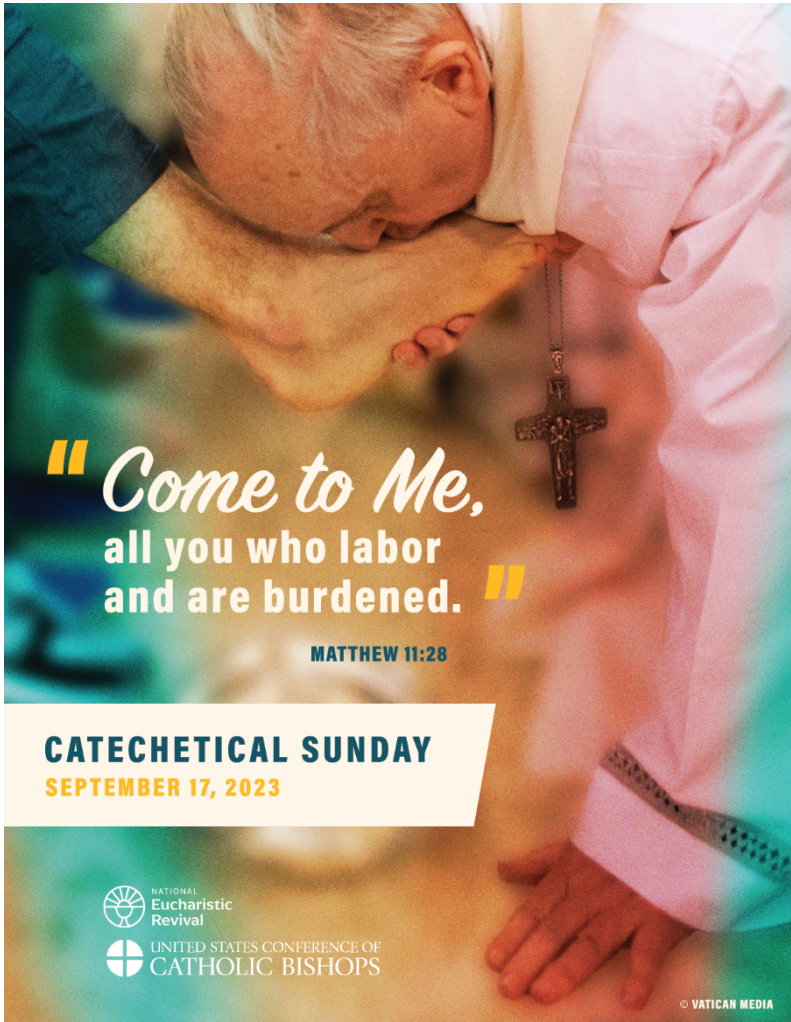


**Holy Spirit Catholic Church
Parish Religious Education Program
Family Handbook
2023-2024**



**"Come to Me,
all you who labor
and are burdened. "**

MATTHEW 11:28

CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 17, 2023



NATIONAL
Eucharistic
Revival



UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF
CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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2023-2024 CATECHETICAL THEME:

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened.”

The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ: only he can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit. CCC 426

Holy Spirit Catholic Church
300 West Pine Street
Palmyra, PA 17078
Parish Office (717) 838-3369
www.holyspiritpalmyra.com
Follow us on Facebook: **@HolySpiritPalmyra**

A Message from our Pastor, Father Anthony Dill

Dear Students and Parents,

Thank you for checking out the handbook for our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP). Thank you for trusting our excellent team of volunteer catechists and our dedicated Religious Education Leaders. In this book you will find information about curriculum, Safe Environment precautions, fees, communication, and other opportunities and expectations that go along with our program.

Parents are the primary guardians and educators of the faith for their children. Thank you parents for the exposure to prayer and faith that you have already given your children. PREP is meant to be a supplement to such a faith-filled family atmosphere. It supplements it by elaborating upon the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ through study of the Scriptures and Tradition. Parents, you have the right to know that good Catholic curriculum is being taught and that our catechists are mandated reporters when it comes to any form of child abuse. I confidently hope that the efforts made by students and teachers in PREP will lead to the greater glory of God.

