

# OUR LADY OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH

## CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH MINISTRY PARENT HANDBOOK 2011-2012



“THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE, SYSTEMATIC INSTRUCTION AND INITIATION INTO THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY TO THE LITURGY, SACRAMENTS AND SERVICE, CATECHESIS DEEPENS AND STRENGTHENS THE BELIEVER AS A MEMBER OF THE BODY OF CHRIST, THE CHURCH.” *(NATIONAL DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS, JUNE 2003, UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS)*

### **Office of Children's and Youth Ministry**

Our Lady of Mount Carmel church  
1441 W. Balboa Blvd.  
Newport Beach, CA 92661  
949.673.2719

#### **Office Staff:**

Director.....John Bruscia

Office Associate..... Joanne Shaw

Office Hours: M-F, 8:30AM-4:30PM, T 8:30 AM-7:30PM (during school year), Sat. closed, Sun. 4-7:30PM

*Please notify the Children's and Youth Ministry Office if you change any of the following information: address, e-mail address, home, cell, or office phone.*

## KEY PRINCIPLES

Faith formation at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Church is based on three key principles:

1. **Faith formation is a lifelong process** of entering into a relationship with God through Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. We strive to assist families in recognizing God's unconditional love, compassion, and forgiveness.
2. **Parents are primary religious educators** of their children. The program is here to assist you with this privilege and responsibility.
3. **Sunday liturgy is the source and summit of life of any Catholic parish.** It is foundational but everyone gathers at the table each Sunday to celebrate Eucharist.

## CURRICULUM

Grades one through five utilizes the *We Believe* the series by Sadlier, found to be in conformity with both Diocesan guidelines and approved by the USCCB. If work is sent home, please be sure to review it with your child.

## PROGRAM GOALS

The faith for permission program will strive to:

1. **Provide a Christian community in which relationships they form and grow in friendship, trust, and prayer.**
2. **Proclaim the message of Jesus Christ:**
  - a. by faithfully teaching the principal elements of the Christian message:
    - The Mystery of One God
    - Creation
    - Jesus Christ
    - Holy Spirit
    - The Sacraments
    - The Life of Grace
    - The Moral Life
    - Mary and the Saints
  - b. **To assist students in understanding and remembering**
    - Traditional Prayers
    - The 10 Commandments
    - The Beatitudes
    - The Laws of the Church
  - c. **To provide students with experience of Christian community**
    - to celebrate the principal events of liturgical year
    - to promote prayer and communal worship
  - d. **Guide for students to provide Christian service**
    - to lay the foundation for concern for issues of life, truth, and justice
    - to provide opportunities for direct, hands-on service in the community

## REGISTRATION

### NEW FAMILIES

Families must first be registered with the parish to register your child in our Children's & Youth Ministry, Religious Education Programs. For *Parish Registration*, please contact the rectory at **(949) 673-3775**, or **register online at [www.olmc.net](http://www.olmc.net)**.

For Children's and Youth Ministry/Religious Education Registration, please contact the office of Children's and Youth Ministry director, John Bruscia, (949) 673-2719, [jbruscia@olmc.net](mailto:jbruscia@olmc.net).

### RETURNING FAMILIES

Please Re-Register with registration packet provided by the office of Religious Education.

### CHANGE OF HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION

Please notify the office if you move or change any of the following information: home, work, or cell phone numbers, address, emergency contact, allergies, etc.

## ATTENDANCE

**Weekly Attendance:** children are expected to be on time each week. They should not arrive on campus more than 15 minutes prior to the starting time. Parents are asked to pick up children promptly; if a child has not been picked up 10-15 minutes after classes conclude, he/she will be brought to the Office of Religious Education to wait.

**Tardiness:** tardiness distracts the class and interrupts the learning process. Parents are encouraged to make every effort to have their children arrive in time for the beginning of class sessions.

**Continuity in attendance:** Faith formation is life-long. Children need to be enrolled in the faith formation program every year and not be removed after the celebration of a sacrament. If a child does not attend the program the year prior to the beginning of sacramental preparation, the director may decide that the child needs a year of review prior to beginning sacramental preparation.

## CHILD SAFETY

### ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Parents are to drop off and pick up students in grades 1-8 from our facilities using the *parking lot*:

- A) When arriving: park in the parking lot and escort students to meeting areas/classrooms.

