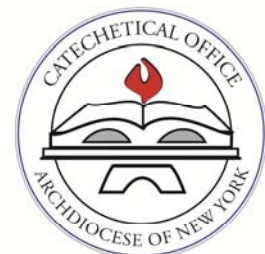




Special Religious Education Myth Busters

- Children with special needs *are not bound by a required Religious Education curriculum*. Their presence in the program is the most valuable part of their curriculum. Within the program they become aware of their acceptance into the family of the Church and experience firsthand the kindness and love that Jesus extends to all in his family.
- The child with special needs *does not have to attend the 90-minute session* required of other students. The timing and frequency of instruction can be adapted to the child's particular needs and abilities.
- The catechist for children with special needs *does not need a background in special education*. Simplified textbooks and methodologies are now available to help catechists meet the needs of these children.
- *Almost all children in a special needs situation can be prepared* in a simplified manner to receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Although we encourage all children to learn and pray the basic prayers (Our Father, Hail Mary, Sign of the Cross), *memorization of these prayers is not a requirement to receive the sacraments*. Many special needs children have great difficulty memorizing. For some children and parents, requiring such memorization can cause anxiety and stress.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation *may be received (and is often recommended to be received) at a later date*, rather than just prior to receiving First Eucharist.
- The Archdiocese of New York provides *a special diocesan-wide Confirmation for children with special needs* in an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance, and a family-friendly celebration!
- The Archdiocese will provide *ongoing support, presence, and resources for those parishes that initiate a Special Religious Education component*. For assistance in meeting the needs of children with disabilities, contact the director of special religious education at, 646-794-2852, or SpecialRelEd@nyfaithformation.org.



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