

Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Religious Education Program



**Parent/Student Handbook
2026-2027**

Our Lady Help of Christians
Parish Religious Education Program
1500 Marian Road
Abington PA 19001

PREP Office	215-887-3466
OLHC Rectory Fax	215-887-3250
Parish Web Page	www.olhcabington.org
PREP e-mail	jack13ny@gmail.com

Parish Staff:

Rev. Anthony W. Janton, Pastor
Deacon John J. Nucero
Bishop Joseph Martino
Mrs. Jack Bellantoni, DRE

Program Day and Time - Sunday 9:00 AM - 10:15 AM

Revised August 2026

Belief Statements

We believe that:

- All students are entitled to be treated with dignity as children of God
- By their participation, parents affirm the value of a Catholic Religious Education
- Catechists are role models of the teachings of Jesus Christ
- Children learn best in a safe, nurturing environment
- Each child has God given talents that need to be encouraged and developed

Mission Statement

Our Lady Help of Christians Religious Education Program is a component of the faith formation of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Ours is a faith-centered environment dedicated to the religious social and moral education of the children entrusted to us.

We strive to empower our students to meet the demands of a rapidly changing and morally complex world.

The support of the program families and the parish community is essential to the success of our mission.

Forward and Introduction

Forward:

This handbook has been compiled to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of Our Lady Help of Christians Parish Religious Education Program (OLHC-PREP). We believe that the religious educational process is one that involves parents, students and catechists and that the potential for teaching and learning is maximized when those involved understand what the program is striving to accomplish. Please familiarize yourself with the contents of the entire handbook and keep it in an easily accessible place for reference. We strongly encourage you to discuss the policies with your child and help him/her realize the benefits of doing all within his/her ability to abide by the policies and procedures of Our Lady Help of Christians PREP. As members of the program community, these are rules which have been developed for the good of the student population. Attached with this book is a Parent Contract that must be signed and returned promptly to the program director.

Introduction:

Our Lady Help of Christians PREP is situated in the residential community of Abington Pennsylvania, located in Eastern Montgomery County. From its beginnings, until the present, Our Lady Help of Christians PREP has served the religious educational needs of the community of Abington.

Staffed by a dedicated faculty, we at Our Lady Help of Christians PREP continue to provide for the spiritual and moral development of those students entrusted to our care.

Program Policies and Regulations

Participation

Spiritual Participation

All OLHC PREP students are expected to participate fully in the Spiritual Life of the program. This would include various prayer services throughout the year and daily prayer. Sacraments are celebrated in second and seventh grades. Students are expected to attend Sunday Mass with their families EVERY week.

PREP is not a substitute for Sunday Mass obligation. All students are expected to attend Mass each Sunday (or Saturday evening) and each Holy Day of Obligation:

- Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God- Jan. 1st
- Ascension Thursday (Thursday of the 6th Week of Easter)
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Aug. 15th
- All Saints Day Nov. 1st
- The Immaculate Conception Dec. 8th
- The Nativity of Our Lord Dec. 25th

Whenever January 1st the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, or August 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption, or November 1st, the Solemnity of All Saints, falls on a Saturday or on a Monday, the precept to attend Mass is abrogated.

Attendance at Sunday Mass is not a PREP requirement but one from a Higher Authority (Commandment #3-Keep Holy the Sabbath)

Mass & Confession Schedule

Saturdays- 4:30 PM (Vigil Mass)

Sundays- 8 AM, 10:30 AM, and 12 Noon

Holy Days- 5:30 PM (Vigil Mass) 8:00 AM, 12 Noon and 7:00 PM

Daily Mass- Monday to Saturday 8 AM

Confessions-Saturdays at 3:45 PM

Class Participation

Students are expected to:

- Give attention and respect to the catechist and persons of authority at all times
- Show respect and concern for other students
- To actively participate in class by responding orally or in writing as circumstances dictate

Assignment Policies

The student is responsible for completing all class assignments and homework on time. Failure to do so indicates a lack of serious preparation for class. Weekly performance of students is assessed by the catechist Examination of books and worksheets for completeness and neatness of work, as well as class participation, are part of the overall assessment.

All students must be encouraged to use books properly. Students should not tear pages from workbooks, skip pages, or use his/her book as a drawing or scribbling pad.

Homework

Homework refers to an assignment given by a catechist that will positively reinforce a concept presented in class. Homework includes both written and study assignments, and these assignments should be such that they can be done by the student independently. While this does not preclude parental help or interest, the assignments should not require undue parental assistance or supervision.

In the event of absence, all homework and missed assignments are to be made up.

Attendance

Absences- The policies regarding this area are as follows:

- a. A student who has been absent from the program, even for one day, is required to notify the director either by phone call or email stating the reason for the absence.
- b. Once your child has missed three classes it may be necessary for arrangements to be made to make up class for classes missed. After five absences it may be necessary to dismiss your child from the program for the remainder of the year and the entire year must then be repeated in the following school year.
- c. In the case of illness while in class, a program official will contact the parents or adult whose name has been submitted to the office with an emergency phone number. No child should leave the program without permission.

Arrivals:

Students report directly to their assigned classrooms between 8:45-9:00. Parents should drop off their children at the main doors of the school. Students are not marked late if Mass runs into the start of PREP. Parents are asked not to leave a child unattended at the program before 8:45 AM.

