Holy Family Church

Parish School of Religion

Parent Handbook

2020 / 2021



*Servant Song*

Dear PSR Parents,

 Welcome to Holy Family Parish School of Religion (PSR). We are happy to share in the privilege of providing religious education for your children. As the children grow in their relationship with God, our goal is to provide them with a better understanding of their Catholic faith and to also help them develop a commitment to the Father and His Church. Our hope is to foster the growth of Catholic Christian values in such a manner that they too will strive to bring all people to the Lord.

 Your support and cooperation are essential in creating an atmosphere in which these goals can be realized. What the children see and live at home is far more important to their faith than all the theology we can possibly present.

 Your responsibility as the primary catechists – as well as ours as supporting catechists – is a great task that can truly be a blessing as we travel this road together to carry out His work.

In Christ,

Dara Hoffman

PSR Principal

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

**I. Contact Information**

PSR Office: 440-842-6658

PSR Principal: Dara Hoffman (PSR Program)

Website: www.holyfamparma.org

Parish Office: 440-842-5533

Director of

Religious Education: Sr. Yvonne Spenoso ext 347 (Sacramental Programs)

Administrator: Fr. Richard Evans

# II. Website

PSR information can be found on our Holy Family website:

[www.holyfamparma.org](http://www.holyfamparma.org). Click on Education & Childcare, then PSR. The website includes our yearly calendar, parent handbook and information on our Called To Protect training program.

# III. Time and Schedule

**PSR is held Tuesday evenings from 6:45pm – 8:00pm for Grades 1-8**. Kindergarten has been suspended for the 2020/2021 school year due to the pandemic. Please drop your children off between 6:30pm – 6:45pm. We respectfully request that children arrive promptly so that classes may begin on time. The PSR school year typically runs mid-September through early May. Please consult the PSR school calendar provided every year for exact dates.

**IV. Registration Procedures and Fees:**

Each year, new and existing students will be required to complete a registration form. This ensures we have accurate information on file – especially for emergencies. Registration forms for new families/students are available at the Parish Office and our website. For your convenience, families with existing students will receive a mailing with a pre-populated registration form. Please notify the office promptly of any changes to your registration information.

Our fees have been restructured as follows: (please note that fees may be subject to change for future school years)

 **PSR**: $50.00 each child / $120.00 cap per family

 **Sacramental Fee**: **(in addition to the PSR fee)**

 Grade 2: $25.00

 Grade 8: $35.00

A Baptismal certificate is required for every child entering First Grade or new students entering the program. This will be kept on file for subsequent Sacramental years.

**Note**: Existing families may be asked to provide this copy for students in Grades 2 & 8 if we currently do not have a copy on file.

**V. Attendance Procedures**

Regular attendance is very important to the development of a strong foundation of Catholic Christian beliefs and for future growth in Christian faith. With this understanding, we encourage parents to support regular attendance. In the event of an absence, please contact the PSR office

(440-842-6658) as soon as possible. Please provide the student’s name, grade and reason for the absence. If a student is absent more than 3 weeks, the teacher or office staff will contact the parents.

**VI. Inclement Weather**

Our program will typically make a decision by 3pm in cases of inclement weather. Please watch your local news stations (WKYC, WEWS) as well as their respective internet sites which will advise the cancellation of PSR classes. You may also receive a phone call from your child’s teacher if they so choose. This phone call is optional and is at the discretion of the teacher.

**VII. Drop Off Procedures**

All students must be dropped off at the doors located on the north side of the school building. Please do not drop children off at the doors located on the church side of the school building. It is imperative that all students enter through a single set of doors. There will be orange cones set up in a rectangle to provide a “safety zone” for your children. It is large enough to accommodate approximately 3 cars. Please have your children exit the passenger side of your car only. This puts them directly into the “safety zone” and not in harms way with other moving vehicles.

