

Dear OLMC Family,

Welcome to the catechetical ministry at Our Lady of Mount Carmel (OLMC) Parish! Please know that we are here to give you continual support and we encourage open and ongoing communication.

May God guide all of our families, volunteers and staff as we enter into this year of prayer, learning and celebration.

*Many Blessings,
Your Catechetical Staff*

PASTOR OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Monsignor Charles H. Hagan

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Mrs. Cindy Balceniuk

FIRST COMMUNION COORDINATOR, GRADES K, 1, 2, 3, 4

Mrs. Julianne Donahue

CONFIRMATION COORDINATOR GRADES 5, 6, 7 & 8

Mrs. Jane Stinson

OFFICE MANAGER

Mrs. Laurie Piccione

*Our Lady of Mount Carmel CCD Office
Address: 225 East Ashland St., Doylestown, PA 18901
Phone: 215-345-7089 Fax: 215 345-4615*

*CCD Office Hours
Sunday (when class is in session) 8:30am -12:00pm
Monday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
Tuesday through Thursday 9:00 am – 4:30 pm
Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm*

Visit our website-----www.ourladymtcarmel.org

Published August 2017

Family Information

1. CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) Mission Statement

The goal of the Religious Education Ministry (CCD) of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish is to lead our children into a relationship with God in the Catholic tradition. Our CCD program provides classes for children of all abilities. Through a devoted and trained community of volunteers, guided by the priests and CCD administration, our students come to experience the fullness of our Catholic faith. The CCD program, with the help of our parents, empowers each student to achieve their potential as active, educated participants in the Body of Christ.

2. REGISTRATION

CCD families must be registered parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church. CCD Registration is held in March/April. Registering in March/April helps to insure desired session and tuition is discounted. New students must be registered by January 31 of the current CCD year. Baptismal certificates must be presented at the time of registration for new students. Tuition must accompany the registration form. When moving, please notify the CCD office of the last day your child will attend.

Tuition:

- Tuition covers the cost of each student's text books, folder, classroom and art supplies, activity days, video purchases, facility utilities, resource materials and catechist and assistant training. It also helps to defray building maintenance and salaries of staff.
- A \$20.00 replacement fee is charged for lost books.
- A financial concern should not prevent you from registering your child(ren) in our program. Payment plans are available. If further assistance is needed, please contact the DRE.
- CCD volunteers pay reduced tuition.

3. SESSIONS AVAILABLE

Sunday	8:30 – 10:00 am	Kindergarten through Confirmation
Sunday	10:20 -11:50 am	Kindergarten through Confirmation
Monday	4:30 – 6:00 pm	Kindergarten through Confirmation
Monday	6:30 – 8:00 pm	Grade 1 through Confirmation

4. ARRIVAL

- All students are to report to the Gym at the time of drop-off.
- All doors, except the gym doors, will be locked. At 5 minutes after the scheduled session time the gym doors will be closed.
- Students should arrive on time since sessions begin promptly.
- If your child arrives late, after the gym doors are closed, they must report to the CCD office and obtain a late pass in order to be admitted into class.

5. DISMISSAL

- All students will go to the gym accompanied by an adult Catechist/Assistant
- Grades K-4 (except those with siblings in grades 5-8) will be dismissed through the doors on the Burpee Park side parking lot, see Figure A (pg. 11).
 - They will proceed with Catechist or Assistant outside and stand behind their class sign on the safety lines in the parking lot to be picked up.
 - Parents will get out of their cars to pick up children from their class lines and signal the Catechist/Assistant that they are taking their child.
- Grades 5-8 plus their younger siblings, will be dismissed on the parking lot side by the cafeteria double doors, see Figure B (page12).
 - **For the safety of all we ask that drivers do not use cell phones in the parking lot.**
- *Students will be dismissed ONLY from the Gym doors.*
- Students may not wait for late parents outside the building. If you are delayed, your child(ren) will wait for you in the CCD office.

