

# CONFIRMATION & YOUTH MINISTRY *Handbook*

*"Experience the Gospel...*

*Engage in Community...*

*& Encounter Christ."*



CHURCH OF THE  
PRESENTATION

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I HAVE COME SO  
THEY MAY HAVE  
*life*

AND HAVE IT TO THE  
*full*

~JOHN 10:10

# CANDIDATE ELIGIBILITY



Confirmation Preparation is a time for the candidate to explore and grow in his or her faith supported by the candidate's parent(s) and sponsor in faith. Prior to beginning the High School Confirmation Preparation program all candidates must meet the following criteria:

- The Candidate's family must be registered parishioners of the parish; families may register in the parish using this link:

[www.churchofpresentation.org/new-parishioner-registration](http://www.churchofpresentation.org/new-parishioner-registration)

- All Candidates must be entering grade 9, 10, or 11 in September of the year that they begin the program.
- Candidates must be Baptized in the Catholic Church, and have already made their First Communion.
- Candidates need to have completed Religious Education through Grade 8 in a parish program or in a Catholic School. Candidates who are new to our program will be required to provide a transcript of Religious Education from their parish or Catholic School. Note: any lapse in years may require additional programming to make up what may have been missed.
- Candidates must exhibit a freely chosen, personal desire for the sacrament. This is determined through the Candidate Discernment Form or through an interview.

*"Many are called, but few are chosen."*

~ MATTHEW 22:14

# WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

Confirmation: a sacramental call to mission

*“When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire, which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.”*

~ ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:1-4



Through faith sharing and enrichment, community worship, retreat experiences and ministry of service, our Confirmation Program is geared towards opening the minds and hearts of our young parishioners to the power of the Holy Spirit bestowed through the laying on of hands and the anointing of Sacred Chrism in the Sacrament of Confirmation. During their preparation and discernment, candidates are invited to 'learn new languages', that is, to grow in their expression of faith as they mature as young adults. Candidates are called to grow in a deeper relationship with Christ, through the Church, and to demonstratively live out that relationship through the decisions they make in their moral, social, and faith lives. As members of the parish community, it is our hope that these young men and women, through catechetical instruction and community engagement will grow in their willingness to witness to others their faith in Jesus through compassionate acts of social justice, and an overall willingness to serve where needed.

*Seven Gifts*  
of the  
**HOLY SPIRIT**

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Wisdom  
Understanding  
Counsel  
Fortitude  
Knowledge  
Piety  
Fear of the Lord

In openness to the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit, through the Sacrament of Confirmation, our young women and men are invited to take their place in the community of the Church and to live out the hope of God as expressed through the words of the Prophet Micah:

*“The Lord has told us what is good. The Lord requires of us this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.”*

~ MICAH 6:84

Saint Augustine declared, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in the Lord”. In this light we can better understand the necessity of a formative Confirmation program. As a sacrament of initiation, Confirmation marks the beginning of a journey into a deeper knowledge of God. It is about taking personal strides, guided by the Church community to move forward in faith. As an indelible mark on the soul, the sacrament of Confirmation is life changing and calls the recipient to never tire in personal, spiritual growth and development. Candidates for Confirmation declare their heritage as believers and active membership in the Church by reaffirming their “I do” to their Baptismal Promises, and consciously aspiring to bear greater witness to their faith!

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit strengthens one’s relationship with God and unites the soul more fully to Jesus Christ, who became man so that mankind could become more like God. Just as Christ prepared His disciples for Pentecost, when He established the Church through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Candidates prepare to receive an increase of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives. While their connection with the Church grows stronger, the Holy Spirit strengthens them to give witness to the Christian way of life in all that we profess and do.

# CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Our Confirmation preparation program is designed to immerse Candidates in the Christian way of life. The methodology of our formation sessions fosters conversations in the faith between Candidates and their sponsors. The retreat opportunities provide time for the candidate to escape the weights of everyday life and walk with the Lord in prayer, through personal reflection, and the support of members of the community. Other elements of our programming magnify the significance of service engagement, an active sacramental life, focus on the Eucharist and purposeful faith-based conversations.

