



**NATIVITY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Nativity Catholic Church  
5220 Johnson Street  
Hollywood, FL 33021  
www.nativityhollywood.org  
(954)987-3300

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Nativity Parish's Religious Education Program. We are privileged to join with you as the primary educators of your child/children's religious formation.

Creating a spiritual atmosphere within the family is essential in your role as a Catholic parent/guardian. By word and example you initiate your child(ren) in the ways of maturity, salvation, and holiness. Each effort in religious formation is part of the spiritual inheritance you are creating for your family. We are grateful you are taking this parental role responsibly.

This is your copy of the Rules and Regulations Handbook for Nativity Parish Religious Education Program. It is important that you thoroughly read this handbook, that you might better understand the philosophy and requirements of the Nativity Religious Education Program.

Please sign and return the slip below, which indicates that you have read and accepted the rules and regulations.

Sincerely,

*Melanie Lerch*

melanie@nativityhollywood.org  
(954) 987-3300 ext. 203

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## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

- Registration Forms should be returned as soon as possible so everyone is in the correct class on the first week of class. Your prompt response is greatly appreciated.
- Incomplete registration forms will not be accepted.
- Late Registration Forms WILL NOT be accepted on Sunday during Religious Education Classes. Children registered late will begin the weekend after the registration form is accepted. Please remind friends and family to register early. **Children cannot attend class until a completed registration form is accepted.**
- Payment is due before the first Religious Education Class. If you cannot pay before the first class, you can pay in two or four payments or monthly/weekly as needed by your family. Please contact the office at melanie@nativityhollywood.org to schedule a payment plan.
- **Payments can be made:** online, by mail, in the office, or by placing your payment in a plain sealed envelope with your child(ren)'s name and "Religious Ed" and placed in the collection basket at Mass.

This Handbook is intended to be a convenient and helpful resource on information. It does not create any rights or benefits, whether expressed or implied to volunteers, parents, or students in the Religious Education Program. These policies are subject to change at any time at the sole discretion of the Archdiocese with or without notice as are all other policies, procedures and benefits and other programs of the Archdiocese. If you have any question regarding these policies, please contact the Office of Catechesis, 305-762-1107.

Thank you for reading this information and registering your child for the Religious Education Program. You are fulfilling the promise you made at their baptism to bring them up in the Catholic faith. You are missionaries, in your own way, spreading the faith to your child(ren).

EACH YEAR TUITION IS: \$100 for 1 child \$130 for 2 children \$160 for 3 children \$20 each child after 3

Cash, check, or debit/credit card are accepted. Please make checks payable to *Nativity Rel. Ed.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

Through the cooperative effort of parents, catechists, and students, we will assist the children in building a foundation of faith so that they may grow in their love for God and knowledge of their Catholic faith. We support parents, the primary religious educators, in the spiritual development of their children. By incorporating prayer, fellowship, service, and teaching, we hope to nurture and support a deep, growing, personal relationship with Jesus and His Church.

## EXPECTATIONS

Parents and Guardians are expected to:

- Each family is expected to become actively involved in Nativity Parish in order to model a living and conscious active Christian faith and to reinforce the values and attitudes for living the faith.
- Ensure that your child attends class and on time.
- Make sure your child is saying their prayers at least once a day.
- Complete all paperwork and return promptly.
- For safety reasons, your child's friends cannot attend religious education unless we have registration information from their parents. Please inform them. We are happy you are encouraging others and are happy to give you a registration form for them.
- Inform Melanie Lerch, Director of Religious Education if you have any concerns about any situation at [melanie@nativityhollywood.org](mailto:melanie@nativityhollywood.org) or 954-987-3300 ext. 203.