This set of doors will be locked at 7pm. If you arrive 7pm or later, please drop your student off at the school office doors (located by the large open circle in the brick wall of the school building).

**VIII. Dismissal / Early Pick-up Procedures**

ALL grades (K-8) will dismiss through a single set of doors - the entrance doors where you drop off your children. Please look for the orange cones set up in a semi-circle in the parking lot. ALL children will be brought outside by their classroom teacher and adult assistant. Please do not enter the school building to pick up your student. This causes too much confusion. Teachers/assistants will remain with the children. Please keep social distancing rules in the parking lot between families. Classes will be dismissed one by one starting with 1st grade to keep a minimum of children in the safety zone. For safety purposes, teachers and children will remain inside the orange cones grouped by grade for ease in locating your child (see diagram). When you arrive, park your car and come to the perimeter of the orange cone area. Please remain outside the orange cones until you see your child(ren) exit the building so we have room for all students INSIDE the safety zone. For safety purposes, please do not instruct your child to leave the “safety zone” and walk through the parking lot alone to your parked car. In the unforeseen event that you may be late, your child will remain inside these doors with a teacher and the PSR Principal. This procedure has worked well in previous years with dismissal being completed within 10-15 minutes. In the event of rain or snow, please dress your children appropriately and send umbrellas. This procedure will not change. We do not have room to accommodate inside dismissals in an orderly and safe fashion.

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Grade 5

Grade 4

Grade 6

Grade 8

Grade 7

 Doors

If you need to pick up your child prior to the 8:00pm dismissal, please send a note with your child that evening so that the teacher and office are aware of the situation. The parent/guardian needs to come to the school office. An office aide will bring the student down to the office. Students will be dismissed only from the school office. We ask that parents do not go directly to the classroom. For safety reasons, please do not instruct your child to leave the building on his own to come out to the car.

### IX. Curriculum and Prayer Requirements

All students will receive a textbook or appropriate study material along with a folder. Pens, pencils, crayons, Bibles, etc. are supplied by the school and are covered in your registration fee – there is no need to bring additional supplies. Students are expected to bring textbooks and folders to class each week.

We are currently using the Christ our Life series for Grades 1-7. Written by the Sisters of Notre Dame of Chardon, Ohio, Christ Our Life 2009 is true to the original spiral curriculum the Sisters created more than 40 years ago. Christ Our Life ensures consistent progress and development, following a pattern of continuous growth in depth and scope.

The core of the series, Scripture, revolves around the four fundamental themes of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Creed, Sacraments, Morality, and Prayer. Catholic social teachings are woven into every grade level. With Scripture, doctrine, prayer, and Church teachings integrated into every lesson, the children can more easily relate Catholic beliefs, sacred Tradition, and, most importantly, their faith to their lives.

Grade 8 uses the *Confirmed in the Spirit* by Loyola Press as well. Confirmed in the Spirit integrates with the parish curriculum, preparing young people to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Students are provided with a textbook as well as a reflection journal.

We encourage parents to participate in your child’s religious education by reviewing the weekly material with your child and visiting the Loyola Press website for additional family resources: www.loyolapress.com.

In addition, the following prayers are required to be memorized by all students. All teachers will be teaching and testing students on these prayers. Again we encourage the parents, as primary catechists, to help their children learn their basic prayers. Please don’t stop with this basic list. A Catholic prayer booklet is being supplied to all families (1 per family) to assist you. Prayers are also in the textbook. Please encourage them to memorize all of these prayers in order to help them develop their relationship with God through prayer.