Above all, we strive to lay foundations for Candidates to live in deeper communion and relationship with our triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Through personal relationships with Jesus Christ and exploration of the Word of God, our program invites young people preparing for this sacrament to more closely connect with the fellowship of Christian believers and prepare themselves for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to renew the Gifts of the Spirit in baptism, and to find their place of welcome and belonging in the Church while growing in their understanding of the faith and desire to serve others.

*“Instruct the young in the way they should go;  
even when old, they will not swerve from it.”*

~ PROVERBS 22:6

# CANDIDATE & PARENT ROLES



**Candidates** are called to express their own desire for the sacrament by making this process a priority in their lives and intentionally diving into the programming and completing components of the preparation in a sincere and timely fashion. Each candidate's readiness for the sacrament should be evident in the months leading up to their anticipated Confirmation. Candidates should to aspire to grow in their knowledge of the Catholic Faith and traditions of the Church, in the exercise of the faith and foster a life of prayer enriched by the sacraments (according to the precepts of the Church). The candidate's desire for continuing involvement as a fully initiated member of the church must be evident and all components of the program must be completed. On an individual basis, it may be necessary for additional time for preparation to be offered prior to reception of the sacrament.

**Parents** have the unique role of being the primary educators of the faith who nurture and support their child candidate in the faith. Parents accomplish this through initiating conversations and discussions on matter of faith and morals while helping their teen to make this period of preparation a priority in their life through family scheduling, transportation, attending Sunday liturgy with their child and assisting wherever possible on retreats and through parental love and support during the period of sacramental preparation and formation. Parents can and should model the values instilled in the Gospels including lives of commitment to service and outreach, prayer, taking time for spiritual retreats and encouraging their child to reflect on, and thoughtfully consider, their child's decision to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

*"Nothing gives me greater joy than to hear  
that my children are walking in the truth."*

~ 3 JOHN 1:4

# YEAR 1: “FRESHMAN YEAR”

**During Year 1 'Freshman Year', Candidates complete the following program requirements:**

- Participate in at least (1) of our Weekend Retreats:
  - *Discipleship Weekend* in November (& /or)
  - *Antioch Weekend* in March
- Participate in at least (5) Youth Ministry Gatherings
  - One of these Gatherings must include the Mandatory Freshmen Orientation
  - One of these Gatherings must include the Retreat Reunion (for the retreat the candidate attended).
- Submit copies of the candidate's Baptism & First Eucharist Certificates.
- Complete the Candidate/Parent Discernment Form (this is available online on our website)
- Regular celebration/participation of the Eucharist at Mass

Candidates who successfully complete Year 1 will be invited to participate in a mandatory orientation for Year 2, prior to registering for the second year program.

# YEAR 2: “SOPHOMORE YEAR”

**During Year 2 'Sophomore Year', candidates complete the following program requirements:**

- Participate in at least (1) of our Weekend Retreats:
  - Discipleship Weekend in November (& /or)
  - Antioch Weekend in March
- Participate in at least (4) Youth Ministry Gatherings
  - One of these Gatherings must include the Mandatory Sophomore Orientation
  - One of these Gatherings must include the Retreat Reunion (for the retreat the candidate attended).
- Participate in (5) Candidate/Sponsor Sharing sessions with a sponsor (or parent proxy).
- Submit a *Confirmation Name Essay*
- Complete an approved *Service Project* and submit a *Service Log* and *Service Essay*.
- Provide a Sponsor Eligibility Certificate
- Regular celebration/participation of the Eucharist at Mass

Candidates who are unable to complete all of the program requirements for Year 2 may be given additional time to complete this process before receiving Confirmation.

