



OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS PARISH

all are welcome

Middle School Religious Education 2021-2022 Registration & Instructions – please read thoroughly! Classes begin September 27

Dear Middle School Students and Parents,

It has been quite a year (or 16 months) - and we know that is *quite* the understatement. We hope that you and your loved ones have remained healthy and well, and we want you to know that we've been praying for you all during this time of separation. We also very much hope that these summer months allow you to truly rest after such a stressful school year.

We first would like to thank everyone who participated in programs last year. We know growing in faith over Zoom wasn't ideal, but we were so heartened by all that we did, shared, and learned together. We also thank you for your patience with us in planning for the 2021-2022 school year. With each week, so much changes with the pandemic situation; it has been difficult to make predictions about next week, let alone next year! Despite all this, we do have faith-filled hopes and plans for Religious Education, and we pray that things will continue to be stable. Of course, if there is another surge in the virus, we will reassess, and we thank you for your flexibility. Before we get to all that, we have some parish and collaborative news for you.

Sadly, Monsignor Dennis Sheehan passed away in November 2020; we miss his wit, warmth, and wisdom, but we trust that he continues to pray for us and that we will enjoy his company again.

And as you likely know, Rosemary Seibold, who coordinated our programs for Grades K-5, retired in May 2020 after sixteen years. This past June, Michelle Solomon, who similarly served for sixteen years, retired from her role as the Director of Religious Education at Sacred Heart. So, as of July 1, Kristina Preman is now the Director of Religious Education for our entire collaborative, both Sacred Heart and Our Lady's. She is just part of our GREAT Religious Education team:

Kristina Preman: Collaborative DRE and direct oversight of Grades K-5 at Our Lady's

Kate Neal: direct oversight of Grades 1-5 at Sacred Heart

Nick Woll: new to our Collaborative Staff, Nick is the Coordinator of Middle School and High School Religious Education (Grades 6-10) for both parishes, including the Confirmation program

Ginny Arpino: Religious Education assistant and on-site coordinator for Grades K-5 at Our Lady's

We also hope to hire a Youth Minister this summer and will share the word if and when we do.

Nick is a native of Erie, Pennsylvania, where he studied at Mercyhurst University and served as an AmeriCorps member. He majored in Religious Studies and Psychology and was actively involved in Mercyhurst's campus ministry events and clubs, admissions office, and student mentorship programs. As a Keystone SMILES AmeriCorps member at Iroquois Elementary School, he served his 6th grade kiddos as a tutor, social support, and academic resource during the pandemic.

Nick will be pursuing his Master's degree in Theology and Ministry at Boston College for the next two years. He loves to run, read, talk about and play basketball, listen to music, and spend time with family, friends, and the Lord. Nick is excited to begin his role as the Coordinator of Religious Education, and looks forward to exploring Boston, serving the Church, and making connections along the way!

All right - registration and program information time!

In-person classes: for Grades 6-8 meet on Monday nights at Mount Alvernia High School on Centre Street here in Newton. There will be two sessions offered: 6:30-7:30pm or 7:00-8:00pm

Please choose a session preference when submitting registration forms.

Please know that, depending on enrollment this year, we may decide to offer only one session, which would be 7:00-8:00pm only. If this is the case, we should know by early September and will notify you.

In-person classes will begin on Monday, September 27. All parents (especially parents of those in Grade 6) are strongly encouraged to attend a brief orientation in the chapel at Mount Alvernia on this date. The entire year's calendar will be sent out later in the summer.

Cross-registration: At Sacred Heart Parish in Newton Centre, in-person classes are on Tuesdays, 6:45-8:00pm. We are offering families from both parishes the opportunity to "cross register" at the other parish. This option will open up in early September, in order to give parishioners the chance to register at their own parish before spots fill up.

Virtual/homeschool option: We know that many of you found the at-home and virtual program last year to be convenient and helpful for your family. We are glad to offer a virtual option again this year for those who want it. This option will consist of the Pflaum Gospel Weekly curriculum and a monthly webinar. Please note that the webinars will not be identical to last year; we are not able to offer the same array of day/time options, and the format will be different.

Registration instructions and deadlines: Please register online at <https://forms.office.com/r/tzP80WeRba> or by following the link at www.sholnewton.org. If you need a paper form mailed to you, please give us a call, and we'll gladly send one.

For those interested in Tuesday classes at Sacred Heart, please mark this on your registration form; you will be notified in early September if there is space.

In order to begin class on the first day, September 27, registrations must be received by Friday, September 10. This is also the deadline for friend and session/time requests, which we always do our best to honor (but can't guarantee even when received by September 10).

New families and new students: Welcome! We're so glad you're here and are honored to partner with you! New families are asked to register as parishioners, online at boston.parishsoftfamilysuite.com. If your child was not baptized at Our Lady's, please send a photocopy of their baptismal certificate when they first enroll.

For those families who are returning,, if you know someone who is new to our parish, our programs, or your neighborhood, please encourage them to join us and to register as soon as possible. We want them to know they are more than welcome!

Mass attendance: It is important to realize that weekend Mass attendance is required for all students. We have really come to understand that children who do not go to church on a regular basis have difficulty really understanding what they are learning in class.

Payment: We would appreciate payment with registration, if possible. **Tuition is \$75 per child with a \$150 family cap for two or more children.** It can be paid online at <https://sholnewton.org/tuition-payment> or you can mail a check to the parish. Because our programs run at a deficit every year, please consider assisting other families in need with an additional donation, if you are able. Any amount is welcome. Children are always welcome without payment if there is a serious need. However, it is necessary to speak to Kristina if this is the case. Multiple smaller payments throughout the year are welcome. **No one is ever refused because they cannot pay. Parents who volunteer EVERY WEEK in the classroom or as a hall monitor do not pay tuition.** There is a \$25 per family **late fee** (for returning families) for registrations received after September 10!

Volunteers: Finally, please help us to begin the year with all our volunteer needs met by September 10. It is so much easier for everyone if volunteers don't wait until the last minute. As you know, we strive to assign two catechists (teachers) to each class. This makes it easier for everyone, provides a sub if the lead catechist is sick or out of town, and provides an aide at the same time. Catechists, assistants, and hall monitors are all needed. Please let us know if you will help! So many people tell us year after year how much they learn by teaching. Please consider whether the Lord is calling you to spread His love and Good News by teaching our children. There is a place for volunteers to note their availability on the registration form. There will be catechist trainings here at Our Lady's available before classes begin, where we will discuss curriculum as well as classroom management strategies.

We hope you have a wonderful, refreshing, relaxing, safe summer, and look forward to seeing you on September 27, if not before. **The picnic will be on September 26 - please join us for this complementary and fun event!** Please call or email with ANY questions. Or, especially if you're new, we'd be happy to have a quick Zoom to say hello.

Wishing you peace, rest, and blessings,

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