- B) Returning for pick-up: park in the parking lot, come to the parish Plaza, classroom, hall or church and escort your children to your car.
- C) If a parent desires to pick up a child *before* regular class time dismissal, parent or guardian are to report to the *office of religious education to request early dismissal*.
- D) If you desire your child to travel home alone (walk, bike, etc.), *provide the office of religious education a written, signed and dated statement* including a statement of “release of liability after departure.”
- E) If for some reason you are unable to pick up your child, please telephone the director to discuss who will be handling pickup, and send a signed note explaining the arrangements you have made

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING FOR CHILDREN

Age appropriate, safe environment training, is provided each year for all students in parish faith formation programs utilizing the “Kids and Company” program developed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. All children enrolled in parish programs must participate in this instruction annually unless a parent provides the appropriate "Opt-out Form." The program provides safety strategies to help reduce the possibility of victimization, abduction, and sexual exploitation. Parent Information Sessions are provided annually through the Office of Religious Education.

Kids and Company takes a positive and constructive approach. It helps children learn to recognize and avoid situations that place them at increased risk and teaches them how to respond to situations and make safe decisions. Through age appropriate presentations including slideshows, games, and other activities, Kids and Company reinforces each child's awareness, assertiveness and judgment.

## FIRST AID

The children’s & youth ministry office has available to all catechists a supply of Band-Aids, rubber gloves, and Ziploc bags. If there is a serious injury, the office will call 911 and notify parents immediately.

## FIRE AND EARTHQUAKE

Fire and earthquake drills will be practiced periodically. We utilize the parish parking lot for the movement of children if parish structures are deemed unsafe.

## WEAPONS

Weapons of any kind (real or make-believe) or the threat of violence to any child or adult is at all times unacceptable. If this is identified, the child will be isolated and the director will notify the parents to come to the office. In the case of a real weapon, the police will be notified. The child may not return to the program until a psychologist has evaluated the situation and provide a written report stating the child does not pose a risk to him or herself or others.

## DISCIPLINE

Children are expected to respect all property and buildings on the parish campus. Furniture and equipment belongs to the whole parish and we must always leave everything ready for the next user. Parents are responsible for the cost of anything that child damages or takes that does not belong to him or her.

Good conduct, cooperation, attention and courtesy are expected at all times while on the property. Each class will make a list of what is expected in their classroom. Students who fail to meet these behavior expectations will be subject to the following procedures and consequences:

- First Minor Offense: catechist will speak to the child directly regarding appropriate behavior.
- Second Minor Offense: the catechists will speak to the child in private and discuss appropriate behavior.
- Third Minor Offense: the child will be asked to go to the office to meet the director of the program.
- Forth Minor Offense or First Serious Offense: the child will be asked to go to the office to meet the director of the program and call his or her parent to come and pick him or her up. A child cannot reenter the program until the parent and child have met with the catechist and the program director.

Serious Offenses refers to, but is not limited to, such things as: fighting, stealing, possession of drugs or alcohol, vandalism, bullying, possession of a weapon, or aggressive behavior.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION

**Sunday Bulletin:** please check the Sunday bulletin weekly for announcements regarding parent meetings, special events, deadlines etc..

**Newsletter:** parents are e-mailed the monthly newsletter with information about the program; it will also carry upcoming dates and deadlines for various parish and program events.

**Pick-up:** children are to be picked up promptly at our publicized dismissal times. If a child has not been picked up 10-15 minutes after classes are over, he/she will be brought to the office to wait.

**Early Dismissal:** students cannot leave the classroom unless the parent drops off a note; the catechist may not dismiss any student early directly from the classroom. Parents need to come to the office when picking up their child to sign them out.

**Custody:** if parents are divorced or separated, the faith formation program presumes that both parents have custody unless one parent provides documentation that he or she has sole custody.

**Parent Concerns or Complaint:** the Religious Education office phone number is 949-673-2719. Please call at any time you wish to discuss an issue or ask a question. Please be reminded that the order of protocol in discussing an issue, or complaint concerning the program: first, directly communicate with your child's catechist, or person they have a conflict with. If unable to resolve the issue, secondly, contact the Director of Religious Education, John Bruscia; and then thirdly, the Parish's Parochial Vicar, Fr. John Weling, followed by the Pastor. If after these steps you feel the issue remains unresolved at the parish level, you can write a letter to the Diocesan Office of Faith Formation explaining the situation and the steps you've taken to resolve it. The Associate Director of Faith Formation, the Director of Parish Faith Formation, or the Coordinator of Youth and Young Adult Ministry will get back to you within 72 hours of receiving a letter to address the situation.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Lost and Found:** if you child loses an article, please check with the Children's & Youth Ministry office. If items are not picked up after 30 days, they are subject to be delivered to a local, public-service agency.