Children are expected to:

- Participate and behave during the Mass to the best of their ability, by standing, sitting, kneeling, responding and singing. Please do not talk or use electronic equipment during Mass.
- Be respectful of other parishioners at Mass. Do not sit in any unsupervised area.
- Respect the teacher and other students in class as well as the property of others in the classroom at all times. No fighting or threatening others is permitted at any time.
- Turn off cell phones during Mass and class. If you are using cell phones during class or Mass, the cell phone will be taken from you until the end of class. You are not permitted to bring other electronics and toys, they are distracting for you and others. They will be taken until the end of class.
- Wear clothing that is **neat and respectful** of this time you are giving to God. Undergarments should not be seen.
- Pray at least once a day, complete class work and homework to the best of your ability.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

Classes are held on Sundays, beginning with the Mass at 9:30 am in church followed by class until 11:30 am in the school buildings. Students and families should be at Mass by 9:20 am. Classes begin Sept. 9, 2018 and end May 5, 2019. All students must be picked up no later than 11:40 am. Please see the Religious Education Calendar for the class schedule and special dates/events.

## MASS

Mass is the most important form of worship we have as Catholics. At Mass, God comes to us in three ways: in the Scripture, God's Word; the Eucharist, when we receive Jesus to spiritually strengthen us; and in the community of all of us, the Body of Christ. Therefore it is the **first part of our Religious Education each week**. Religious Education students are required to attend Mass. Our younger children participate in the offertory. Older students are ushers and altar servers. **Participation is important.**

## ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is an important factor in deepening a child's understanding of God through Scripture, prayer, Church teaching, and community. Children should miss no more than four (4) classes. If a child misses more than 4 classes, they may be retained in a sacramental preparation class. Please contact the office if there are any concerns about attendance. Special arrangements may need to be made. We do not want a child to come to class ill. Please e-mail or call and leave a message if child is ill. We pray for everyone's good health, please contact us if we can be of help in any way.

**If your child is late entering our program and in a sacramental preparation program**, they may be retained in the same class next year if the teacher feels they are not prepared due to their late entrance. **Please register your child early**. Please tell family and friends to register early. Remember, Mass Is Considered Class Attendance.

## HURRICANE WATCH OR WARNING

If our area is on HURRICANE WATCH or WARNING, we WILL NOT have Religious Education class. Please listen to local television for advisories.

## PROGRAMS OFFERED

The Religious Education classes are for children in grades 1-10 if they have not received all three sacraments of initiation (Baptism, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation). If they are 17 year of age or older, they attend RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults.)

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS AND CLASS LEVELS

First Communion – 2 years preparation required (Level 1 and 2)

Confirmation – 3 years preparation (Level 6-8)

**LEVEL 1a** – First year of First Communion Preparation for students in school grades 1-5

**LEVEL 1b** – First year of First Communion Preparation for students in school grades 6-10

**LEVEL 2a** – Second year of First Communion Preparation for students in school grades 2-6

**LEVEL 2b** – Second year of First Communion Preparation for students in school grades 7-11

**LEVEL 3** – Religious Education for students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in school

**LEVEL 4** – Religious Education for students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in school

**LEVEL 5** – Religious Education for students in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in school

**LEVEL 6** – Religious Education for students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade in school/First Year of Confirmation Preparation

**LEVEL 7** – Second Year of Confirmation Preparation

**LEVEL 8** – Final Year of Confirmation Preparation

## TEXTBOOKS

Levels 1a-8 use *Finding God*, Loyola Press; *We Believe*, Sadlier Publishers; and *Gospel Weeklies*, Pflaum.

Levels 1b & 2b use *Our Catholic Faith* and *One Faith, One Lord*, Sadlier Publishers.

All conform to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Register on their websites for interactive games, tools, crafts, and more.

## DISMISSAL

The safety of the children is extremely important.

**All Level 1a** will be dismissed from the **NORTH SIDE DOOR** to parents.

**All Level 2a** will be dismissed from the **SOUTH SIDE DOOR** to parents.

**Students in Level 3-8, Level 1b and 2b** will meet their parents at the doors of the West Chaminade Drive exit. Parents should pick up their older children in the **circular drive**. Parents parking in the church parking lot must walk to pick up their child. Do not ask your child to cross West Chaminade Drive to enter the vehicle or meet on Johnson Street.