Early Dismissal

If for some urgent reason a child needs to be excused early from class, please observe the following:

- A written note is to be turned into the Catechist by the child at the beginning of class with the reason for dismissal.
- A parent must come to the CCD office to sign out and pick up their child(ren), at which point your child will be brought down to the CCD office.
- For safety reasons, no child may leave the building alone.
- Students must be in class at least **1 hour** to count as present for that class session.

6. EMERGENCY CLOSING

- On occasion, concern for the safety of our families requires that the Pastor and Director make a decision to cancel a scheduled session or event due to inclement weather.
- If Central Bucks School District is cancelled, OLMC CCD is cancelled.
- NBC & CBS television stations will air all closings on their School Alert System. KYW Radio will also announce the closing; our school closing number is 739.
- When in doubt, call the CCD Office at 215-345-7089.
- When possible, an e-mail will be sent.

7. ATTENDANCE

A minimum of thirty five hours of religious instruction are required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of Catechetical Formation. It is also recommended that a child repeat the grade if frequent absences occur (10-15%). Our attendance policy therefore is:

- When a child misses a class, the parent should supervise the completion of the missed lesson, listed on the grade level calendar, and the lesson should be returned to the child's catechist at the beginning of the next class.
- If long-term absence occurs due to illness or a family situation, parents must contact the grade level Coordinator or Director to arrange a suitable way for their child to complete grade level requirements.
- Children must meet attendance requirements, complete all their assigned work and examinations before they are promoted to the next grade level.
- Since the curriculum is graded and presented in developmental sequence, children may not arbitrarily skip grades. If children register with no previous religious instruction, they may or may not be placed in the same grade they are in school. This matter must be discussed with the administration.
- *If a student misses 5 sessions, they will not be promoted to the next grade level until their parents resolve this issue with the CCD Administration.*

Session Make-Up

- For the benefit of our students and their family's schedules it is possible to make-up a CCD session. However, students are asked to make up no more than 3 weeks in a row. This can only occur within the same weekend of the missed class.
- Parents must bring students to the CCD office prior to the time of the session they wish to attend and sign-in their child. The child will then be assigned a make-up class.
- If any student needs to extend make-up sessions for a number of weeks, please contact the grade level coordinator.
- We reserve the right to close certain classes for makeups.

Family Emergencies/Illness

- *Due to our large numbers, parents need not call the CCD office to report an absence. Instead, a volunteer will call home during class time. We do this to be sure that every student sent to CCD arrives safely and to become aware of any serious illness or problem that may have occurred in the family.*
- However, a parent should notify the catechist in writing of any anticipated absences. The catechist will then record the anticipated absence on the absentee form for that week and no call need be made to that home.

8. EXAMINATIONS

Examinations are given to students in Grades 1 through Confirmation based on the material outlined on the grade level calendar. Study Sheets will outline the basic information your child should know for each exam. As stated above, all students must take an exam to be promoted.

9. FAMILY ROLES

Our catechists are parents who work and are busy with family responsibilities. They have spent time preparing their classrooms, their lessons, and their hearts. They have also committed additional time to workshops, seminars and meetings in order to provide their class with the best faith-sharing leadership possible. In order to demonstrate support of these dedicated members of our parish, we ask the parents to observe the following:

Parent Responsibilities

- **Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.**
- Send child to all sessions on time
- *Check child's folder every week for assignments, notices and calendar updates.*
- Check weekly/biweekly emails sent from the CCD office.

- Attend opening session and all required meetings.
- **Parent Volunteers – In the past parent volunteers have been substitutes and additional help in the classroom. Parent volunteers are a vital part of our program. The State of Pennsylvania now mandates along with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia that all parent volunteers must have security clearances. Clearances needed are as follows:**
 - **Pa Criminal Clearance**
 - **Child Abuse History Clearance**
 - **Safe Environment Adult training (Virtus)**
 - **Mandated Reporter Training (on-line)**
 - **NOTE: FBI Fingerprinting is needed for any volunteer not living in Pa for at least 10 years.**
- Any parent coming to CCD to volunteer, must sign-in at the CCD office and wear a name tag.