**PSR Required Prayers/Basic Knowledge**

**Grade 1:** The Sign of the Cross/Genuflecting

 Our Father

 Hail Mary

 Glory Be

**Grade 2:** The Sign of the Cross/Genuflecting

 Our Father

 Hail Mary

 Glory Be

 Act of Contrition

**Grade 3:** The Sign of the Cross/Genuflecting

 Our Father

 Hail Mary

 Glory Be

 Act of Contrition

 Grace Before Meals

**Grade 4:** The Sign of the Cross/Genuflecting

 Our Father

 Hail Mary

 Glory Be

 Act of Contrition

 Grace Before Meals

 Ten Commandments

**Grade 5:** The Sign of the Cross/Genuflecting

 Our Father

 Hail Mary

 Glory Be

 Act of Contrition

 Grace Before Meals

 Ten Commandments & Seven Sacraments

**Grade 6:** The Sign of the Cross/Genuflecting

 Our Father

 Hail Mary

 Glory Be

 Act of Contrition

 Grace Before Meals

 Ten Commandments

 Seven Sacraments

 Apostles Creed

**Grade 7:** Repetition of all Grade 6 prayers

**Grade 8:** Repetition of all Grade 6 prayers

You will notice that the last 2 years (Grade 7 – 8) are simply repetition. The Apostles Creed was chosen versus the Nicene Creed as it is a shorter version but still teaches the children what we profess as our Catholic faith. Please teach your children the Nicene Creed as they attend Mass with you regularly.

**X. Bibles**

In 2014, we introduced the use of The New American Bible Revised Edition in our program for grades 5 – 8. Students in each of these grades were given a Bible and clear vinyl cover free of charge with clear instruction to keep the Bible for future grades. Moving forward, each student entering 5th grade will be given a Bible and cover free of charge. Again, students are expected to keep this Bible for use in the remaining years of the program (6 – 8). We are teaching the children how to become familiar with Scripture and make this a “living” Bible for them. In that regard, we are encouraging students to underline, highlight, and write notes in the page margins to help them locate important and meaningful Scripture to them. Please encourage your children at home to use their Bible.

In the event, a student loses or destroys their Bible beyond use, a replacement will be provided for a nominal fee of $5.00 to defray replacement costs.

### XI. Prayer Services/Masses and Projects

Our normal opening & closing PSR masses as well as service projects have been suspended for the 2020/2021 school year due to the pandemic. As with all things, this is subject to change.

**XII. PSR Themes**

In 2014, we introduced a PSR Theme based on popular Catholic Hymns which are sung during Sunday Masses. Our theme changes every year and the PSR theme song is sung during our opening and closing PSR Masses as well as studied throughout the school year. It is our hope when the children complete our program, they will be familiar with 9 hymns which they can sing at Sunday Masses. We encourage you as a family to attend Mass regularly and become familiar with these hymns. Following is our list of PSR theme songs to date. Please reference youtube.com to become familiar with them and sing them with your children.

PSR Themes

2014/2015 Open My Eyes Lord

2015/2016 Whatsoever You Do

2016/2017 We Are Called

2017/2018 Christ Be Our Light

2018/2019 We Walk by Faith

2019/2020 Christ Has Promised to be Present

2020/2021 Servant Song

**XIII. Discipline:**

A teacher’s primary responsibility is to teach. Disruptive students interfere with the learning process of the entire class. All students are expected to abide by the basic rules of polite conduct. Minor offenses will be handled by the classroom teacher. Severe or repeated offenses will warrant being sent to the Principal’s office. Incident reports will be completed for all severe offenses. A phone call will be made to the parent and a copy of the incident report will be mailed as well. If the problem persists, the parents will continue to be notified. Continued severe behavior may result in the student being dismissed from the PSR program.

No electronic devices of any kind (radios, cell phones, iPODs, etc) are permitted in the school building. We realize parents may supply their children with cell phones for pick up procedures. We respectfully ask that all cell phone usage be done prior to or after class. If a student brings any electronic device and uses it during class, it will be confiscated by the teacher and returned to the student after class. Please note: the teachers and office have phones for the students’ use in reaching a parent or guardian.

**XIV. Sexual Harassment & Sexual Violence Policy:**

Holy Family PSR is firmly committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone involved in the program. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, Holy Family PSR expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school environment. This policy re-emphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for others.