**Older students with siblings in Levels 1a and/or 2a should meet parents at the door of the youngest sibling.**

## IMPORTANT DISMISSAL SAFETY INFORMATION

- Please make sure your child is always aware of **who they are allowed or not allowed to go home with even if it is another relative.**
- Please pick your child up promptly at 11:30 am **We are not responsible for your child after 11:40 am**
- No child is allowed to meet parents in the gazebos, church parking lot, Johnson Street, or across West Chaminade Drive.
- No child should go to the Blue Lantern without their parent's supervision. Currently closed until further notice.
- We must have the name of those who you want to pick up your child on the registration form if you are not picking them up.
- Early dismissal is discouraged. We cannot release a child early without the knowledge of the parent/guardian.
- Only the parent/guardian can pick the child up early. Any other person must be on your list of safe people to pick up your child and have a note from you.

## USE OF STUDENT PICTURES AND VIDEO

The Religious Education Program reserves the right to use student pictures in publications. Any parent who wishes to opt out must notify the Director/Coordinator of Religious Education in writing prior to the beginning of the Religious Education Program year.

## BEHAVIOR

Students must be responsible for their actions, behavior and the consequences that may occur as a result for their actions. Students are to show respect to ALL adults and students. All students are expected to share in faith-learning experiences of the parish program. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process, the following steps will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue: (1) The child will be reminded of the expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior (2) After the second incident, the child will be sent to have a discussion with the D.R.E. (3) After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues the child will be sent to the office to do his/her assignment and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

## **NO WEAPONS OR DRUGS**

All Archdiocesan Religious Education programs are committed to a drug free environment. Any student selling drugs on religious property or functions may be immediately expelled. All Archdiocesan procedures must be followed when it comes to child safety. The use or possession of illegal drugs, mood altering substances, alcoholic beverages, drug paraphernalia or abuse of prescription or over the counter drugs by a student on Parish property or Religious Education sponsored activity is forbidden. Transgression of this rule will result in disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from Religious Education even for a first offense. Weapons are not permitted anywhere on Religious Education grounds. Any student in possession of weapons, or who threaten others with weapons or items used as weapons may be expelled from our program.

We do not want to search and seize students belongings brought on church property but the DRE or her designee can have access to students belongings on church property. In the case of reasonable suspicion of weapons, drugs, or any other dangerous materials, the DRE will notify the legal authorities, the Pastor, and the Archdiocese Office of Catechesis.

## **COMMUNITY PROJECTS**

Respect Life Sunday is usually held on the first Sunday of October. It is a drive to help mothers and babies at our local Respect Life office. Diapers and new baby items are a great help to them. The donations are given during Mass.

Pennies from Heaven is a Parish activity where we save our pennies and coins and place them in containers in church for the Respect Life office.

St. Vincent De Paul Society Non Perishable Food Drive is held each year from the first Sunday in November until our Christmas break. Children are encouraged to bring food for the needy in our local community who will receive Christmas food baskets before Christmas. Please be as generous as you can. If you need the help of our St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 954-981-5060.

Rice Bowls are given to the students at the beginning of Lent. The children should make small monetary sacrifices and place the money in the rice bowl during Lent. Examples are not eating a treat at lunchtime a few days a week and put the savings in the rice bowl or the entire family eating a small dinner and put the savings in the rice bowl. At the end of Lent, count how much was saved for others and send it in to us. All funds are given the Archdiocese Catholic Relief Charities for people outside of our communities.

## **PARISH REGISTRATION**

Registration for Religious Education is not Parish Registration. You can register for Nativity Parish on our website, [www.nativityhollywood.org](http://www.nativityhollywood.org) or ask the ushers for a Parish Census Card to complete and return to the collection basket.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR ADULTS**

Adults who have not received all of their sacraments of initiation and are interested in receiving Baptism, First Communion and/or Confirmation can attend classes for RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Class is held in the **Parish Hall** weekly at **7:00 pm** from September thru May. More information is available on the church website, [www.nativityhollywood.org](http://www.nativityhollywood.org), or the church bulletin in September.

## **VIRTUS PROGRAM**

The Archdiocese of Miami requires that we offer our children the "Touching Safely" Program each year. The Archdiocese requires we give this to all families. Please read the program information on the next page. Parents can opt out of this program. For more information on how to keep the children safe, go to [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org).