# CONFIRMATION NAME ESSAY

In the Book of Isaiah we read, "I have called you by name; you are mine" (Isaiah 43:1). In YOUR desire to be confirmed in the faith, YOU have the opportunity to reflect on identity in Christ and desire for Confirmation in choosing your Confirmation Name. This decision indicates your awareness of how Confirmation will help you live as a disciple of Christ. In choosing a name, you have a few options. You may choose the name of a Saint that you admire or who is a role model of faith to you. You may also choose the Christian name of your sponsor or another adult role model in your life, because this individual is an example for you of how to live the Catholic life. Although it is traditional to take a new name at Confirmation, it is not required as you may wish to reaffirm your given Baptismal name since the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are so closely related. We ask that you spend some time prayerfully reflecting about your choice as this is a very important decision with much meaning for this Sacrament.

## SERVICE PROJECT & ESSAY

Catholic disciples on mission (that's us!) are called to put two feet of love into action! This foundational tool describes two distinct, but complementary, ways we can put the Gospel in action in response to God's love: social justice (addressing systemic, root causes of problems that affect many people) and charitable works (short-term, emergency assistance for individuals). Charitable Works are our "response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc." (Deus Caritas Est, no. 31). We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need. The service essay helps candidates reflect on their service project in the light of the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching, the Law of Love, the Beatitudes, as well as the Corporal Works of Mercy.

# THE SPONSOR

A significant part of Year 2 of Confirmation Preparation includes the presence and role of an actively involved sponsor.

Candidates: serious consideration should be made in choosing a sponsor that practices and exemplifies a faith-filled Christian life, an active sacramental life, and regularly attends mass. Moreover, sponsors must be fully initiated members of the Church and provide a signed and sealed eligibility certificate from the sponsor's parish.

Per Canon Law each candidate must be supported by a sponsor of his/her choosing. The sponsor need not be the same gender as the Candidate but CANNOT be a parent. Sponsors MUST meet the following requirements:

- 1.) **The intended sponsor cannot be a parent of the candidate.**
- 2.) **The sponsor must be at least 16 years of age.**
- 3.) **The sponsor must be Roman Catholic and have received Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation.**
- 4.) **The sponsor needs to actively practice, and thereby model, the Catholic Faith.**

While it is a honor to serve as a sponsor it is moreover a responsibility that should not be taken lightly. The sponsor should have a genuine interest in the faith life of the candidate and be willing to invest time to be present to the candidate and to explore the faith with the Candidate for the sacrament. Some examples of an ideal sponsor might be one of child's godparents or grandparents who has an active faith and sacramental life.

*“We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

~ HEBREWS 10:24-25

# MISSION STATEMENT:

*“Experience the Gospel...  
Engage in Community...  
& Encounter Christ.”*



Our Youth Ministry's Mission Statement is built on three pillars: *Experiencing the Gospel, Engaging the Community & Encountering Christ.* These benchmarks help us to have a standard by which our ministry's fruits and goals may be measured. *Experiencing the Gospel* & *Engaging the Community* are values grounded in the Church's Mission of Evangelization. In his 2013 letter to Confirmation Candidates, Pope Francis wrote,

“How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening could say, today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends my parents, or an older person.” In the work of evangelization we pass on the Gospel message in our actions, “and sometimes we even use words” (St. Francis of Assisi).

Our ministry seeks to bring teens into deeper relationships with our Lord and to “Encounter Christ” more intimately in the Eucharist, through prayer and the sacraments, in community, during retreats, Christian Service, mission trips, and provide experiences that foster a love of neighbor, exercise the Beatitudes nurture our young people through study of Sacred Scripture as well as through the exercise of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*

~ MATTHEW 28:19

# PEER MINISTRY “TEAM”



Our Leadership Team of Juniors and Seniors are the voice of the young people of the Parish. They receive training as Peer Leaders and help us stay true to our Vision and Mission. They help us run the most effective and relevant program possible!

\***NEW**\* Sophomores who have been a part of the Ignite Program last year are now eligible to shadow and serve as apprentices for TEAM.