Pandemic Response and Continuity of Education

As of the writing of this handbook, all pandemic mitigation measures have either been relaxed or rescinded. The pandemic situation remains fluid and we will follow guidance from the Diocese, CDC, Palmyra School District and state health authorities.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS)

For children ages 3-5 we offer a program called Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This program has been well received by parents and students and we are excited to be able to continue this offering.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was founded in the 1950's by two Italian lay women, one a scriptural scholar, the other an expert in Montessori education. Together they conceived of a simple, attractive method for sharing the richness of the faith with young children, who are uniquely capable of accepting the beauty of God's love. The program is presented in three levels, and includes time in the "Atrium," which is a quiet environment where children learn through presentations and tactile engagement.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd emphasizes quiet contemplation and "the enjoyment of God." The children hear Bible stories and watch them acted out with simple materials; they learn songs and prayers, and are encouraged to work quietly with simple and meaningful objects.

Religious Education Textbooks

For grades 1-8 we will use the **Faith and Life series from Ignatius Press** as our textbooks. This series presents Catholic teaching using the time-tested ecclesial methodology and spiral development of catechesis, in a beautiful, student-friendly, comprehensive format. Faith and Life integrates the diocesan curriculum, scripture, prayer, the lives of the saints, sacred art, music, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, liturgy, and life experience to help children and their families learn, live and grow in faith.

Copies of our textbook series, Diocesan curriculum guidelines (www.hbgdiocese.org), and

supplemental materials are available for review in the parish office. A Family Prayer Booklet outlining the prayers that the children are expected to learn is also available in the parish office.

Students are expected to have their books in class each week. A \$25 replacement fee will be charged for lost or damaged textbooks.

Student Registration and Fee

Holy Spirit's religious education program does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national origin, age or disability. New parishioners need to complete a parish census form available in our office or download from our website www.holyspiritpalmyra.com

The registration fee for in-person classes is \$50 for the first child, \$90 for the second child and not more than \$120 per family. The online/homeschooling option is \$50 per student. Full-time Catechists' children attend tuition-free in appreciation for their service. A financial concern should not prevent you from registering into our program. If there is a difficulty, please contact the PREP Leader or our parish manager to discuss options.

Communications

In addition to asking your child about their lesson each Sunday, please ask for any communications that may be coming home with him/her. These may be letters from the office or catechist, requests, reminders about upcoming events or changes in schedules. It is very important that we keep these lines of communication open. Please provide your current email address so that catechists and/or the PREP Lead can contact you.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is expected of all students in our Parish Religious Education Program. All PREP students should arrive promptly with a willingness to learn and actively participate. Attendance for students in Sacramental Programs for grades 1, 2, 7, and 8 is particularly important and we ask that absences be avoided as much as possible. For students taking class online it is important that they complete their assigned lessons on a weekly basis and respond to communications from their catechists and adult mentors. Catechists and mentors may communicate via email with students and will always copy the parents. Parents need to make sure that their child is receiving them and/or pass along communications to their children.

If you know that your child will miss class, **please notify the Catechist or PREP Lead at prep@hspalmyra.com**. It is the student's and parent's responsibility to inquire what materials or lessons were covered and assist the student in catching up should a class be missed because of illness or family reasons. After 3 unexcused absences the catechist or PREP Lead may contact the parents to discuss any issues and ways we can help improve student attendance.

Mass Attendance

The celebration of the Sunday Liturgy is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith. It is the place where we are fed by the Word of God and the Bread of Life in the Eucharist, strengthening us in Christ's love so that we may go into our homes, schools, work place and community spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. Mass attendance is ***vital*** to our Catholic faith formation, therefore, families are expected to attend Mass regularly.

Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures

Holy Spirit Catholic Church PREP staff and volunteers prepare a quality program of Religious Formation presented in an atmosphere of respect and Christian Community.

We expect all students to listen attentively and be prepared to participate fully in PREP Classes. Proper conduct and respect of others: adults, students, and property are expected at all times of all students. We expect all participants to behave in a manner consistent with being members of the Body of Christ.

We affirm the value of every individual, inherently deserving respect as a child of God; therefore, any form of harassment (physical, psychological, sexual, or verbal) or threats of violence are strictly prohibited.

Use and/or possession of any illegal drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, weapons (novelty or real) is forbidden. Suspension from the program will result immediately if this policy is violated.

Corporal Punishment is NOT in keeping with the philosophy of this program and is NOT used.

Because a disruptive student may have a negative impact on other students and prevent them from benefiting from the program, when a student becomes disruptive, these general disciplinary guidelines will be followed:

- 1st incident The Catechist will warn the student that their behavior is not in line with the classroom rules.
- 2nd incident The Catechist will issue another warning and discuss the inappropriate behavior with the student after class.

- 3rd incident The PREP Lead will discuss the situation with the student and contact the student's parents.
- 4th incident The PREP Lead and/or Pastor will meet with the student and parents to discuss options.

