

**ST. BARTHOLOMEW PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2016-2017

**WEBSITE: SAINTBARTHOLOMEWS.COM
FACEBOOK: ST. BARTHOLOMEW ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

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ST. BARTHOLOMEW PARISH
Office of Religious Education
321 West Ridge Avenue
SHARPSVILLE, PA 16150

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

A Fully Accredited Program by the Diocese of Erie

Program MISSION Statement: Our purpose is to teach the heart and beauty of our Catholic Faith and Tradition. Recognizing that parents are the primary educators of their children, we strive to assist parents by offering quality religious education and instruction.

Program VISION Statement: We are a faith-filled community called by Christ to spread God's Kingdom. By our faith sharing, instruction, and example we guide our members to grow in knowledge of our Catholic Faith and Tradition, to a life of service and stewardship.

PROGRAM GOALS

We are a faith filled community called by Christ to spread God's Kingdom. By our faith sharing, instruction, and example we guide our members to grow in knowledge of our Catholic Faith and Tradition and to a life of service and stewardship. Therefore, our program goals are:

- ✠ to provide a program of formal religious education for the children and youth of St. Bartholmew Parish;
- ✠ to support parents in their role as primary educators of their children;
- ✠ to offer sacramental preparation to children and youth at the appropriate diocesan recommended age levels;
- ✠ to allow our children and youth to experience the Church as community;
- ✠ to expose children and youth to the liturgical and sacramental richness that is part of our Catholic tradition;
- ✠ to enable students to become responsible, loving, and praying individuals who live a life rooted in charity and justice based on the moral teachings of the Church.

ROLE OF PARENTS

It is the role of the parish to assist the parents in nurturing the faith of their children. At the same time, it is essential that parents cooperate with the parish and work with those who are designated leaders of the parish program.

Parents who would like their children to be a part of our program should:

1. complete a religious education registration form,
2. inform the children's catechist of any pertinent information regarding medical history, emergency information, rights of a non-custodial parent, or any changes in the household that may affect the behavior or attitude of the children.
- 3. read the policies, and procedures contained in this handbook**
4. maintain an open line of communication with the catechist and be supportive of the catechist, especially in the area of discipline,
5. attend Mass weekly with the children,
6. take the responsibility for the role of primary educator,
7. practice the traditional prayers of the church at home with the children,
8. attend parent meetings when requested.

ADMISSION POLICIES

St. Bartholomew Parish does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, national origin, religion, or physical or mental challenges.

Any family that is registered in St. Bartholomew Parish may enroll children in the Religious Education Program. In order for children to be admitted, the family must complete the necessary registration forms. Non-parishioners are welcomed to participate in our program, there will be an additional fee for those families not registered members.

Registration: A general registration session will be held each August/September for students in grades 1-11.

Books and Materials Fee: The annual fee is determined by the cost to the parish for program materials and books, as well as miscellaneous expenses such as special materials needed for sacramental preparation and retreats. **Current Fees:** Grades 1-11 \$70.00 for 1 student, \$100 for 2 students, \$130.00 for 3 or more students per family. Fee is waived for children of *volunteer* catechists, facilitators, and aides. *There is NO book/materials fee, unless a student losses the book.*

Curriculum for Grades 1 – 5 are using Sadlier “We Believe” series. Grades 6 – 8 are using St. Mary’s Press “Catholic Connections and Grades 9 – 11 are using St. Mary’s Press “The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth”. The middle school and high school students will have the same book, theirs to keep, throughout middle school years and throughout high school years.

****NO PARISHIONER WILL BE DENIED FROM ATTENDING BECAUSE OF PARENTS’ INABILITY TO PAY.** Please contact the pastor if class fees are an issue for your family. Please know that this is offered in the spirit of a community called to assist one another in love.

CHILDREN’S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Children’s Liturgy of the Word is offered at our 9:30a.m. Mass from September through May for children age 3 to grade 3. Children are dismissed from Mass just before the Liturgy of the Word to the church hall where they hear the readings of the day in simpler form and do activities based on the readings. No registration is necessary to participate. Volunteers are always needed to help with this ministry.

ATTENDANCE

Diocesan Policy 401.20 states: “*All children/youth will have a minimum of 44 hours of religious education per year including instructional time, liturgical celebrations (excluding Sunday worship unless it is a specific class responsibility), community building activities, and service activities.*”

In light of this policy and in review of our program:

✠ ***Please remember: Religious Education is not a substitute for Sunday Mass and Sunday Mass is not a substitute for Religious Education.***

✠ Service and whole-community activities will become an integral part of the program.

