



OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS PARISH

all are welcome

Grades K-5 Religious Education 2021-2022 Registration & Instructions – please read thoroughly! *Classes begin September 26 and 27*

Dear Elementary School Families,

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.

All right - registration and program information time!

Changes this year: We've made the decision this year to suspend the Sunday 11:15am-12:15pm session on a trial basis. We know this will be very disappointing to many of you, and we are sorry. We hope that, by not having a session immediately following 10:00am Mass, more families will be able to participate in Sunday hospitality (coffee and donuts) and various other planned activities on Sundays to help build our community, especially after the time apart. We are also moving the Monday afternoon classes to 4:00-5:00pm (instead of 3:30-4:30pm). Both changes are trials for the year ahead, and next spring we will assess how the changes have affected you and our parish community.

Class options for Grades K-5, in-person: This means the two options for elementary school Religious Education at Our Lady's will be Sundays 8:45-9:45am (Grades K-5) and Mondays 4:00-5:00pm (Grades 1-5 only, no K option). In addition, we plan to offer one Grade 5 class on Monday nights during our Middle School program, 7:00-8:00pm, at Mount Alvernia High School on Centre Street.

In terms of pandemic safety, we are awaiting guidelines from the Archdiocese for the upcoming year. We don't know whether masks will be required or if there will be distancing/capacity requirements. We will of course follow all guidance and will communicate with families as it is received. In the meantime, we encourage all those who can safely get vaccinated to do so. And keep those masks handy, just in case!

Cross-registration: At Sacred Heart Parish in Newton Centre, Religious Education classes are on Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00pm. 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. Of course, celebration of sacraments can always be at your own parish, even if you participate in classes at the other.

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. Also note that virtual

formation is not ordinarily an option for those preparing for First Penance and First Communion; please contact Kristina if you need to discuss.

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.

Monday afternoon classes tend to be very popular; we will give priority registration for Monday classes to those who were enrolled in Monday classes during the 2019-2020 school year **AND** who register by August 23. All others will be placed on a waiting list by date of registration. We would like to discourage Grade 1 students on Monday afternoons; it's a very long day for the littler ones, and many have a tough time with it.

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 (Sept 26-27), registrations must be received by Friday, September 10. This is also the deadline for friend 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 in the parish, 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. If you are registering a new student who is entering Grade 2 but did not participate in Religious Education last year, please speak with Kristina as you register.

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!

First Communion students from Catholic schools: Parents are asked to call Kristina and **MUST** register by October 1 if they expect their children to receive First Penance in December and First Communion next spring. There is a required parent meeting in the fall. There is a place to note "Grade 2 Catholic School" on the registration form.

Class locations and procedures: Sunday morning classes are held in the school building and Parish Center. Enter and exit only via the school doors on Washington Street for gathering in the auditorium. A parent or guardian must walk children in and pick them up inside; we don't allow children to leave without an adult. Monday afternoon classes are held in the church and Parish Center. Gathering happens in the Lower Hall. Again, a parent or guardian must walk children in and pick up inside.

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 are very confused about what they are learning.

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 do not start the program without two catechists (teachers) in 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 26 or 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,

Kristina Preman, Director of Religious Education & Pastoral Associate
kpreman@sholnewton.org 617-527-7560 ext. 216

with
Kate Neal kneal@sholnewton.org 617-527-7560 ext. 219, Ginny Arpino garpino@sholnewton.org 617-527-7560 ext. 221,
and Nick Woll nwoll@sholnewton.org