



**Most Precious Blood**  
— CATHOLIC CHURCH —

# Religious Education K3-12<sup>th</sup> Handbook

**Fall 2023 – Spring 2024**

## **Church Information:**

Most Precious Blood Church  
3502 Saratoga Blvd.  
Corpus Christi, TX 78415

Phone: 361-854-3800

Website: [www.mpbchurch.org](http://www.mpbchurch.org)

## **Priests and Deacons:**

Rev. Joseph A. Lopez, J.C.L., Pastor  
Rev. Arularasu Mathias, Parochial Vicar  
Deacon Ken Bockholt  
Deacon Frank Newchurch  
Deacon David Castillo  
Deacon Mark Cazalas

**Parish Faith Formation & Discipleship Office** - Phone: 361-854-3800

Tina Villegas, Director - E-mail: [mpbred@yahoo.com](mailto:mpbred@yahoo.com)

Alexis Martinez, Youth Minister – E-mail: [mpbccym@gmail.com](mailto:mpbccym@gmail.com)

Stacie Bunting, Youth Ministry Event Coordinator

Belinda Arnero, Administrative Assistant

## Curriculum

Our programs for students in grades K-12th follows the guidelines outlined by the policies set forth by the Diocese of Corpus Christi for the Catechesis of Children and Adolescents.

Our chosen curriculums: Grades K3-6<sup>th</sup> is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd; Grades 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> is Word of Life and High School Confirmation Preparation is Chosen.

## Communications

Please be sure that all your phone numbers and emergency contact information listed with us is current and that you or another responsible adult can be reached during class time in the event of an emergency. We do not have the facility to care for a sick child. Please ensure that a 2<sup>nd</sup> person is listed in case the parent is not available.

Communication to parents from this office and from catechists serve to strengthen our joint efforts to provide quality religious education for the student. The main means of communication will come via text. Information is also posted regularly on our website, weekly parish bulletin (which is also available on-line) and Facebook. Parents are strongly encouraged to be in touch with our office if there is a concern or question. The catechist is also encouraged to text, e-mail or call parents as the need to do so becomes apparent. Parents are welcome to visit classrooms/atriums with advanced notification to the DRE.

- Parents should watch for reminders that are **texted**/e-mailed and/or sent home with the students, as well as look for notices in the bulletin.

## Admission Policies:

You must be a registered parishioner of Most Precious Blood Church to enroll your child for a K-12<sup>th</sup> Religious Education classes. Registration fees are \$35.00 per child.

Students from other parishes may be enrolled in our Religious Education program BUT they must submit a written letter of permission from their appropriate pastor.

In addition to the registration form, parents must sign a “Yearly Parent/Guardian Consent and Medical/Health History Form.” This form will be kept on file. Also, parents must return a signed “Parent/Student acknowledgement” form.

All students entering the program for the first time must also submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate and First Holy Communion Certificate with their registration form. If student is in RCIC – Birth certificate is required.

Registration is available on-line. Please visit our website [mpbchurch.org](http://mpbchurch.org) and/or look in the bulletin for more information. **Remember to include your fees, consent form and Parent and Student Acknowledgment Form which may be found under documents in the online registrations.**

### **Catechists/Leaders:**

Catechist, Leaders, Teachers and assistants will provide a loving Christian atmosphere within the classroom so that children will be able to learn and recognize they are special children of God. Catechists are also positive Christian role models who are prepared to teach and discuss the designated curriculum. All catechists and their assistants have completed the *Creating and Maintaining Safe Environment* (CMSE) program as required by the Diocese of Corpus Christi. • *Creating and Maintaining Safe Environment* Workshops (CMSE) are required for all church personnel, clergy, teachers, volunteers and others working with or for the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Corpus Christi.

### **Attendance:**

Regular attendance is an important factor in helping your child deepen their understanding of church teaching, scripture, prayer and community. If there are special circumstances regarding your child's participation in the program, they may be worked **out in advance** with the Director of Faith Formation.