Emergency Care of Students

All Students must have a Medical Emergency Authorization/Registration Form on file in the PREP office authorizing emergency care if a student would become seriously ill or injured while attending PREP classes. Every attempt will be made to notify parents if there is an accident or illness.

In the case of minor accidents or injuries, personnel will administer basic first aid. We request that parents administer necessary medication to your child before or after religious education activities. If this is not possible, parents must meet with the DRE to arrange distribution of medication in accordance with diocesan policy.

Catechists follow the Universal Precautions set by the Center for Disease Control for handling spilled blood and body fluids to insure proper cleaning and disinfection.

Diocesan Youth Protection Program

Holy Spirit parish employees, catechists and volunteers are required to be in full compliance under the Diocesan Youth Protection Program which includes obtaining appropriate clearances and taking the Diocesan online training.

The Diocesan Youth Protection Program also includes Safe Environment Lessons in grades K-12. View the lessons and online training at (<https://www.virtusonline.org/virtus/>).

Drop Off and Dismissal

Parents are asked to take their elementary school child directly to their classroom for PREP classes. If the catechist is not in the room, please stay with your child until the teacher arrives.

All parents will wait outside for the teacher to bring out their class. If your child is restricted as to who may pick him/her up, please notify the PREP Lead and file the necessary paperwork in the PREP office.

Please pick up your child on time; thank you!

Special Learning Needs

Special learning needs (those with an IEP) should be identified on the registration form or by contacting the PREP Lead.

Sacramental Programs

Students preparing to receive the Sacraments are required to participate in PREP classes for two consecutive years prior to reception of the Sacrament; **1st and 2nd grades** for First Holy Communion and **7th and 8th grades** for Confirmation. Both Sacramental Programs include special formational activities to help prepare the student and their family for the reception of the Sacrament.

Weekly class attendance is **extremely important**. After 3 unexcused absences the catechist or PREP Lead will contact the parents to discuss any issues and ways we can help improve student attendance.

Communication with the catechist and making up any missed work will be considered when evaluating the student's ability to receive the sacrament in the desired year. Mandatory parent meetings are held to

prepare parents for their child's First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.

Volunteering

We depend on parents and family getting involved, whether in the classroom or on special projects. Please choose how you can help. If you can bake or serve at parties, receptions, or meetings, help in the office or as a classroom aide, **We Need You!**

We need classroom aides, hall monitors to keep a watchful eye during class periods, Vacation Bible School helpers, etc. If your child is in our program, find some way to lend a hand, regularly or as needed. See the PREP Lead to sign up!

Cell Phones

We have all become very dependent of our cell phones and they have turned into an indispensable tool for many, however, they can be very distracting especially for children and teens. For this reason, **use of cell phones are not permitted at PREP except for extreme emergencies**. If your child brings their phone to PREP they will be expected to put them in silent mode and keep them in their pocket or bag. If your child is observed using their cell phone during class the Catechists will ask your child for the phone and will return it after class. We only have your children 1 to 1½ hours a week, so, we want and need their complete attention. In case of emergency students may use the phone in the church office.

Thank You

Our Parish Religious Education Program is only possible through the support of Holy Spirit's Parish Family and the many volunteers who so generously give of their time and talents. Thank you for your important part in spreading the Gospel message to our children. Thanks especially to our volunteers who make it possible.

Administration Staff

Pastor	Father Anthony R. Dill	838-3369 x107
Parish Manager	Janet M. Parks	838-3369 x106
PREP Secretary	Holly Serio	838-3369 x104
Parish Secretary	Lori Jasper	838-3369 x109
Maint. & Facilities	Joe Cesari	838-3369 x103

PREP Team Leaders

CGS PREP Lead	Mrs. Brenda Poland
1 st -6 th Grade PREP Lead	Ms. Rebecca Messimer
7 th -8 th Grade PREP Lead	Mr. Logan Zugay

PREP Catechists

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd	Mrs. Brenda Poland Mr. Harry Poland Mrs. Kim Douillette
First Grade	Mrs. Robin Burns Mrs. Becky Heine
Second Grade	Mrs. Jodi Frazier Mrs. Angela Messimer
Third Grade	Mrs. Andrea Murray
Fourth Grade	Mrs. Joy McNally
Fifth Grade	Mrs. Alison Brooks
Sixth Grade	Mrs. Eileen Ciardullo Mr. John Ciardullo
Seventh Grade	Mr. Logan Zugay
Eighth Grade	Mr. Logan Zugay