## Protecting God's Children© Overview of the Touching Safety Program

The job of ensuring children's safety is a challenging undertaking. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult awareness, education, & training about the nature & scope of the problem. We must also give our children the tools they need to overcome the advances of someone who intends to do them harm. The *Teaching Touching Safety* program guide (*Teaching Touching Safely Guide*) is a tool designed to assist parents & teachers in this important task. The Touching Safety program is a vehicle through which parents, teachers, catechists, & youth ministers give children & young people the tools they need to protect themselves from those who might harm them.

The Touching Safety Program Lessons were created for Four Specific Age Groups: Gr. K-2; Gr. 3-5; Gr. 6-8; Gr. 9-12 [Our children who are in 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Younger Children preparing for 1<sup>st</sup> Communion will attend together the Gr. K-2 group. The 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Older Children preparing for 1<sup>st</sup> Communion will attend together the Gr. 3-5 group. Our Confirmation students in any year of preparation will attend together the Gr. 6-8 group.

Each year, the program provides a theme that introduces & builds on the basic concepts of the *Teaching Touching Safety Guide*. The material is developmentally appropriate for each age group & includes content & activities that reinforce the message. The lessons are now organized in a five-year cycle so each child experiences a totally different lesson plan each time the materials are presented & so each child receives the full range of information from the *Teaching Touching Safety Guide* in small "digestible" bites, over a four-year period. Then, as a child advances to the next age group, there are a whole new set of age appropriate lessons that explore the major topics in increasingly greater detail.

The themes covered (in age-appropriate way, of course) in each of the three years are:

Year 1—Lesson 1—Touching Safety Rules—Students learn simple rules about what to do & how to react when someone's touch is confusing, scary, or makes the child or young person feel uncomfortable. Young people start to deal with the real risks they face when they are out in the world & on their own & they begin to learn where to draw boundary lines in relationships. Lesson 2—Safe Friends, Safe Adults, & Safe Touches—Children, young people, & their parents establish basic guidelines for working together to make certain *which* friends & other adults in their environment can be trusted to act safely & in the best interest of each child or young person.

Year 2—Lesson 3--Boundaries—Students learn about personal boundaries & how identifying & honoring those boundaries can give a child or young person the self assurance needed to speak up when someone tries to step over the line. Lesson 4—Telling Someone You Trust—children & young people learn who to tell when something makes them feel uncomfortable or confused. This lesson also begins to explore the phenomenon & power of "secrets" in a child's life at various ages.

Year 3 Lesson 5—Grooming—Students learn about the types of behavior that may indicate that an adult is grooming the child or young person for something more than friendship. This also helps students learn to trust their own instincts about what is "okay" & what is "not okay." Lesson 6—"No Secrets"—Reinforcing & building on the lessons from year 2, this lesson deals with peer groups & other influences (including grooming by an abuser) that prevent children & young people from reporting inappropriate behavior. It also helps children & young people develop their own decision-making process to use in these situations.

Year 4 Lesson 7 Internet Safety to assist children and young people in recognizing the risks of providing personal information to anyone on the internet and help them realize how difficult it is to know who someone really is when the only avenue is the internet Lesson 8 Creating and Following Family Rules. To assist parents, guardians and other caring adults in teaching children and young people the importance of creating and following safety rules in an effort to keep everyone safe such as following rules on giving out private information for example, name, address, phone number, school attending, etc. to people that are not known or trusted by the child and their family.

Year 5 Lesson 9 & 10 Speaking Up, Speaking Out, Being Heard! Teaching our children and young people how to think of how they can communicate to parents and trusted adults when something occurred that makes them feel uncomfortable or more.

Regardless of a child's grade level at the time the program is implemented, each child should participate in all ten lessons during the five year cycle. This program & each included lesson are founded on the principles of appropriate relationship boundaries in the broader context of Christian values. All lessons are age-appropriate, and help children and young people develop the vocabulary and boundary distinctions necessary to empower them to begin to recognize inappropriate behavior by others, while practicing appropriate relationship boundaries in their own lives. The lessons focus on an age-appropriate discussion of touching safety, relative to the specific roles that different people play in a child's life. All of the lessons stress the importance of keeping private body parts "private," and of telling a trusted adult about anyone's behavior that causes a child to feel uncomfortable or threatened.

This overview is modified from the [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) site. **If you do not want your child to participate in this program**, please complete and return the opt-out form. Thank you.