Student Responsibilities

- **Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.**
- Cooperate with the catechist in order to maintain a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Participate fully and appropriately in your group's activities.
- Treat others and the property of others with respect.
- Please note, the following is unacceptable behavior:
 - ◆ Disrespect for any adult by word or action.
 - ◆ Leaving the premises without permission from the office.
 - ◆ Excessive talking or calling out in class.
 - ◆ Fighting
 - ◆ Defacing books, desks, walls, bathroom, etc.
 - ◆ Removing items from OLMC school student's desk.
 - ◆ Repeated failure to complete homework assignments.

Cell Phone Policy

- Students are prohibited from using cell phones at anytime during the CCD session.
- Cell phones found in use will be brought to the CCD office and must be picked up by a parent.

Disciplinary Policy

Occasionally there may be situations where disciplinary action must be taken. They include but are not limited to:

- disruptive or inappropriate behavior in class
- unforeseen personality conflicts with the catechist or classmates

Steps to resolve conflict:

- First, the catechist discusses the situation and possible solutions with their coordinator.
- Second, if the problem persists, catechists or the Administration will contact the parents.
- Third, if the problem continues, the DRE will meet with parents, the student and the catechist, to best resolve the situation.

10. COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

We encourage all parents to discuss any suggestions or concerns with the Grade Level Coordinators and/or the DRE. The CCD administration can be contacted using any of the means listed below:

CCD office phone: 215-345-7089

Email addresses:

Cindy Balceniuk (Director) - cbalceniuk@ourladymtcarmelschool.org

Julianne Donahue (Coordinator grades k-4) – jdonahue@ourladymtcarmelschool.org

Jane Stinson (Coordinator grades 5-8) – jstinson@ourladymtcarmelschool.org

Laurie Piccione (Office Manager) – lpiccione@ourladymtcarmelschool.org

- The Director will send a weekly/ biweekly email to parents.
- Communications will come to you via your child's folder.

11. SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION

Parents are expected to follow Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish policy with regard to sacramental preparation and celebration with their children. This policy will be explained more fully at the parent sessions held in conjunction with each sacrament.

- Registration in the parish is required
- Since catechesis involves much more than classroom preparation, *the most important preparation is active participation in the Sunday Liturgy (Mass).*

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Two years of preparation are required for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. Guidelines put forth by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia concerning baptized children specify that the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be received prior to First Eucharist, a sacrament of initiation.

- At OLMC the preparation for these sacraments traditionally begins in the fall of Grade 1, called Communion Prep, and requires parental involvement at meetings, sacramental programs and overseeing of homework assignments.
- Reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist (First Communion) traditionally occurs in Grade 2.

First Communion Requirements

The expectation for each child preparing for the celebration of this sacrament is they:

- Must be baptized.
- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.
- Have completed two consecutive years of religious formational instruction.
- Have a satisfactory attendance record (*4 or more absences during First Communion year may necessitate additional preparation*).
- Have an appreciation and understanding of the sacrament appropriate for the age level and ability.

The expectation for parents who choose to have their children celebrate this sacrament is:

- Be registered in the parish.
- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.
- Know and support the teaching of the church.
- Be personally involved in your child's preparation by attending parent meetings and other scheduled activities.
- Oversee the child's participation in the homework books, retreat days, and all practices.

Special Sacraments Program

For students in the fourth grade and above who have not received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and/or Eucharist, we coordinate a Special Sacraments program with emphasis on family involvement. This program helps parents prepare their child/children for these sacraments.

Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is also a sacrament of initiation, which requires two years of preparation. Therefore, candidates in Confirmation Prep (Grade 7) begin to prepare for Confirmation in the fall, and celebrate the sacrament in the spring of their Confirmation year (Grade 8).

Confirmation Requirements

It is the expectation that candidates who wish to receive the sacrament of Confirmation:

- Must be baptized.
- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.
- Have a satisfactory attendance record (*4 or more absences during 7th & 8th grade may necessitate additional preparation*).
- Complete a Confirmation formation program, attend a retreat, offer hours of service to the parish and community and work closely with their sponsor.