*“Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.”*

~ MATTHEW 20:26

## **What does a Peer Minister do?**

Peer Ministers set aside time for their own relationship with the Lord while being present at PM meetings, the PM Overnight Leadership Retreat, Discipleship Weekend (formerly Freshmen/Sophomore) and Sunday Night Youth Ministry Gatherings. A Peer Minister welcomes and engages other teens in conversation as well as helps to plan activities, leading games, show hospitality, nourish the community and foster relationships with Jesus!

## **What does it mean to commit to being on TEAM?**

Peer Ministers are asked to commit to and participate in TEAM formation sessions and the Peer Ministry Overnight Retreat, help plan and assist with the Discipleship Weekend Retreat, and leading Sunday Night Youth Ministry Gatherings. We are very willing to work with you, so don't let the commitment scare you away! Talk through it with us and we can find a way to make sure you have a place on Team!

# DISCIPLESHIP WEEKEND RETREAT



**'ONE FLOCK, ONE SHEPHERD'**  
NOVEMBER 8-10, 2024

Rebranded for 2024, the *Discipleship Weekend Retreat* (formerly Freshman/Sophomore), is a dynamic retreat experience for all high school teens. This high energy retreat experience is prepared and lead by our upperclassmen high-school Peer Ministry TEAM and select group of Sophomore TEAM Apprentices. This retreat is held at our Parish Center each year in November: themes and activities change from one year to the next.

At Church of the Presentation, the *Antioch Weekend Retreat* has become a historical tradition that has been offered for the young people of our parish for more than 41 years! This high-impact retreat experience is orchestrated by a team of highly trained Adults and Young Adults, many of whom return from their own time in Youth Ministry. The team dedicates months of their time to preparation, and share their stories of faith. They bring with them a love, joy, and passion that is igniting!. Themes and activities are made fresh each year for this fun retreat held at our Parish Center.

# ANTIOCH WEEKEND RETREAT



**'HOME SWEET HOME'**  
MARCH 7-9, 2025

# YOUTH MINISTRY GATHERINGS

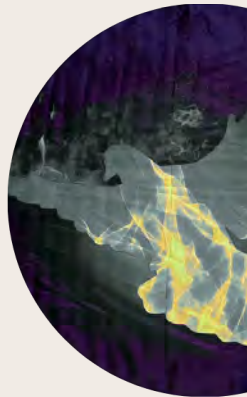
Youth Ministry Gatherings, (a.k.a. Sunday Nights), are opportunities for high school youth to gather and socialize, to talk about current issues and support each other in prayer while building an awareness of community. At our Gatherings teens come to meet new people, make new friends, connect with old friends, & /or come for a spiritual boost at the beginning of their week. Most come for all of the reasons listed above.. It is at these gatherings that many teens first encounter community through a program requirement connected to Confirmation preparation but then continue coming because they find a place of welcome in a judgement free space at their parish.

It is at Youth Ministry Gatherings that teens frequently find community and foster bonds of friendship within their church community. Our Gatherings are designed to be lighthearted with a discussion "nuggets" on a variety of topics about the faith while spending time getting to know one another. All high school teens are welcome to participate in these uplifting gatherings. Youth Ministry Gatherings provide a sampling for teens to explore and discover their relationship with the Lord without being too demanding of their time.

*"Where two or three gather together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."*

~ MATTHEW 18:20

# IGNITE IGNITE IGNITE



A YOUTH GROUP FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEENS

## **What is Ignite?**

Ignite is a mid-week youth group for teens in grades 9-12 to come and encounter Jesus through community and the Word. Here we have time for conversation and games, and dive into Scripture and topics of our faith! Ignite provides a space for teens who desire more depth in their faith to grow deeper in relationship with Jesus and to do it in a community of peers and mentors who journey with you in faith. Come and see what the Lord has for you here.

## **Who can come to Ignite?**

Ignite is a place for all 9-12th graders, whether you are committed to your faith or curious about it or filled with questions! If you or someone you know is interested in learning more, in making new friends, meeting new people, being a part of a faith community, join us! You can come once in a while or every week!

## **When is Ignite?**

Ignite begins after the Discipleship Weekend Retreat and meets every Tuesday in the Antioch Room from 6:30-8:30pm. Come to as many or as few as your schedule allows!

