

**OUR LADY OF THE
ASSUMPTION
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**



PARISH SCHOOL OF
RELIGION
HANDBOOK – 2018/19

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Brookhaven, GA 30319
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Dear Parents, Guardians, and Families:

On behalf of our pastor, Fr. Jim Duffy, S.M., and parochial vicar, Fr. Joel Grissom, S.M., we would like to welcome you to our Parish School of Religion, 2018-2019, and personally thank you for your commitment to nurturing your child's life of faith. We hope that you find this Handbook useful and informative. If there are ever any questions or concerns during the year, please call Gretchen at the parish office, or contact either of us via email.

Our Parish School of Religions has experienced significant growth in the past 20 years – from less than 100 students in 2000, to over 300 students currently. This is a great blessing for our parish. It is also a call to the parish to respond in ministry, as many catechists and assistants are needed to serve the families in PSR. The parish is very blessed with many volunteers who answer the call.

Our program uses the *Finding God* (2013) textbook series by Loyola Press. We implemented this series in 2016 and it is used by many parishes in the Archdiocese of Atlanta, including our neighbors to the east, IHM Church and School.

Again this year is a commitment to service and participation in the life of the parish. Students in the program, Grades 3 – 9, will be expected to complete two activity/service forms. These will be available for families to complete and return. We also look forward to our 2nd-Annual Day of Service on Sunday, January 20.

Thank you again for participating in the Parish School of Religion. We hope you and your family have a blessed year of learning and growth.

Wishing you Christ's peace,

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Philosophy of Catechesis

Catechesis is an education in the faith. By handing on the faith to others, the catechist plays an important role in the Church's universal mission to make disciples. The catechist's role includes helping others to believe in Jesus Christ and instructing others in the Christian faith. Parents are the primary teachers of their children; ideally, the catechist works in partnership with parents to teach the children.

Registration and Fees

Parents are required to register their children before classes begin. We must have a registration form for each family before students can attend classes. The form asks for important information such as emergency contacts, dietary restrictions, and special needs. Also note: 1 - No child will be turned away due to a lack of funds; 2 - Families must be registered members of OLA Church. Each child's baptismal certificate or profession of faith must be provided if he/she was not baptized at OLA.

VIRTUS Protecting God's Children

Priests, seminarians, deacons, religious, employees, contractors, and volunteers are expected by the Archdiocese of Atlanta to participate in Safe Environment Training. Our Lady of the Assumption Church complies with Archdiocesan safe environment policies and procedures. Beginning January 1, 2016, the Archdiocese will use VIRTUS Protecting God's Children program for clergy, employees, and volunteers. Also, the Archdiocese uses a program from VIRTUS for children's training.

Sacramental Preparation Program

Ordinarily, students in Second Grade are prepared for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Children must be enrolled in a Catholic education program the year prior to sacramental preparation. Also, students are typically confirmed in Tenth Grade. Any Eighth or Ninth Grader who plans on celebrating Confirmation in Tenth Grade must either be enrolled in OLA's Eighth/Ninth Grade Sunday School class or in a Catholic High School. Please contact Gretchen Heath in the OLA parish office for the particular guidelines.

Textbook Information

Finding God (2013), published by Loyola Press, is the textbook series used for grades Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. For more information, please visit:

<http://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2013>

Also, various materials are used in the Kindergarten through Ninth Grade classes and will be provided throughout the year.

Communication with Parents

Email is the primary source of communication we use with PSR families. Please make sure your email address is on file with the Parish Office. Communications about our School of Religion may also be found weekly in the parish bulletin. Parents should feel free to contact the Religious Education Office with any questions or concerns.

Class Attendance

Regular class attendance is expected. Catechists will mark an attendance sheet each week. If a student misses class, parents should take time to review the lesson with their child. Class attendance is very important, particularly for the year before and the year of First Communion preparation (typically, 1st and 2nd grades) and the two years before Confirmation preparation (typically, 8th and 9th grades). Attendance during these years should be 80% participation. Finally, please do not send your child if he/she is sick or have had a fever in the last 24 hours.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up (10:10 am - 11:20 am)

Parents or an older sibling of a child in Kindergarten - Grade 3 should accompany the student to and from the classroom. Students in Grades 4 - 8 should be dropped-off and picked-up from the main OLA parking lot or from Hearst Drive. However, please note there is absolutely no parking on Dunlap Circle. Students are expected to arrive to class on time but no more than 5 minutes early and should only enter if a teacher is present. Since catechists must remain until all students leave the School, parents must be on time to pick up their children. If someone besides a parent (e.g., a sibling or grandparent) will be picking-up a student, the parents should notify the Religious Education Office in writing. Also, parents are required to let the Religious Education Office know if there is anyone who *should not* be allowed to pick-up their child. Parents should notify the catechist in person or in writing if a student is to be dismissed early.

Class Location

Grades K-8 meet in OLA School classrooms. Grade 9 meets in the youth room. Catechists, students, and parents should be extremely respectful of School property, OLA students' property in desks, and of each teacher's classroom.

Students with Special Needs

Parents should notify the Religious Education Office and their child's catechist if there are special needs, such as dietary restrictions and learning disabilities.

Code of Conduct

- 1) Catechists must be treated with respect.
- 2) No damage to church or school property will be tolerated.
- 3) Students must be courteous to each other. Absolutely no abusive language, fighting, or disrespectful conduct will be allowed.
- 4) No running is allowed on the property.
- 5) Other inappropriate behavior and conduct unbecoming of a Christian student is not allowed.
- 6) No inappropriate use of cell phones or other electronic devices. Cell phones and other devices can be collected and held until released to a parent at the end of class.
- 7) Normal disciplinary problems will be handled by the catechists. A continuing or serious problem will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Parent Involvement and Support

"Many hands make light work." Besides, it is our Christian commitment to service that should lead parents and families to assist in some way with the PSR. Substitute teachers, classroom assistants, and hall monitors are always needed. Please contact the Religious Education Office for more details. Finally, we ask all parents/guardians to support our program by attending Mass with their children. There are several opportunities for weekend Masses at OLA.