It is the expectation that parents of candidates preparing for Confirmation:

- Be registered in the parish.
- Participate weekly in Sunday Mass.
- Know and support the teachings of the Church.
- Be personally involved in the preparation through attendance at parent meetings.
- Guide the candidate in the selection of a sponsor.
- Oversee the candidate's fulfillment of requirements.

Sponsor

The role of the Sponsor is to help the candidate throughout his/her life to fulfill his/her baptismal promises. The sponsor should be one whose positive influence on the candidate is permanent and strong; hence it is not just an honorary title, but a responsibility to set a good Catholic example.

- In conformity with the new Code of Canon Law, parents may not be sponsors.
- Sponsors must be at least 16 years old.
- Sponsors must be Catholics who have been confirmed, received Eucharist and practice the Faith. "Practicing" means, in the case of an adult, registered in a parish, frequenting the Sacraments, regularly attending Mass and in a valid marriage.
- Sponsors must have a Letter of Eligibility from the pastor of their present parish if the sponsor is not from Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church.
- Encourage a sharing of faith between Sponsor and Candidate.

Catechist and Assistant Information

1. PHILADELPHIA ARCHDIOCESAN RELIGION CERTIFICATE POLICY

“Before someone begins to teach the parish program, the Pastor or his delegate should be satisfied that the catechist is appropriately prepared.” (Office of Religious Education, Archdiocese of Philadelphia)

The Catechist Certificate Program

This program seeks to help catechists:

- Become familiar with official Church documents, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and Archdiocesan guidelines and resources.
- Be introduced to practical applications of post-Vatican II teaching as is found in approved texts and resources.
- Be provided with a bibliography of printed resources for further reading and study.
- 1 Archdiocesan Religion Credit (10 hours) is to be completed in the first year of teaching, as well as additional catechetical courses offered by the Archdiocese.
 - Orientation and Training Course: 1 credit
 - Core course: 8 credits
 - Electives: 7 credits
- It is recommended that each year following completion of Level One Certificate of Participation, 1 Archdiocesan Religion credits (10 hours) should be earned until a total of 16.0 credits have been reached.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES of CATECHISTS and ASSISTANTS

The ministry of Catechist is a vocation, an interior call of the Holy Spirit. Commissioned by the Church, catechists participate in a divine calling to teach as Jesus did. Catechists need to be practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the church.

- Catechist must be over 18 years of age.
- Actively participate in the Sunday Liturgy (Mass).
- Fulfill archdiocesan educational requirements.
- Meet legal requirements of having PA Criminal Record Check and PA Child Abuse History Clearance forms on file with the Parish. (required to be updated every 3 years.)
- Obtain FBI Fingerprinting if you have not lived in Pennsylvania for 10 or more years.
- Attend a Safe Environment Program (Protecting God’s Children) and complete online Mandated Reporter Training.
- Attend all grade level meetings.
- Plan one class service project per year.
- Follow guidelines and curriculum set by the Parish Religious Education (CCD) office and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Role of the Catechist

Week prior to class:

- Pray
- Prepare each week’s lesson according to the guidelines set forth by the grade level coordinator in the binder and the catechist manual. Curriculum has been chosen to meet the guidelines as set forth by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Lesson plans in the binder are designed to highlight the key elements to be taught each class. Catechists may not substitute their own lesson plan unless they submit a revised lesson plan to their coordinator for approval at least one week in advance. If you are using a video clip (u-tube, etc.), please show it to the Director or Coordinator prior to class.
- Make duplication requests one week in advance; email requests should be the Wednesday prior to class during office hours.
- Brief assistant on their part of the lesson plan.
- Get a substitute when necessary. Assistants are the first source of substitutes. Parents with clearances may act as substitutes. Call the office and leave the name and phone number of your substitute.
- Arrange pick up of class materials with the substitute.
- Grade level Coordinators and/or Director must be copied on all emails that are sent to parents.