## OTHER PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**Liturgy of the Word for Children:** this program takes place weekly during our 10AM Sunday Masses. The children have the opportunity to hear the readings and reflect on them in age-appropriate ways.

**Children's Choir:** OLMC's Children's Choir is open to any child in the parish. Rehearsals are held periodically directed by our parish's director of music, Anne Peter. You're welcome to contact her directly for information, [anniebananie4@gmail.com](mailto:anniebananie4@gmail.com).

**Altar Servers:** Mass server training is offered periodically, children must be in fourth grade or older to participate unless an older sibling is already a Mass Server, if that be the case, third-graders may be invited to participate on a case-by-case basis. Mass server training is directed by parishioner, Chris Ciraulo, [ckc4xp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ckc4xp@sbcglobal.net). Please contact him directly to set up a practice day and time. At the same time, please also contact the Dir. of Religious Education, John Bruscia, [jbruscia@olmc.net](mailto:jbruscia@olmc.net), informing him of your intention of training your child to be a Mass Server. Practices are normally held 30 minutes before one of our 10 AM or 12 noon Masses. Special arrangements can be made as necessary.

**Family Service:** opportunities are offered to all families in the parish. Many options are available at the parish including food and clothing collections, helping with various parish functions, and through local service agencies, soup kitchens, etc.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/YOUTH MINISTRY

### GENERAL INFORMATION: 2011 THROUGH 2012 SCHOOL YEAR

**Elementary:** Grades 1-5 meet in the parish hall Monday afternoons from 3:15 - 4:45 PM, September 19, 2011 through Monday, May 21, 2012.

**Junior High Youth Ministry:** Grades 6-8 meet in the parish hall Tuesday evenings from 6-7:30 PM, beginning Tuesday, September 27, 2011 through Tuesday, May 15, 2012.

**High School Youth Ministry:** Grades 9 & 10 meet weekly for Confirmation preparation through our comprehensive parish youth ministry program! All high school sessions (with dinner) are held Sunday evenings from 6-7:30 PM in the parish hall following our 5 PM, "youth friendly," Mass. Regular meetings begin Sunday, October 9, 2011. Grades 11 & 12 are invited to participate in a program which includes, social/fun outings, service activities, discussions, and leadership training and formation to help as "peer ministers." *Please check e-mail and the Sunday bulletin for program details and announcements.*

**Baptism:** For infant baptism, please contact the rectory at (949) 673-3775. For school age children, please call our Director of Religious Education, John Bruscia, at the number below.

**Eucharist (First Holy Communion) and Reconciliation (Confession):** First Communion & Confession is integrated into our *second grade* religious education program. If you have a student in *grades three or higher*

who has not yet received the sacraments of “Eucharist” and “Reconciliation” and are interested in receiving them, please contact John Bruscia for details.

**Confirmation:** Confirmation is a two-year program for high school students in grades 9-10. The Sacrament is conferred at the end of the 10th grade school year. A required year II, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, “Student and Parent Orientation Dinner & Meeting” is scheduled for Sunday, September 25, from 6-7:30 PM. The required Year I, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, “Student and Parent Orientation Dinner & Meeting” is scheduled for Sunday, October 2, from 6-7:30 PM. Accommodations can be made for 11-12<sup>th</sup> grade high school students seeking this sacrament. Preparation to receive the sacrament is embedded into our high school program; with this in mind, all “youth ministry” activities are considered “confirmation preparation” activities.

**Holiday and Early Dismissal:** Religious Education and Youth Ministry sessions do not meet on “legal,” school holidays. Elementary sessions meet at the regular time on any early dismissal days from school.

*Please read our monthly, Children’s & Youth Ministry Newsletter, e-mailed to all families registered in our program. In addition, please check the Sunday Mass Bulletin for any changes and or new events not originally scheduled.*

## PARENT-STUDENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES - 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

### CHILDREN’S & YOUTH MINISTRY GRADES 1-12

#### Meeting Times:

- Grades 1-5 meet in the parish hall **Mondays from 3:15 - 4:45 PM**, beginning 9-19-2011
- Grades 6-8 meet in the parish hall **Tuesday evenings from 6-7:30 PM**, beginning 9-27-2011
- Grades 9-12 meet in the parish hall **Sunday evenings from 6-7:30 PM**, beginning 10-02-2011