### **Arrival**

Pk3 to Grade 6 students - Drive-by drop off is not permitted. Students must be escorted to and from the atrium/classroom by a parent or guardian. Side gates are opened 20 minutes before class time begins. They will remain open until 5 minutes after class time begins. Please ensure that your child(ren) are in the atrium/classroom before leaving. Please be prompt—Students may not enter atriums/classrooms unless a teacher/aide is in the room; if no adult is present in the atrium/room, students are expected to wait quietly in the hall outside the classroom until the teacher or teacher's aide arrives. Side Gates are locked 5 minutes after class time begins; after that, main lobby doors must be used. Please try to avoid tardiness—it is very disruptive to the teacher and all the students in your child's class

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are to use the St. Maria Goretti Youth Center Lobby entrance for class. Attendance will be taken in the lobby area and then they are to check in at their assigned tables.

9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students are to use the St. Juliana Family Center entrance. Attendance will be taken in the lobby area and then they are to check-in at their assigned tables.

## Departure

Pk3 to Grade 6 students - Drive-by pick up is not permitted. Please PARK and escort your child out of the building. Adults will be required to “sign out” their children from the classroom. Side gates will allow access to classrooms 5 minutes before dismissal time. Please exit the building by the side gates. Main Lobby doors may NOT be used to exit during departure/pickup. While these protocols may be inconvenient, they are required to ensure the safety of all children entering or leaving the building/accessing parking lots.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are to be picked up from the Saint Maria Goretti Youth Center.

9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students are to be picked up from the St. Juliana Family Center.

- Early pick-up is discouraged. Frequently missing all or part of weekly classes does affect your child’s religious education.

- **Pk3 to Grade 6 students** - If you do need to pick up your child before dismissal, the parent/guardian must send a brief note (stating time, date, catechist’s name and room number) to the Office of Faith Formation. **Pick up your child at the SMGYC Lobby area.** Students will be released only to those persons approved by the parent or other designated adult. Any person(s) picking up the student other than the parent/guardian or other adult will be asked to provide photo identification to staff on site.

### **The reasons for repetition of grade level are as follows:**

1. Excessive absence: 3 absences are allowed. Additional absences may require a parent conference.
2. Poor performance: if the child consistently does poorly when assessed on the content of lessons, repetition of the grade level may be the best solution for the child to grasp the content.
3. Excessive lateness: If the late arrivals continue beyond 6 occurrences, this is grounds for repetition of grade level.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

**RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation of Children):** The RCIC program is a 2 year program for children eight years of age or older who have not been baptized, and wish to become Catholic. Birth certificate required. Parents/guardians may contact the office by email: [mpbreled@yahoo.com](mailto:mpbreled@yahoo.com)

**First Reconciliation and First Communion:** The celebration of First Reconciliation and First Communion occurs during the 2nd grade year for most students who have been baptized, and who are in their second consecutive year of Religious Education. Older students who have not received either of these sacraments are eligible if they have been baptized, and are in their second consecutive year of Religious Education. Baptismal certificate required.

**Confirmation:** Confirmation preparation begins in the 9th grade under the Chosen Religious Education program. Students are confirmed in the spring of their 10th grade year, or after 2 consecutive years of confirmation preparation. This course is designed to help teens come to a greater understanding of their Catholic faith, grow in their relationship with Christ, and practice living the Christian life. With this foundation, they will be able to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit received at Confirmation to the fullest. Confirmation sessions include prayer, catechesis, small group faith sharing, and required service components. **Confirmation Mass is scheduled by the Bishop's office and rehearsal and Confirmation Mass dates will be provided once our Parish receives the assigned date.** Baptismal and First Holy Communion certificates required.

### **Program Components:**

Weekly Sunday Mass and Holy Day of Obligation Mass attendance.

Confirmation Retreats-Must attend 1 parish retreat per year.

Parish Service & Ministry Hours along with 2 Service projects.

Religious Education Classes-Must attend and participate in Sessions.