Time of Session:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before class starts.
- No child is allowed in the classroom, including those of the catechists and assistants; they must go to the Gym.
- Report to the CCD Office to sign in and check ‘mailbox’ for handouts. No one may check in for anyone else.
- Wear name badge at all times.
- Prepare your teaching resources for class (notes on board, opening activity props, VCR/DVD set-up).
- Come to the gym 5 minutes before the beginning of session.

- Begin class with the Gospel Gathering; Assistants read and discuss Sunday's Gospel around the prayer table.
- Follow the lesson plan and note carefully the time allotments.
- Be open to unforeseen additions to the lesson plan. (fire drills, special requests, visit from coordinators, etc.)
- Reasonable and responsible behavior must be exhibited in the classroom at all times. Children may not be sent on 'errands' alone. If an assistant is not available, the children must go in pairs. Avoid remarks that may be taken as "defamation of character." Physical punishment is never allowed. A child may not be left in the hall alone as a disciplinary action. See the grade level Coordinator for suggestions. Always model Gospel values.
- Before leaving the classroom, distribute all handouts and Rosaries.

Dismissal Plan:

- Assistants and their classes go to the gym for one decade of the Rosary.
- Catechists may cleanup classroom then go to the gym 5 minutes after students have left the classroom for final prayer and dismissal. All catechists are to be in the gym for dismissal.
- At least 2 people from each class must accompany the students of grades K-8 to the car line. They stay with the children until they have all been picked up.
- Return "Class Folder" to the Catechist/Assistant Box (C/A Box) in the hallway outside the CCD Office. The Class Folder should contain an attendance sheet, any forms returned by students, duplication requests or notes to coordinators. The Class Folder will be returned to the catechist's mailbox each week.
- Should breakage occur in the classroom please notify both the school teacher and the grade level coordinator in writing.
- Be sure to close windows, erase blackboards/whiteboards, and turn off lights and fans.

Role of the Assistant

Week prior to class:

- Pray
- Review each week's lesson in the folder in order to anticipate what will happen during the lesson and be prepared to teach when necessary.
- Get a substitute when necessary. Every class should have at least two adults present at all times. Call parents with proper clearances as a source for volunteer substitutes.

Time of Session:

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before class starts.
- Report to the CCD office, sign in and collect the class supplies from the CCD office. No one may check in for anyone else.
- Wear name badge at all times.
- Help catechists arrange classroom environment.
- Go to the Gym 10 minutes before session time to supervise and take attendance.
- Begin class with the Gospel Gathering. It is the Assistant's job to read and discuss Sunday's Gospel around the prayer table.
- Check books and assignments returned by children who were absent. Mark books etc. so parents and students will see the work has been checked.
- Finalize attendance in the classroom which should have been started in the gym.
- Assist with classroom maintenance and discipline.
- Fill out absentee form and bring to the CCD Office within 30 minutes of the start of session.
- Help distribute handouts. Reserve handouts for absent children.
- Be prepared to lead discussion groups or assist with hands on activities.
- Handle injuries/illness during class. Monitor bathroom breaks.
- Assist catechist with class service project.
- Reasonable and responsible behavior must be exhibited in the classroom at all times. Avoid remarks that could be taken as "defamation of character." Physical punishment is never allowed. Model Gospel values.

Dismissal:

- Assistants and their classes go to the gym for one decade of the Rosary.
- At least 2 people per class must accompany the students of grades K-8 to the car line. Stay with the children until they have all been picked up or bring them to the grade level Coordinator. After some time, the children are brought to the CCD office for pick up.
- Return "Class Folder" to the Catechist/Assistant Box (C/A Box) in the hallway outside the CCD Office. The Class Folder should contain an attendance sheet, any forms returned by students, duplication requests or notes to coordinators. The Class Folder will be returned to the catechist's mailbox each week.
- Should breakage occur in the classroom please notify both the school teacher and the grade level coordinator in writing.
- Be sure to close windows, erase blackboards/whiteboards, and turn off lights and fans.