Late Arrivals:

Students are considered to be late if they arrive after 9:00. All students should be in their classroom ready for morning prayers at 9:00. Doors are locked at 9:10 AM.

Dismissals:

Students are dismissed from their classrooms by their catechists at 10:15 AM. No child may leave the building prior to dismissal without the director's permission. All children are picked up by a parent or guardian from the front doors of the school.

Early dismissal for individual students

No child will be excused early except in cases of emergency. Parents are requested **not** to ask for early dismissal for such things as parties, sporting events etc. If a child is to leave the program early, a note is required and an adult must come to pick up the child.

Vacation Policy

The planning of family vacations is strongly discouraged during the program year. Please email the director directly if there is a need for your child to be away on vacation during the academic year.

Books and Materials

Textbooks

All students are issued a student handbook. All fourth grade students are issued their own Bible and all second grade students are issued their own Mass booklet which they will be expected to have and use through the remaining years of PREP. All books must be properly identified with the child's name. Textbooks and writing instruments should be brought to every class. Lost books are replaced at the student's expense of \$25 each.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Cell phones are permitted to be carried only in program bags for safety purposes if the child is so instructed by the parents. At no time should the phone be removed or turned on while in program. If phones are in sight or if they ring during program hours, the phone will be taken and will be returned at the end of the class.

General Information

Admissions

In compliance with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of Catechetical Formation , Our Lady Help of Christians PREP, mindful of its primary mission as an effective instrument of the educational ministry of the Church and a witness to the love of Christ for all will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies and other program administered programs.

Registration Guidelines

Families are accepted into the program in the following preferential order:

- a. Parish families with currently enrolled children in our program
- b. Other families (Non-parishioner) with children current registered in our program
- c. Families new to our program
 - i. Students transferring from other Religious Education Programs and residing in our parish
 - ii. Families new to our program residing in our parish
- d. Families residing out of our parish

A student who is registered in first grade in a public school is eligible for first grade religious education. A Baptismal certificate (regardless of home parish) is necessary for admission.

Re-registration

Families registered in our program are required to re-register annually. Re-registration information for the following year is forwarded to each family in the Spring prior to the next program year. All financial obligations must be current before registration can be processed.

Approval Form for Photo Release and Interview

Written permission must be received by parents before a child's picture can be taken for publication in a newspaper. This is a box that a parent checks on the registration form. These forms are kept on file in the main office.

Code of Conduct

Discipline Code:

We believe that discipline is fundamental to life. Discipline is a necessary reflection of the Philosophy of a Catholic Program which attempts to develop a fully committed Christian-a Christian committed to the observance of just rules and regulations, which will assist the individual in responding to his/her responsibilities and obligations to himself/herself and others.

Correct training in discipline means that a child learns to accept rules and regulations presented by lawful authority. Students are expected to act in such fashion that their behavior will reflect favorably on themselves and the program. They are expected to show consideration

and respect for their fellow students and catechists, thus creating a harmonious atmosphere within the program. All students must recognize their individual responsibilities and obligations and discharge them in accordance with program regulations. Children who fail to comply with program policies and regulations must accept the consequences.

Weather Emergency Procedure

If a closing is called for due to inclement weather, you will receive a message from your child's Catechist or the Director. Please do not call the rectory. It is imperative that your emergency information is kept current.

Safety Regulations

Safe Environment Lessons:

As directed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia the students of OLHC PREP are instructed in safe environment lessons once every year. These lessons are given in the Spring of each program year. The curriculum for these lessons is provided by the Office of Catholic Education and on file in the program office for parental review.

Custody of Children:

Parents are asked to inform program personnel when custody of the child(ren) resides with one parent. It is important for the program to have a copy of the custody decree. This will help program personnel to make effective decisions when the need arises. Custodial parents are likewise asked to supply the program with copies of restraining orders if the need arises.

Those individuals who have legal custody of the student may attend program meetings, participate in educational decisions and review educational records regarding that student. Persons who do not have legal custody (including those with visitation rights but not legal custody) have no such educational rights and may not participate in these matters.

Medical Records

Care given in the program is limited to first aid in accidents or illness until parents can be reached to take the child home, to the doctor, or to the hospital.

If your child has a specific medical problem, please notify the homeroom catechist of the problem. Medic-Alert bracelets are also strongly recommended for any child with a medical problem.

Emergency cards are kept on file for each student. Please be sure that we have an up-to-date emergency number on file in case of an emergency during the program day involving your child.

Accidents or unusual illness occurring during the program are reported immediately to the director. When a student becomes ill or meets with an accident, the parent or guardian is contacted. If the parent or guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called. No medicine of any kind may be given to the student, only minor and very basic first aid may be administered. Secondary treatment may not be administered to an area already treated by the family or a physician. Parents will be contacted immediately if there is a question regarding an injury.

Medications:

It is recommended that students not carry any medication to the program. **No medications should be placed in student bags for students to self-administer.**

Snacks:

We request that no food and/or drinks be brought to the program.

Volunteers

The assistance of parent volunteers is greatly appreciated and encouraged. We recognize the invaluable assistance given by our students' families, which helps in building a strong learning community.

Parents are urged to take an active part in their child's education by volunteering whenever and wherever possible.

Every student is expected to show courtesy and respect to all catechists.