Complete the Saint Poster Project

### **Confirmation Readiness Interview and Test**

Towards the end of the second year of Confirmation preparation, each candidate will participate in an informal interview to demonstrate readiness to receive the sacrament. Readiness is determined by the **candidate's** desire to receive the sacrament and satisfactory completion of the requirements for Confirmation. Before the interview, candidates will need to successfully complete a test, demonstrating understanding of what they have learned. **TBA in Spring.**

## **Confirmation Saint's Poster Project Presentation**

The tradition of taking on a new name to show a new role can be traced back to the Old Testament. When Abram was called to lead his people to believe in the one God, his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, "*Father of many nations*". Again, in the New Testament, we find Simon's name changed to Peter, meaning "*rock*", because he was to become the rock upon which Jesus founded his Church. Now that you are about to be confirmed, it is time to choose the name you will take as a sign of your growth in faith. Project will be due on 12/3/2023. Poster detail requirements can be found in documents(registration).

## **Confirmation Sponsor**

Individuals seeking Confirmation must also acquire an adult Sponsor. "It is the role of the sponsor to represent the faith community." (Canon 893) The confirmation sponsor is to guide the one confirmed to act as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfill the duties of the sacrament. It is preferable for the godparent from baptism to serve as sponsor. However, another person may serve as sponsor. To become a sponsor, a person:

- Must be a practicing Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- As a practicing Catholic, is expected to receive Communion at the Confirmation Mass.
- If married, the marriage must be in accordance with the laws of the Catholic Church. If single the sponsor cannot be cohabitating (living with a significant other).
- Must be at least 16 years of age.
- Must not be the mother or father of the child or candidate.
- Must have every intention of fulfilling the role as Sponsor.

## **Rules/Expectations for Religious Education and Youth Ministry Sessions and Events:**

Out of respect for oneself and others, children/students are expected to:

- Behave appropriately and respectfully at all Parish events and sessions.
- Anything dangerous or illegal is of course prohibited.
- Use upbuilding and kind speech, and no swearing/profanities.
- Arrive on time.
- Participate in sessions, and complete assignments/ readings.

- No cell phone or electronic devices use during sessions, Youth events, and of course Mass. (High School Students - Unless this is directed by the Catechist/Leader as part of the educational process.)
- Dress modestly and appropriately: All undergarments must be covered, no skin-tight clothing, exposed midriffs, no low-cut tops, spaghetti strap tops, strapless or backless tops. No sagging, skintight pants, short shorts or short skirts. No inappropriate language/graphics on clothing. Certain types of attire are not appropriate to wear to RE class or in Church, in the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Regular visits to Church throughout the year require that students' dress each week be appropriate to go to Church. Our efforts to teach students reverence for God and each other include guiding them in how to best present themselves modestly and respectfully. All hats must be removed by males before entering the church.

### **Cell Phones and Electronics**

The use of cell phones and other electronic devices by the child is not permitted during the Religious Education session (High School student may have an exception IF this is directed by the Catechist/Leader as part of the educational process.) Cell phones brought into the classroom should be turned off. At the discretion of the teacher cell phones may be collected and put in a basket at the beginning of class or placed on the Catechist/Leader's desk. Children in need of contacting a parent must ask the Catechist's permission to go to the Religious Education Office to place the call.

### **Bullying and Cyber-bullying**

Bullying includes but is not limited to: threatening physical harm, verbal abuse, intimidation, cyberbullying. A safe and civil environment is necessary for children to learn and achieve Christian value. Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying (using technology to bully such as but not limited to: posting an inappropriate picture of a child on the Internet) and other violent behaviors will not be tolerated in a Religious Education Program environment. Any child who engages in this behavior may be asked to leave the religious education environment if this is seen to be in the best interest of the rest of the religious education community.

### **Vandalism**

Children in this program share church property with others. Touching or removing someone else's property will be considered vandalism. Vandalism or willfully damaging or destroying property will not be tolerated. Vandalism must be paid for by the parent of the child who did it. Accidental damage should be immediately reported to the Director.