*"I have come so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."*

~ JOHN 10:10

# THE HOMELESS OVERNIGHT

During the Homeless Overnight Retreat and Midnight Night Run teens learn about caring for the poor and marginalized. As we explore Christ's teaching's on the Beatitudes and the Law of Love, we collectively examine how, through living out the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching and exercising the Corporal Works of Mercy we can see the face of Christ in those less fortunate. Through the generosity of our parish family, during this unique 22 hour retreat participants bring donated food, clothing and toiletry items to the homeless in NYC through *Midnight Run*.

During the evening hours of the the Homeless Overnight participants sleep outside in cardboard boxes to experience some sense of homelessness for a night. Prior to the morning masses on Sunday, teens advocate for Homelessness Awareness as parishioners gather to worship at Sunday Mass.

*"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*

~MATTHEW 25:40



# YOUTH MINISTRY

## LIVING STATIONS OF THE CROSS

A signature component of our Youth Ministry programming is tied to Good Friday and the Youth Ministry Living Stations. Each year on Good Friday teens and adult volunteers workshop and prepare for a dramatization of Christ's passion & death. This reflective, retreat-like experience begins by joining the parish community for the 9am Morning Prayer & Good Friday Reflection in the church. The day includes an overview of events and the historical and personal significance of the spirit of the stations and well as a few rehearsals and a dress rehearsal with the choir. There are roles for pantomime, back stage crew, narration, reflection and choral components with the Youth & Young Adult Choir. We join the parish community for the 3:00pm service and veneration of the cross .

The Living Stations help the community to relive the final hours of Jesus' life as the Youth Ministry re-enacts the Stations of the Cross with acting, singing, and contemporary, personal prayers. Each year the Church is packed with hundreds of people who come to experience this dramatization steeped in tradition at our parish yet renewed each year and led by our high school youth. No acting or singing experience necessary. Come and be a part of this life-giving and rewarding experience!

“Among the other reasons why our Savior deigned to take upon Himself these feelings of human weakness, this one I have spoken is not unworthy of consideration — I mean that having made Himself weak for the sake of the weak, He might take care of other weak men by means of His own weakness.”

# YOUTH MINISTRY MISSION TRIPS

Church of the Presentation has a long history of offering both domestic and international summer mission trips. Each year in October, high school teens are invited to apply for the coming summer's mission trip experience where we will strive to benefit a community outside of our own through the missionary work of ecumenism while spreading the joy and experiencing some of the challenges of living in solidarity with others. Details and applications are made available for upcoming trips each October.

# YOUTH MINISTRY FUNDRAISING

In order to help offset expenses of our Youth Ministry and Ignite programming, costs of our summer youth mission trip(s), and the formation of our peer ministers, Youth Ministry offers a number of creative fundraising opportunities throughout the year. Youth Ministry runs three plant sales per year, a Super Bowl Sunday Pancake Breakfast (with the help and support of the Knights of Columbus), a Youth Ministry Car Wash, and on occasion a signature fundraising event. Teens in the Confirmation Preparation program are also asked to make a contribution toward this programming & /or to support our drives for our outreach events.

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our well-established attendance requirements have been developed in accord with Archdiocesan guidelines and must be met in order for the Candidate to have been considered suitably prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, attendance will be taken at ALL events. Partial attendance or failure to sign-in will be considered as absence. Examples of this include: participation in Youth Ministry Gatherings, Retreats, Service Projects & Candidate/Sponsor Sessions.

Candidates are expected to be present and participate at ALL required or mandatory sessions unless illness or a family emergency arises. Sports events/practices, trips, weekends away and homework ARE NOT acceptable excuses for being absent and do not demonstrate a priority given to or genuine desire for the sacrament.

If a Candidate must be absent, it is the Candidate's responsibility to contact, by telephone or email, the Confirmation Coordinator IN ADVANCE with the reason for the absence. Each case will be handled individually.

