



***Our Lady of Sorrows
Religious Education Program
Parent Handbook***

Mission Statement:

Our Lady of Sorrows Religious Education program provides continuing religious education and sacramental preparation for children from 2nd grade through high school. This program assists, directs, and helps parents, the primary educators of their children, with ongoing education in their children's faith formation.

About Our Program

The program we use helps the growth and nourishment of faith and provides a continual formation in spiritual enrichment and Gospel teachings. The foundation of our program is the six fundamental tasks of catechesis, taken from the General and National Directories for Catechesis:

- Promote knowledge of the faith
- Promote knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and sacraments
- Promote moral formation in Jesus Christ
- Teach how to pray with Christ
- Prepare the Christian to live in community and participate in the life and mission of the Church
- Promote a missionary spirit that prepares the Christian to be present as Christians in society

These six tasks constitute a unified whole; together with normal evangelical efforts of the parish, they are the sum total of the OLS religious education program's goals.

Religious Education Personnel

Director of Religious Education: Jana Adams is the delegate of the pastor and responsible for enacting the mission and running the operations of the Religious Education program. You can contact her in the following ways:

Jana Adams

Cell: (505) 363-5516

janaroad@gmail.com

Catechist: Our volunteer catechists teach the doctrine of the faith to the children.

Amanda Luna is the Confirmation Teachers.

You can contact her in the following ways:

Amanda Luna

Cell: (505) 917-3519

manda92485@gmail.com

Announcements

Parents should consult the weekly Sunday Bulletin for general information regarding the Religious Education Program. Although written communication reflecting changes in the program calendar or special up-coming events will be sent home with the students, the Sunday Bulletin does provide another means of communicating information about the program and should be checked regularly.

Admissions

Admission is open to all children whose parent/s or guardian is Catholic. The family must be registered at the parish. You are welcome to register at the parish office on Monday's or Friday's. If you do not register, you may not be able to attend religious education at Our Lady of Sorrows. Additionally, if you are not a member of our parish but wish for your child to receive sacramental preparation at OLS, you will need to obtain a letter of permission from the pastor of the church at which you are registered.

Proof of legal guardianship/adoption or written permission must be obtained if you are not the parent of the child that is being enrolled.

Registration

In order to register a student, the following is required:

- Completed registration form
- If applicable, proof of Legal Guardianship/Adoption
- Registration forms will not be taken without payment or payment plan, Birth Certificate and Baptismal Certificate if child has been Baptized.

Registration Fees

- First Child: \$30.00
- 2nd Child: \$25.00

This cost goes primarily toward covering the materials and operational expenses incurred in running a religious education program. Our catechists are volunteers and are not compensated for their work except through the grace of God.

Attendance

Children need to understand the value of commitment if they are to begin to truly learn and grow in their faith as children of God. As responsible Catholic parents, it is important to prioritize – which means that faith must come first! It must be more important than sports, parties, and time with friends. This is an essential value which must be passed on to our children.

- Please make sure your child is on time and in attendance on a regular basis for their classes. Students are permitted **three** excused absences per year; this includes illness and family emergencies. If the student is more than 15 minutes late, it will be marked as an absence. Students who miss too many classes will be dismissed from the program and need to repeat the year.
- We **will NOT** dismiss children early for sports activities or other non-related church activities. Please do not request that we place your child's religious education second to a sports activity or other non-related church activity.
- If you are planning to miss class, please call or send a text message to your teacher. Remember, only 3 absences allowed!!!

Supervision of Children

At Our Lady of Sorrows, the safety of our children is very important to us. Parents and guardians are responsible for their children before and after Religious Education classes, as parish staff and catechists are only able to supervise during class time. Please note that the playground and parish grounds are not monitored before, during, or after classes; any children who choose to play there remain under the care of their parent or guardian.

Weather Delays/Cancellations

Weather emergencies do occur. We follow Belen Consolidated Schools closures for Tuesday evening classes. Cancellations of religious education classes are rare. However, please use your own judgement on travel conditions.

Drop off and Dismissal

- Religious Education classes at Our Lady of Sorrows will begin promptly at **6:00 p.m.** and end at **7:00 p.m.**
- Please ensure that your child arrives on time so they may fully participate in class. For the safety of all children and families, we ask everyone to use caution in the parking lot during drop-off and pick-up.
- No child will be allowed to wait in the parking lot for their parents.
- **Please note: Because the parish hall grounds are not secure for children without supervision, any children remaining after classes have ended will be taken to OLS Parish Office with the DRE.**