## Unacceptable Behavior

The following types of behavior are NOT allowed during the Religious Education Program. Infractions which call for discipline by the Catechist are:

- acting in a disrespectful manner toward the Catechist/Leader, Assistants, Volunteers, other adults or children in the program
- cheating
- speaking and interacting with other children inappropriately during the session
- abusive or vulgar language
- leaving a session without permission
- using a cell phone during the session when not authorized by the Catechist or Lead
- doing something other than the work of the session
- violating the dress code
- possession of and /or trafficking in alcohol or other drugs
- leaving the Religious Education premises when a child is supposed to be attending the session
- willful defiance of authority
- recording or photographing a catechist or student without permission
- possession of weapons, such as knives, guns, or look-alikes
- physical assault/fighting, threatening bodily harm
- harassment and intimidation of other children
- vandalism, arson, theft
- bullying/cyber-bullying.

Persistence in any of these behaviors after corrective measures have been taken can result in the removal of the child from the Religious Education group sessions, either temporarily or permanently, depending on the recommendation of the Director and the decision of the Pastor.

## Behavior Management

Our Catechists are volunteers and should not be expected to spend class time as disciplinarians. However, when necessary a catechist may use **behavior management** (or “discipline”) appropriate to an educational environment as a necessary means for the Religious Education Program to accomplish its goals. The purpose of behavior management is to help the children develop self-control, self-respect, respect for others, and reverence for the Word of God which is being explained to them in these sessions. Several infractions of rules of conduct will result in a call by the Director to the child’s parent in which the Director will describe the situation and work out a solution with the parent. If the infractions continue, the Director will organize a conference with the parent, the Catechist, and if needed the Pastor. The Religious Education Program reserves to the Director, under the authority of the Pastor, the right to remove a child from the group session, either temporarily or permanently: - **if the child’s behavior is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group;** - **if the child’s behavior is seriously inhibiting the safety or well-being of others in the group;** - **temporary removal is used as a disciplinary measure for serious and persistent disruptive behavior.**



# 2023-2024 Parent/Student Religious Education Handbook Acknowledgement Form

## The student's responsibilities include:

- Living a moral life that reflects the values and teachings of Jesus Christ
- Participating in the Parish Mass each Sunday
- After receiving the Sacrament of Penance, you should be confessing at least once a year
- Following the teachings, laws, and norms of the Catholic Church
- Attending the weekly Religious Education Sessions
- Arriving on time each week for the Religious Education Session
- Being well-prepared for each Religious Education session by having all assigned home projects completed satisfactorily
- Memorizing all required prayers
- Participating in class discussions and activities
- Being attentive and respectful during sessions
- Performing satisfactorily on assessments of the material taught in the sessions
- Practicing appropriate and modest dress

## Parents' Responsibility

- 1) To accept our responsibility as the primary educators in the faith of our child(ren) and support what they learn in the Religious Education.
- 2) To witness to our child(ren) by the practice of our faith which includes Sunday worship, the celebration of Reconciliation, and other worship opportunities.
- 3) To witness to our child(ren) by collaborating with the parish in their preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- 4) To witness to our child(ren) by being involved in the stewardship of the parish by sharing our Time, Treasure and Talent with the parish and other Church endeavors.

## Sacramental I & II Parent Commitment

### Sacramental Preparation Year I

I, the parent of the child listed below, promise to help be a guide for my child's spiritual journey through this two year sacramental preparation. Out of love for my child, I will help him/her fulfill our Sunday obligation of attending Mass. I understand that my son/daughter must attend classes each week and that they may NOT have MORE THAN 3 absences. If they fail to meet this, I understand that I am choosing to limit my child's understanding of these sacraments. I understand that my son/daughter is responsible for meeting project deadlines and turning all work in to their catechist/leader. It is my understanding that this is not the end of my child's faith journey, but just a step until they can continue on as adults in our faith. I understand my child should continue with Religious Education through the 12th grade.

### Sacramental Preparation Year II

I agree to attend the designated Parent Meetings, Meditations, and retreats to assist my child as he/she grows deeper in the understanding of the sacraments.

I/We hereby acknowledge that I/we have read and understand the contents of this Parent Student Handbook regarding the Religious Education Program at MPB. I/We agree to the directives contained herein.

Student Name(s):

Student Grade(s)

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: (please sign and date)

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_