Regarding Candidate/Sponsor Sessions (Year 2): Each Candidate will need to be accompanied by a Sponsor. In the event that a Sponsor is unable to attend one or more of these sessions, or two candidates are at the same session with a shared/mutual Sponsor, (1) parent must attend the Session for each Candidate who does not have his or her own Sponsor present. To be clear: candidates with shared sponsors must also have a parent present in addition to the sponsor. Each candidate must have a sponsor with them or a parent substitute. There are no exceptions to this policy.

# ZORACH V. CLAUSON

Dismissal from Public School  
Zorach v. Clauson  
343 U.S. 306 (1956).

This U.S. Supreme Court case ruled that it is not unconstitutional for a public school student to attend religious instruction at a parochial school or church event even if this should disrupt the public school schedule.

By "public school schedule" it has been interpreted to include sporting events, band competitions, school plays, and any other public school sponsored event.

Any type of "punishment" for missing or leaving an event early IS NOT permitted and is in violation of the law. Therefore, school personnel cannot:

- Threaten the student in any way (example: removal from the team)
- Mock or make fun of child's religious convictions
- Point out the reason why a student is not present or leaving early to other students or staff
- Place a penalty such as "extra laps," "benching," or any other type of action, which is placed upon the student because of his or her absence or early dismissal.

If your family ever has a problem with a teacher or coach regarding Church programming, please do not hesitate to call the Youth Ministry & Confirmation Office.

# H.S. CODE OF CONDUCT

*All participants in our programs and events are expected to adhere to the High School Code of Conduct.*

*Any participant who is unable to follow these behavioral expectations will be dismissed without receiving credit for attendance at that event.*

- I will use language, gestures, and behaviors appropriate to Church of the Presentation events.
- I agree to respect other individuals who attend Church of the Presentation's events and to treat others with kindness and compassion. This includes my peers, adult volunteers, and the staff.
- I agree to participate fully in both small and large group activities.
- I understand that I am welcome to bring a guest to any Church of the Presentation activity and that I am responsible for any guests that I bring.
- I understand that I am responsible for the cleanliness of all facilities and will clean up my own mess.
- I understand that I may be asked to pay for damages to the facility caused by my inappropriate behavior.
- I understand that I am responsible for reporting any of the above situations caused by others or myself to the adults in charge.
- I understand that I must arrange a ride to and from all Church of the Presentation activities and will be picked up at designated end times.
- I understand that once I have my driver's license, I am permitted to drive to Church of the Presentation. I agree that I will drive in a responsible and safe manner.
- **I agree to not have my cell phone out at any event unless asked to do so. It is a distraction to you and to those in charge of the event.**
- I understand that there may be specific rules and regulations based on the individual activity and I agree to abide by those rules. These may be in written form or may be verbalized by the adults in charge.

# PROTECTING OUR YOUTH POLICIES

In accordance with requirements mandated by the Archdiocese of Newark, all adults, staff and volunteers alike, involved with the children and/or teenagers of our parish must comply with the following requirements of the Protecting God's Children program prior to being able to volunteer:

AFTER meeting with the staff member who oversees the specific area of youth involvement each prospective volunteer will need to complete the following PGC Requirements:

1. Complete the Volunteer Application
2. Read the "Archdiocese of Newark Policies on Professional and Ministerial Conduct"
3. Sign an Acknowledgement Form for the policies
4. Complete a background check online OR provide proof of being fingerprinted. Note: If you have ever been fingerprinted, you do not need to order a background check. You must provide Kathleen Martorano a copy of a confirming letter from the agency that took your fingerprints.
5. Attend a Protecting God's Children Workshop

## FIRST TIME ATTENDING A WORKSHOP?

All volunteers must pre-register at [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org).

Click on the "FIRST-TIME REGISTRANT" tab on the left hand side of the page. Select the Newark (Archdiocese) and when prompted indicate in the "LOCATION" that you'll be volunteering at (Presentation).

Attending a Protecting God's Children workshop in-person (2.5-3 hrs. in length) satisfies this requirement for (5) years.

Background checks must be performed every (5) years.



## CONTACT US

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