First Communion Requirements

- The family must be registered at Our Lady of Sorrows or have a letter from their pastor of the parish where they are registered to receive the sacraments here.
- Preparation for First Holy Communion is a two-year process as directed by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. They may begin classes in the Second Grade.
- If your child has completed the first year of preparation at another parish, an affidavit from the pastor, director of religious education, or catechetical leader will be necessary to enroll them in the sacramental program.
- **A baptismal certificate.**
- **Attending Mass every Sunday and all Holy Days of Obligation.**
- Each child needs to bring in a bulletin, SIGNED by the Pastor, each Monday to show that they went to church.
- Students are permitted three excused absences per year; this includes illness and family emergencies. Students who miss too many classes will be dismissed from the program and need to repeat the year.
- Church Service Hours- **Your child is required to participate in Mass and Our Lady of Sorrows Fiestas.**

Confirmation Requirements

- The family must be registered at Our Lady of Sorrows or have a letter from their pastor of the parish where they are registered to receive the sacraments here.
- Preparation for Confirmation is a two-year process as directed by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. They must be at least 15 years old when they make their Confirmation.
- If your child has completed the first year of preparation at another parish, an affidavit from the pastor, director of religious education, or catechetical leader will be necessary to enroll them in the sacramental program.
- **A baptismal certificate and First Holy Communion Certificate.**
- **Attending Mass every Sunday and all Holy Days of Obligation.**
- Each child needs to bring in a bulletin, SIGNED by the Pastor, each Monday to show that they went to church.
- Students are permitted three excused absences per year; this includes illness and family emergencies. Students who miss too many classes will be dismissed from the program and need to repeat the year.
- Church Service Hours- Your child is required to participate in Mass and Our Lady of Sorrows Fiestas. **Confirmation students are required to participate in 10 hours of Church Ministry and 5 hours for Family Ministry for Year I & Year II** (see Service Hour Requirements document).

Discipline

Our program strives to emphasize God's love. However, we expect all students to behave in a respectful and appropriate manner. Respect for classmates, teachers, staff, clergy, and church property are a top priority. Our catechists are volunteers and should not be expected to deal with disrespectful, uncooperative, and/or disruptive students. We ask parents to do their part to explain to their children the importance religious education plays in their lives. We cannot provide religious education and formation without the cooperation and support of parents.

Students using obscene language, physically harming others, displaying disrespect to classmates, teachers, staff, clergy, or property, will be sent from their class to the Director of Religious Education and parents will be called immediately to pick up their child and be dismissed from the program.

Conferences

Parents who would like a conference with either the catechist or the Director of Family Catechesis should contact the Director to obtain an appointment. **Parents should refrain from attempting to conference with a catechist unannounced or during class hours.** It is program policy that concerns are to be discussed first with the catechist of the child. If your concern is not addressed or not to your satisfaction, please contact the Director of Religious Education.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is required in our program. As the primary educators of your children, it is necessary to always be growing in your faith! Continuing education and formation are one way to do so. Parents are welcome to attend any of your child's Religious Education classes if you are interested.

- ***Homework***

When homework is assigned, it is intended to reinforce ideas learned or to extend and deepen knowledge. It is also a valuable practice in the development of responsibility and the exercise of initiative. Parents should regularly observe their child as he/she does his/her homework and be actively involved with any questions the child might have.

- ***Participation in Parish Activities***

Parents and students are encouraged to participate in all parish activities. This is a part of the ongoing formation parents need to instill in their children emphasizing our closeness as a community of God's people.

- ***Prayer***

As the primary educators of the children, parents are to ensure that their children know and are memorizing prayers relevant to his or her grade level.

- ***Worship***

Attendance: Parents are encouraged to set a good example by regularly attending Sunday Mass with their children as well as all Holy Days of Obligation. Where possible, attendance at other prayer services and Masses is encouraged.

- ***Confessions***

It is the responsibility of the students and parents to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly. The parish holds confessions 30 minutes before mass on Sundays or by appointment with Father.

Protection of Children and Youth

In accordance with Archdiocesan policy and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Directives, a training session for both adults and children must be held. The Abuse Awareness Workshop is a workshop designed for church employees and volunteers to assist them in preventing, spotting, and reporting potential child abuse.

The children and youth session teaches children to be safe, how to protect themselves and to communicate potential dangers regarding abuse. Parents will be able to determine whether they want their child(ren) to attend the session. If a parent chooses not to allow their child(ren) to attend the training session, then a letter must be filed with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. The sessions will be held in September during the normal religious education classes. Any students whose parents do not opt out need to take this session.

Any adult who wishes to volunteer within the Religious Education program must take the Virtus training sponsored by the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. If you need to attend a workshop, please contact the Director of Religious Education or call the Archdiocesan office for the Protection of Children and Youth at 505-831-8142.

The Director of Religious Education has the right to amend this handbook for just cause. If amendments are made, parents will be given timely notification.