3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- No food or drink allowed in the classroom.
- It is extremely important that our children do not have the opportunity to “investigate” a child’s desk. Chairs should be arranged in a sharing circle or small group format. Desks should be used only for specific tasks.
- Chalkboards//Whiteboards are not to be used by the children outside of class time. Whiteboards are only to be used by the adults with dry erase markers and socks/cloths for erasing.
- Leave the room exactly the way you found it. Please note that the **blue recycle bins are for paper only! No trash!**
- Smart boards are NOT to be used by anyone.

4. ATTENDANCE REGISTER

- The taking of attendance is a very serious matter. Absences are kept on file.
- Accurate records are imperative for grade level promotion and safety reasons. At the end of the year all attendance records are given to the coordinators.
- In case of a fire drill, it is imperative that roll be taken at the beginning of class and that all catechists take the official attendance registers outside with them during a fire drill, and take roll outside.
- *Always keep the official attendance register in the “Class Folder”.* This folder will be turned in at the end of every class to the Catechist/Assistant Box. The C/A Box will be emptied by the coordinators who will return Class Folders to the mailboxes. Never take the class folder or the official attendance register home.
- The parents will be asked to complete an information form. This form will have email address, cell phone numbers, carpool information etc., please *keep in class folder*. This information is given to insure the best possible learning situation for students and is to be kept strictly confidential!

5. ABSENTEE FORMS

- The assistant is to fill out the absentee form and bring it to the CCD Office within 30 minutes of the start of class.
- An office volunteer will phone the student’s home and record the reason for the absence. The volunteer will then give the forms to coordinators for review.
- The assistant or catechist should notify the coordinator via the Class Folder when a student leaves the program or if the family is experiencing an extended illness or serious family situation.

6. TRIPS/PERMISSION SLIPS

If a class plans a small outing or service project during class time which requires leaving Our Lady of Mt. Carmel School, (Church, Prayer Garden, Burpee Park excluded) a signed permission slip for each student is required. The CCD Administration must grant permission for the activity before the announcement of such a trip to students and parents. All forms must be obtained from the Grade Level coordinator.

- If your lesson includes going outside of the school building (i.e. Prayer Garden, Park, Church, etc.) you must sign out your class in the CCD Office and return with your class through the CCD Office and sign back in.

7. C/A BOX

The Catechist/Assistant Box (C/A Box) is located in the hallway outside of the CCD Office. All Class Folders should be returned to this box each week, **after dismissal**.

8. INJURIES

- Assistants should accompany injured children to the CCD office where there is a First Aid Kit. Use latex gloves.
- *Classes should not be left unattended without proper instruction.*
- An Accident Report Form for injuries of a more serious nature **MUST** be filled out the day of the injury in order to answer any insurance inquiries. Give it to the grade level Coordinator.

9. FIRE DRILL INSTRUCTIONS

- Read the fire drill instructions in the Emergency Handbook.
- Instruct the children on what they should do in the event of a fire or drill.
- Take your attendance register.
- Direct the children to leave quickly and quietly when the bell rings without stopping to form lines or covering their ears.
- Move the class away from the school building.
- Take roll to account for all the students. This is a state law.
- Return to classroom when the all clear signal is given.

CCD Curriculum

All aspects of Catholic life and practice are covered between the years Kindergarten and 8th grade. Not every element of Church teaching can be covered at each grade level. By the time a student has experienced all grade levels; he or she will have been formed in the faith and will know that learning about the faith is a lifelong task.

Central Theme by Grade Level

Communion Prep:	Creation, Trinity and Baptism
First Communion:	Reconciliation and First Communion
Grade Three:	Church Community
Grade Four:	Ten Commandments and Beatitudes
Grade Five:	Sacraments and Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
Grade Six:	Salvation History
Confirmation Prep:	Jesus Christ, Discipleship and Confirmation
Confirmation:	Confirmation and Morality/ Theology of the Body