

## 2026-2027 • RELIGIOUS FORMATION • PARENT HANDBOOK

### EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES

1. **You, as parents, are the primary teachers of faith to your children.** We ask that you model the faith by praying at home, attending Mass regularly on weekends and on Holy Days of Obligation, to share in the Eucharist with our parish community and look for ways to serve as disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. Before sending your child to Family Catechesis (Grade 1- 6) or Middle/H.S. Religious Education (Grade 7-12) sessions for the first time, **REGISTRATION and PAYMENT must be complete** for every child.
3. Ensure your children regularly attend their religious education sessions. **For Family Catechesis Sessions (Grades 1-5), at least one parent or guardian adult (18+) must attend the session with the child.** Please actively participate in your child’s learning and formation.
4. E-mail and text are our preferred modes of communication. **A valid, updated email address is required to send reminders and communications.** If you are NOT receiving email reminders and/or schedule updates, please let us know. For grades 7-12 we have a text messaging service for reminders—please allow text messages from the number (833) 945-3415. Info can always be found on LOURDESWESTORANGE.ORG.
5. Communicate to catechist or coordinator any special needs or allergies that may affect your child.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH

- Ensure adequate staffing that is trained, background checked and prepared.
- Provide formation that is grounded in Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Create a safe and Christian environment.

### SACRAMENT POLICY

All matters of the eligibility of a child to receive a sacrament are determined by the Pastor and religious education personnel by review of compliance with the process described below. Please confirm your child’s eligibility to receive a sacrament with the office.

***There is a minimum 2-year preparation period for the Sacraments of First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation.***

This minimum 2-year preparation means that students spend their first year of preparation in the appropriate grade level religious education sessions. During the second year, students continue to participate in the appropriate religious education session level and, *in addition*, participate in special sacrament preparation sessions with a parent.

### RULES OF CONDUCT

- Obedience to legitimate authority.
- Courtesy and respect for all people and property.
- Adherence to safety and classroom rules.
- Sense of fair play and trustworthiness.
- No use of phones for texting, calling, internet use, or calls during Mass and class.

Our Lady of Lourdes, One Eagle Rock Ave., West Orange, NJ 07052  
Rectory-office: 973.325.0110      LOURDESWESTORANGE.ORG  
FAMILY CLASS Gr. 1-5 – ONCE A MONTH \*SATURDAY (3:00-5:30 PM) **OR** MONDAY (5:00-7:30 PM) in Lower level of Church.  
GRADE 6 – Selected Sunday Mornings (9:30 – 11:45 am) including 9:30 am Mass, in Connor Hall  
MIDDLE/H.S. - GRADE 7-12 – Sunday Mornings (9:30 – 11:45 am) including 9:30 am Mass, in Connor Hall  
\*Please check online schedule for dates\*

### PICK UP AND DROP OFF (for students in Grades 6-12)

Students must attend 9:30 am Mass on Sunday on selected dates (see calendar) and be seated with their classmates in assigned seats. Class will be after Mass, usually until 11:45 am (see calendar). Students will typically be dismissed from Connor Hall. "Walking Home Permission" slips are available in the rectory only for grades 7-12.

### EMERGENCY CLASS CANCELLATION

**If local public schools are closed, Religious Ed is closed.** We will notify you by email and text if our sessions are cancelled. A voicemail message will also be posted at the Religious Education Office at 973.325.0029 or 973.325.0110.

### ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY

If possible, please let us know in advance whether a student or family is unable to attend a scheduled session. Report absences or address questions via email as follows, or call 973.325.0110:

- ▶ Priscilla Castro, [Priscillacastro@lourdeswestorange.org](mailto:Priscillacastro@lourdeswestorange.org) (Grade 1-5 Teacher)
- ▶ Barbara Camp, [ollfamilyclass@aol.com](mailto:ollfamilyclass@aol.com) (1<sup>st</sup> Communion Teacher)
- ▶ Joe and Kathy Petrillo, [jmcp84@aol.com](mailto:jmcp84@aol.com), [kap522@hotmail.com](mailto:kap522@hotmail.com) (Grade 6 Teachers)
- ▶ Paul Hirsch, [Confirmation.Class@lourdeswestorange.org](mailto:Confirmation.Class@lourdeswestorange.org) (Grade 7-12 Teacher)
- ▶ Julie Okeke, [julie712@lourdeswestorange.org](mailto:julie712@lourdeswestorange.org) (Grade 7-12 Teacher)
- ▶ Rosa Cruz, [rosa.cruz@lourdeswestorange.org](mailto:rosa.cruz@lourdeswestorange.org) (Parish Office Assistant) 11 am to 2:30 pm, 973.325.0110

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**Grade 1 – 6** In **Grade 1–5**, it is important that students attend sessions **monthly** with their parent/guardian. Students must complete 70% of the work in Google Classroom and attendance in monthly classes. **In Grade 6**, it is important that the student attend all sessions. No more than 3 absences are permitted. Make up work will be required if there is an excess of 3 absences in Grade 6 or 70% of the classwork is not Completed in Grades 1-5.

**Grade 7 – 12** In **Grade 7-12**, it is important that students attend sessions with their peers **as per the schedule**, according to the published calendar. While this program is not intended for individual or self-directed study at home, an absent student will receive – via e-mail – required make-up work. No more than 3 absences are permitted. If a student is absent, he or she would be required to do additional work in order to keep up. If the student has more than 3 absences in one year, the year will not count. If you wish to discuss this policy please contact Father Jim Ferry, Pastor, 973-325-0110.

**Volunteer Policy** If you are an adult volunteering in Family Catechesis, Middle and High School, and/or Children's Liturgy of the Word, and you have children in one or more of these religious education programs, you are not required to pay the religious education fees.