All adults (teachers & assistants) in our program, in conjunction with the Cleveland Catholic Diocese, are VIRTUS compliant. This program includes a training class, documentation regarding Standards of Conduct and Policies, continual online training bulletins and fingerprint background checks.

**Sexual Harassment:**

For the purpose of this policy, sexual harassment includes the following specific instances: verbal sexual abuse, disseminating obscene or sexually explicit material, whether in the form of music, written lyrics, pornographic pictures or other literature, or having such material in one’s possession in the school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on the school/parish grounds, continual and unwanted written or oral communication directed to another of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumors/innuendoes; obscene T-shirts, hats or buttons; touching oneself sexually in front of others; obscene and/or sexually explicit gestures; and any other inappropriate behavior of a sexually explicit or obscene nature that demeans or offends the recipient. The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute sexual harassment.

Isolated, trivial incidents are not sufficient to constitute harassment and will be handled according to the student behavior code.

Allegations of sexual harassment (as defined above) are to be reported to the teacher and the principal. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential by all parties involved; and, every effort will be made to protect the alleged victim from retaliation. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation.

If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. These will depend on the nature, frequency and severity of the action, the ages of the offender and victim, the history of similar actions by this individual and the circumstances in which the harassment occurred. Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to any or all of the following:

 - Verbal warning/reprimand and apology to the victim

 - a parent/student conference

 - removal from the PSR program

**Sexual Violence**

Sexual violence is handled separately because of its potentially criminal nature. If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the principal, pastor or other school authority is required under state law to report the incident (O.R.C. 2151.421). The Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately if there is any “reason to believe” (O.R.C. 2151.421) that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. The Diocesan Legal Office will be contacted immediately in these situations.

Generally sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when: the recipient is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner; is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender’s sexual gratification; or is the victim of sex offenses under Ohio law, including Gross Sexual Imposition (O.R. C. 2907.05), Sexual Battery (O.R.C. 2907.03), Rape (O. R. C. 2907.02), Importuning (O.R.C. 2907.07), Voyeurism (O.R.C. 2907.08), Public Indecency (O.R.C. 2907.09), or Felonious Sexual Penetration (O.R.C. 2907.12) as examples. In each one of the above examples, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately.

**XV. Called to Protect**

We are pleased to announce that we will be providing our students in grades 1-8 with personal safety, boundary skills and abuse prevention information by presenting the curriculum titled “Called to Protect™” as part of our PSR program.

Called to Protect for Young Children provides catechists with 3 brief lesson plans (approximately 20-30 minutes) that include hands-on activities for each grade level (grades 1-6). Call to Protect for Youth is designed for grades 7 & 8. This self-protection training program uses 3 video facilitated discussions and interactive activities to help children develop skills they can use throughout their lives and in virtually any situation – school, home, sports, clubs, teams and in all interpersonal relationships.

Called to Protect™ was developed by Praesidium Inc., the national leader in abuse risk-management. The content has been written and developed by experts and is age-appropriate for all grade levels. It is not sexual education but rather a personal safety program that addresses a variety of topics including:

Rules for Interacting with Others (grade 1)

Listening to your Intuition (grade 2)

Secrets: Those You Keep and Those You Share (grade 3)

Healthy Friendships (grade 4)

Healthy Privacy (includes information on Internet safety) (grades 5 & 6)

Grades 1-6 will receive this training during the last half hour of their PSR classes. Please consult the PSR Calendar for dates as to when this material will be taught. It is listed as “CTP Training” on the calendar.

Grades 7 uses a DVD and activities to help children:

 - Understand physical, emotional and behavioral

 boundaries

 - Identify ways that child abusers try to violate these

 boundaries

 - Suggest ways the youth can respond if a person

 tries to violate their boundaries

 - How to report abuse that has happened or may be

 happening to them or someone they know

Grades 7 will also receive this training during their PSR classes. This material does take the entire class period. Please consult the PSR calendar for dates this material will be taught.

