops, and transparent shirts will not be tolerated.
- No tight, clingy, revealing or form fitting pants are to be worn; i.e. spandex, yoga pants or leggings. Belts must be worn with loose pants. Pants are to be worn at the waist and not drag excessively on the floor. Shorts are to be fingertip length.
- No hats or hoods are to be worn in the building at any time.
- Shoes should be comfortable and practical. For safety reasons, no flip-flops or shoes with wheels are permitted. Athletic spikes, muddy boots, or any type of shoe that may damage the floor is prohibited.

Use of Electronics Policy

There shall be no use of any electronic devices by students while in class or at Mass. Any and all electronic devices misused during class or Mass may be confiscated. Cell phones may be used after class to contact parents. Teachers have the right to take the phone until the end of class if a child is using a cell phone during class. Phones will be returned to the student at dismissal. In the event of an emergency, the classrooms and hallways are equipped with phones capable of calling 911.

TO DIAL 911 ON CLASSROOM AND HALLWAY PHONES DIAL 9-9-1-1

At no time should a student view, possess, capture, post, disseminate, transfer and/or share nude, semi-nude, blasphemous, profane, obscene, pornographic, vulgar, sexually suggestive, or otherwise inappropriate photos, videos, tweets, songs, jokes etc. Any of the above stated actions may constitute a crime under state and federal law. Anyone found participating in such behavior will have their parent called and be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. No electronic device is to be used to bully, harass, intimidate, haze or threaten another individual. Student found participating in any of these activities will have their device confiscated, parent called and law enforcement contacted.

St. Mary Parish will not be held responsible for lost or stolen electronic devices.

Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol Policy

The use, concealment, transfer, sale, possession, or buying of any controlled substance, tobacco, drug or alcohol will result in an immediate conference with the student's parents. If a child is to use a prescribed drug for the treatment of asthma, allergies or medical condition, the drug is to be kept in the PSR Office and a note from the child's doctor must be provided describing its use and dosage. If a child carries an EpiPen, a note from the child's doctor must be on file in the PSR Office explaining why and under what condition constitutes the carrying and use of the EpiPen. With the exception of a life or death emergency, no child should self-medicate themselves while at PSR. Failure to follow this policy will result in an immediate conference with parents and in some cases a call to law enforcement.

Cameras

St. Mary Parish facility is equipped with an updated security system that incorporates numerous cameras. These cameras monitor all exterior doors, internal hallways and gather areas.

Weapons Policy

At no time should a student possess, use, transmit, display, handle, or conceal an object that can be classified as a weapon or dangerous instrument. In addition no student shall possess, use, transmit, display, handle, or conceal an object that can be considered a look-alike weapon or dangerous instrument that may be disruptive to education. Violation of this policy will result in the notification of law enforcement and an immediate conference with the parents.

Overview of the Curriculum - Grades K-5

Written by the Sisters of Notre Dame, Christ Our Life fosters children's love of God and guides them toward a life of discipleship. With its thorough presentation of the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church, comprehensive approach, and variety of teaching methods students will have a rich knowledge of the Catholic faith so they may respond to the Church's essential mission to evangelize and be disciples of Christ. Please check out <http://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/christ-our-life/christ-our-life-2016/parents-and-students> for materials specifically designed for use at home to supplement what is learned in the classroom. **Students are expected to bring their books and other materials to and from PSR each week in the blue bag provided.**

Overview of the Curriculum - Grade 6

Sixth graders will study the Old Testament and trace our salvation history from the creation of the world to the time of Jesus using *The Catholic Youth Bible*. *The Catholic Youth Bible* draws the student into the biblical text itself to see how it speaks to them.

Overview of the Curriculum - Grade 7-8

Be My Disciples shares the Christian story using reflection on Scripture and doctrine, plus prayer celebrations throughout the church year. This series is in semester format focusing on the foundations of our Catholic faith. Each text in the curriculum invites, teaches, and challenges young people to discipleship. Students will participate in three mini-retreats throughout the year. In addition to *Be My Disciples*, students will also attend special Confirmation preparation sessions beginning Spring of seventh grade.

