

CCD RELATED FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Our Lady of Mercy (OLM) is the only English speaking Catholic parish in Madrid. We joyfully receive new families who move to Spain, and wish to enrol their children in our religious education program, a.k.a., the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD). If you clicked this link, you may like to know a bit about our program.

Welcome to our CCD frequently asked questions (FAQs) section, where we provide more detailed responses to questions that you may have. This section is updated regularly to incorporate newly identified areas of interest for parishioners. If your doubts are not resolved here, please contact me and I will do my best to assist you.

We look forward to meeting you and to accompanying your children on their spiritual journey.

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My family just moved to Madrid, and we would like to register our children for religious education at OLM. What are the requirements?

Registering your children for CCD at OLM is an easy process. First, it is important that you register as parishioners of OLM. You can download the new parishioner registration form from our website, or get an already printed copy on Sunday at church. Fill this form and then return it **personally** to Fr. Ron. He likes to meet every new parishioner. Also, we require the children's Baptismal certificates and certificate of First Holy Communion (for those who have received this Sacrament). There are some additional simple forms to be filled; these and other necessary information will be communicated to you by the CCD coordinator during registration. Normally registration takes place in the fellowship room after our 11am Mass.

My children do not speak/understand English well, but I do. Can I register them to the program since it will help them learn English faster?

OLM is home to over 30 nationalities. Given the obvious linguistic and cultural diversity, English is the only language of instruction for CCD. We make provisions for the CCD coordinator to have a chat with your children to determine if their level of English is sufficient to grasp the content of the lessons. While there is no doubt about a parent's commitment to the education of their children, active participation in class can only be assured if children can communicate to a reasonable extent in the language of instruction. The alternative will lead to frustration, loss of interest, and self-esteem issues.

What time does the CCD class begin and how long does it last?

We begin CCD classes shortly after our 11am Sunday Mass, i.e. 12:05pm. Classes finish at 1:00pm.

My family cannot make a commitment to attend Mass on Sundays or we sometimes like to attend our local Spanish parish. Can we drop our children off for CCD and pick them up afterwards?

We do not allow drop-offs for CCD at OLM. The practice of our faith and Sunday worship is an integral part of a child's religious education and children learn this by observing their parents/family.

Our children will not be able to attend CCD weekly. Is this a problem?

Our CCD classes are held one hour per week (and we do not usually schedule classes on holiday weekends), which is hardly enough time to teach the content that children need to know as practicing

Catholics. Punctual and consistent attendance to CCD classes is therefore an expectation at OLM. We do allow for some excused absences on grounds of illness or custody situations. The CCD teacher and/or the coordinator must be given prior notification. In the event of too many (unexcused) absences, the child will have to repeat the class the following year, not as punishment, but for the purpose of reinforcement.

How do I ensure my child's safety during classes?

The safety of children is a top priority at Our Lady of Mercy. We keep a strict child protection policy, and ensure implementation of this policy by carefully vetting all our catechists according to the provisions of the Spanish laws. We also monitor the classroom areas during classes, among other precautions.

I have 2 little children and I'm wondering the age range for kids attending CCD classes and where my children fit in the program.

Under the guidelines from the Archdiocese of Madrid, children must attend a minimum of 3 years preparation for First Holy Communion and confirmation. Following those same guidelines, **ideally**, we offer CCD continuously from Level 1 (minimum age 6) to level 9 - Confirmation (minimum age 15) with 3 years minimum preparation required for new students. That said, the levels to which new students would be admitted is determined by the CCD coordinator (and the Parish priest if necessary) following a brief chat with the student. Please note that to be admitted to the Sacrament classes (First Holy Communion and Confirmation), additionally, we require a proof of any previous preparation as verified by an official letter from the child's school or previous parish.

My child has not been baptized. Can s/he enrol to the program?

Yes. The CCD coordinator will assign your child to a class where s/he corresponds based on age and previous knowledge. Your child must be baptized prior to receiving the First Holy Communion. However, this process will not be accelerated for children 6 years old and older. **We do not condone the practice of non-practicing Catholics to seek Baptism for their child only so that s/he may receive First Communion, and then once celebrated, promptly abandon anew the practice of the faith.**

Is there provision for me as an adult in your religious education program?

Yes. For interested candidates above the age of 16, we have the Right of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), which also serves as preparatory program for receiving the Sacraments. Depending upon our resources, we sometimes offer Bible Study on Sundays,

I was a Catechist in my previous Parish and would love to volunteer as a catechist at OLM.

God bless you for your service to the Church. To volunteer as a catechist at OLM, you must be a registered member of our parish. Please fill out the new parishioner registration form and hand it in **personally** to Fr. Ron. You will find that there's a space in the registration form to indicate how you would like to serve, please communicate your willingness to volunteer as a catechist. Please note that in line with our child protection policy, you need to worship with us actively and consistently for a minimum of one year and also meet the Spanish legal requirements regarding child protection before you can become a catechist at OLM. In any case, we look forward to meeting you and discussing your proposal.