This program was piloted in 5 Parishes in the Cleveland Diocese during the 2009/2010 school and was implemented at Holy Family during the 2010/2011 school year by directive of the Cleveland Diocese. All were well received by parents. We highly encourage your children to participate in this program. However, you do have the option to not have your children participate. In that instance, your child is still expected to come to PSR but will be moved to another classroom during this instruction. If you opt your child out of this program, it is highly encouraged that you obtain materials and teach your child these boundary skills at home. An opt-out form will be provided prior to these sessions being presented.

**It is presumed that all children will participate in this program unless we hear from a parent/guardian otherwise.**

Parent materials are available upon request that provide more details on this program.

**XVI. Catechist Training**

Not only do our teachers give of themselves by teaching class an hour and a quarter each week, they also prepare for that class which takes at least an equal amount of time and energy. Our catechists also attend training classes and special workshops offered by the Diocese. Many of our catechists have achieved the Basic Catechist certification through the Diocese and are continuing to work towards the Advanced & Master Catechist certifications. These certifications require many hours in classes that teach basic beliefs and traditions, faith formation, methods, etc.

**XVII. Dear Parents…**

Your children need to see the concepts they learn in PSR class lived out in their own family and at Church. We would like to offer the following suggestions:

1. As the “primary and principal educator”, worship with your children at home and at Sunday Mass. They cannot bring themselves to Mass or Church activities. You, who are closest to them and who will have the greatest influence on them, must help them along and help them become a follower of Jesus.
2. You can be of great assistance to your child’s teacher by:
3. Attending Sunday Mass with your children weekly.
4. Seeing that your child is on time for class.
5. Making use of the Family Section of your child’s textbook & family resources on the Loyola website.
6. Heeding special notes that come home or notes on their report cards.
7. Working with the teacher and principal in matters of discipline.
8. In each child’s text for grades 1 – 7, there is a special section for the family after each unit: Things to do at Home. Parents are encouraged to go over this section with their children and complete the activities. Completing any other activities such as puzzles, questions and other activities as a family will make the text much more meaningful for the child.
9. Please do not let your Bible sit on the shelf collecting dust. Please take some time during family night, before bedtime or whenever the opportunity presents itself to read from the Bible. Bible pages are meant to be worn from use, important passages highlighted and comments written along the sides of the pages. It will help your children quickly find Scripture important to them in dealing with everyday life.
10. Since it is obvious that we involve so many people in our PSR program, we would ask you to seriously consider volunteering for this program. We always need PSR catechists and adult assistants. There is office work, parking lot supervision and a number of other volunteer jobs which could utilize your time and talent. Please call Dara Hoffman at 440-842-6658 if you are interested in volunteering.
11. Talk to your child’s teacher about his or her progress or about any questions you may have. Students will receive report cards shortly after the New Year and at the end of the school year. The report cards help inform you of your child’s progress. However, if you suspect that your child is having difficulty with the program, contact the teacher before report card time – the sooner the better.
12. Finally and perhaps most important of all, work on your own knowledge of the Catholic faith. Your children will receive and retain most of their knowledge of the faith from you. Being better informed will benefit your children in understanding and practicing their Catholic faith. Holy Family does offer enrichment programs throughout the year. Please watch your bulletin for announcements regarding these programs.

**XVIII. Sacramental Programs**

Within the calendar year, there are a number of dates which refer to parent meetings or student activities. These meetings are for parents of the children who are to receive First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion or Confirmation (Grade 2 & Grade 8). Parents are required to attend these sessions for each sacrament their child will be celebrating. Students are required to attend their special sessions as well in order to prepare for these Sacraments. Confirmation sessions this may be virtual instead of in-person.

Sr. Yvonne Spenoso is in charge of our Sacramental programs and will be in touch with all parents regarding meetings and requirements. If you have any questions, please contact her at the number listed in the front of this handbook.