Called to Protect Program Grades 1-5 & 7

Praesidium's *Called to Protect*[™] is a multi-media training program focused on matters of personal safety, abuse prevention and creation of safe environments for children based upon the latest child development research on how children and youth can best protect themselves. It does not replace the VIRTUS training for employees and volunteers, but is supplementary to that. Lessons will be woven into classes during regular class times.

The annual parent meeting(s) will be offered on Sunday, October 8 and Monday, October 9. *Called To Protect*[™] for Parents and Families, teaches parents what they must know to protect their own children. Parents new to our program and those parents who did not previously attend "Called to Protect" are expected to attend.

Called To Protect[™] for Young Children teaches age appropriate information to children in elementary school. They learn rules about protecting their bodies and what to do if someone tries to break the rules.

Called To Protect[™] for Youth teaches middle and high-school aged kids about boundaries, how to respond if someone tries to violate their boundaries, and how to tell their parents if they or their friend have been abused. The 7th grade students will assemble in the Banquet Room for instruction on Sunday, April 22 and Sunday, April 29. As a parent, you have the option of requesting that your child not participate in the above program. Please contact the PSR Office for an "Opt-Out" form if you do not want your child to participate in the *Called To Protect*[™] for Youth program or if you have any questions.

***Called To Protect*[™] for Parents and Families Meetings are
Sunday, October 8 or Monday, October 9 at 6:30 p.m. in the Banquet Room.**

***Called To Protect*[™] for Youth Opt-Out Form is available on the PSR website
if you do not want your child to participate in *Called To Protect*[™] for Youth.**

ST. MARY PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our parish provides an opportunity for children to attend PSR each and every year, in support of the Baptismal responsibilities parents bear as the “primary teachers of the Catholic Faith” to their children. As our curriculum is based on a spiral scope and sequence, students engage their coursework in an age-appropriate manner each year as a part of their ongoing Religious Education. The vast majority of our students make this progress year after year, and the benefits are a testimony to the faith lives of the families in our parish community.

Faith formation is a lifelong experience and regular attendance is critical for success. A student experiences greater and longer-lasting benefit and has increased confidence with consistent participation. Students registered in PSR are expected to attend classes and miss class only when there is a serious reason such as illness. At the same time, *children who are kept out of classes over one or more years become disadvantaged, and may be evaluated for readiness and required to make up a portion of any Religious Education work they missed before they are re-enrolled in PSR.*

In classes directly involving preparation for reception of Sacraments (Grades 1, 2, 7, and 8) regular attendance ensures the success of class-based communication, group discussion, reflection, and community-focused action. *Students in sacramental years are expected to be present for at least 75% of all scheduled classes. All other students are expected to be present for at least 60% of all scheduled classes.*

If a student must be absent from PSR class, a parent/guardian should call the PSR Office attendance line at 286-6531 x18 stating the student’s name, grade, teacher, and reason for the absence. The student is expected to submit the make-up work covered in the missed class. Excessive absences or failure to turn in make-up assignments may result in a family interview with the Parish Catechetical Leader or Pastor.

Religious Education and Extra-curricular Activities

PSR assists parents in their carrying out their Baptismal responsibility as “primary educators” of the Catholic faith to their children. This includes those parents who choose extracurricular programs for their children that may, on occasion, conflict with PSR class sessions. Parents are strongly urged to review our Attendance Policy and exercise good judgement in planning their children’s schedules.

If sports or other outside activities will be a known conflict, parents are encouraged to contact the PSR Office to discuss the options available to them to complete PSR for the current year. A reasonable solution will be sought that is mutually beneficial to all parties and will also satisfy the requirements for promotion to the next grade level.

Pick-up Authorization for Grades 1-5

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Child's Name: _____ Grade: _____

_____ Grade: _____

_____ Grade: _____

_____ Grade: _____

The following people are authorized to pick-up my child from PSR:

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone number: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone number: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Phone number: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Handbook Policy Acknowledgement Form

I have received and read the St. Mary Parish School of Religion Handbook for the 2017-2018 PSR School Year and accept the policies regarding program goals, my role as a parent/guardian, as well as policies on admission, attendance, arrival and dismissal and discipline contained in the handbook.

Student's Agreement

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Parent's/Guardian's Agreement

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____