#### Arrival and Dismissal:

- Staff and volunteers are responsible for the supervision of students *only* during stated meeting times listed above. *Staff and volunteers are **not** available to supervise children at other times. Parents assume full responsibility of children before and after stated hours.*
- Parents are to drop off and pick up students from our facilities using the *parking lot*.
  - F) When arriving: park in the parking lot and escort students to meeting areas/classrooms.
  - G) Returning for pick-up: park in the parking lot, come to the courtyard, classroom, hall or church and escort your children to your car.
- Skateboard, rollerblade, roller-skates and scooter use is not allowed on church property.
- Please be on time. Coming late may be disruptive and students may miss content.
- If a parent desires to pick up a child *before* regular class time dismissal, parent or guardian are to report to the *office of religious education to request early dismissal*.
- If you desire your child to travel home alone (walk, bike, etc.), *provide the office of religious education a written, signed and dated statement* including a statement of “release of liability after departure.”

#### Classroom Behavior:

It is our joy to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the “Good News,” to the children of our parish. We work hard to create an environment of trust, love and mutual respect to help facilitate each student’s faith development and Christian growth. Our time together is an important component in your child’s faith formation; we need the cooperation of everyone. Below, please review behavior-expectations essential to group environments. All students will be informed of the expectations outlined below. If you have any

questions or concerns regarding these, please contact the Director of Religious Education, John Bruscia, at (949) 673-2719, or [jbruscia@olmc.net](mailto:jbruscia@olmc.net).

### **Student Behavior Expectations:**

- Students are to *respect* persons and property at all times; this includes *thoughtful attentiveness* to both catechist and fellow students.
- No hurting anyone with actions or words (mocking, insulting, excluding, laughing at, etc.).
- Hands and feet are to be kept to oneself.
- One person speaks at a time, raising hand for recognition.
- Prayer time will be respected and disruptive behavior avoided. Students are to be attentive.
- Remain seated unless adult in charge grants permission otherwise.
- No leaving the classroom or church property without expressed permission.
- All food or snack stops and consumption should take place *prior* to arrival at OLMC.

### **Parents:**

- Please go over the above behavior expectations with your child before you send them to class. Be sure they clearly understand them and will follow them. If a discipline problem becomes repetitive, the parent will be called for consultation and possible remedial action.
- Parents are the primary catechists; your involvement is essential. You are encouraged to discuss your faith with your children, including praying together. Regular attendance at Sunday Mass is *essential* to nurture faith and build community. Sacramental action takes place in the context of a community; as we grow and work together as a community, we can better follow Jesus' command to "love one another."
- Please *review* any "take home" assignments. They provide an opportunity for you to interact with your child on the topic.
- If your child has special challenges in maintaining attention or sitting still, or if he/she is on medication for this condition during the day, please discuss these issues with the director of religious education so we may plan strategies to help work with your child.
- If your child has any "special needs," please let us know on the registration form to help us work with them. This would include medical conditions in need of monitoring.
- **Concerns/Questions/Complaints:** the Religious Education office phone number is 949-673-2719. Please call at any time you wish to discuss an issue or ask a question. Please be reminded that the order of protocol in discussing a complaint: first, directly communicate with the person you have a conflict with. If the issue is unable to be resolved, secondly, contact the Director of Religious Education, John Bruscia; and then thirdly, the Parish's Parochial Vicar, Fr. John Weling.

***It is understood that each student in this parish religious education program may have special needs and may require certain individual assistance with those needs. The parish religious education program will endeavor to assist you in providing religious education for your child within the ordinary structures of parish programs. The undersigned parent/guardian acknowledges the current programs, staffed by volunteers, may be discontinued or a particular student may be required to complete an alternative course of religious studies at the sole discretion of the religious education director.***

### **Emergency Response:**

In the event of an emergency (earthquake, fire, etc.) children will be brought to a secure area of the parking lot. If you are picking up your child under these conditions, please "check-in" with your child's teacher or other adult who remains in supervision of the children until they are safely cared for. Children will be released to a parent or "authorized adult" listed on the Registration Form.

### **Accident Insurance:**

The Diocese of Orange provides limited, *supplemental* accident insurance coverage for registered children in our program (see Myers Stevens's fact sheet). The supplemental accident insurance becomes active

only *after* your own medical coverage is used to treat your child if the accident occurred when your child was at the church, or a church sponsored event.

**All accidents or injuries must be reported at the time of occurrence to the Office of Religious Education.**