Class Schedules: Currently, classes meet 10:30 – 12:30, unless otherwise noted on the schedule. Please check the calendar closely for dates and times of all events. Calendars are distributed at the beginning of each year. Class dates and times are also published in the bulletin and on our Facebook page...St. Bartholomew Roman Catholic Church...and on the parish website: saintbartholomew.com

- a. **Missed Classes:** Each class session is planned to build on previous classes. Children who are absent do miss a great deal and more than 2 missed classes are excessive. You will find an absentee form enclosed you need to use if you student is absent from class, unexcused absences (absences other than illness, death or emergency) will be require to complete, with the help of their parents make-up work and may

chronic absences will result in a meeting with Fr. Matt and Rosemary to evaluate your continued participation in St. Bartholomew religious education program. Missing a confirmation class session is not an option. This program has been designed to make it as simple as possible for you. Keep it simple by making arrangements with your employer ahead of time and letting coaches know you plan to be confirmed this year. They will understand if you let them know! With that said, **if an emergency arises or an unavoidable conflict (other than work!) arises –call Rosemary before class to make arrangements to make up the material.** (WARNING! Make-up work will be extensive!)

Arrival and Dismissal: Classes begin promptly. Please DO NOT drop off your child more than 10 minutes before class time. A parent should be available to pick up their child promptly at dismissal time.

At pick up time you are asked to park. For children in grades 1 - 5 with no older siblings in the program you are asked to walk to the doors to pick up your child. PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN!!!

Classroom Visits: Parents are welcome to visit their children’s classrooms **at any time.** They are required to check in with the program Coordinator before entering the classroom.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATION

In case of severe weather, please use your better judgment. It is always best to error on the side of safety but don’t use the weather as an excuse especially if you can make a trip to the grocery store, make your Wal-Mart run, or go snow tubing. Very rarely is Mass cancelled. Cancellations due to inclement weather will also be posted on our Facebook page **St. Bartholomew Roman Catholic Church** and our parish website: saintbartholomews.com. PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE PARISH OFFICE OR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR.

CURRICULUM

We use the Diocese-mandated textbook series Grades 1 – 5 are using Sadlier “We Believe” series. Grades 6 – 8 are using St. Mary’s Press “Catholic Connections and Grades 9 – 11 are using St. Mary’s Press “The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth”. The middle school and high school students will have the same book, theirs to keep, throughout middle school years and throughout high school years and follow Diocese developed guidelines. As a part of their curriculum, students in grades 7- 11 are required to complete:

7 & 8th grade hours of community service – 10 hours.

9th grade hours of community service – 15 hours.

10th & 11th grade hours of community service – 30 hours each year.

Grades 1 – 6 service will be done as a class or group effort.

Students will be responsible for recording and returning records of their service to their religious education teachers

1/3 of your service can be to the community. There is NO lack of service opportunities in our parish and opportunities within the parish to help the bigger community.

“Child Protection/Safe Environment Program”: **Students** in grades 1-11 are required by the Diocese of Erie to be in-serviced annually regarding Child Protection. This will be completed at St. Bartholomew by the Religious Education Leader using videos approved by the Diocese of Erie for this purpose. Each video is presented at an age appropriate level. Parents are given the option to not have their child participate in this in-service. An option form will be sent home prior to the in-service date and if parents choose not to have their child participate, they must simply return the option form to their child’s teacher. If you choose not to have your child participate in the in-service, information will be sent home for you to review with your child. **Parents** are

also required to be in-serviced each year regarding Child Protection and Safe Environment. Each year information will be sent home to parents covering this topic.

DISCIPLINE

In order to provide for a safe and well ordered program in which the student and the catechist can learn to follow Jesus' call to love, some rules for behavior are necessary.

The students have the following responsibilities:

- † show respect to catechists, other students and program personnel
- † treat property, good name, and physical safety of others with respect
- † be present only in areas of the building for which they have permission at a specific time
- † display actions and a tone of voice that is appropriate for a classroom
- † never be in the possession of or under the influence of any illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; evidence of such use will result in the student being removed from the environment while the parents and *proper authorities are notified. ZERO TOLERANCE*
- † never be in the possession of or make threats of future possession or use of any weapons. Evidence of such possession or threats will result in the student being removed from the environment while the parents and *proper authorities are notified. ZERO TOLERANCE*
- † it is also the responsibility of the students to immediately report any breach of the disciplinary codes, especially those that involve any kind of harm, injury, or threats to harm or injure.

For a single minor occurrence, the teacher may remove a student from the classroom for a “cool down” period with the program Coordinator. Consequent occurrences or occurrences of major concern will be immediately addressed with the parents.

If repeated attempts to correct a disruptive behavior have failed, the student will be removed from the class permanently. A student may be re-admitted after a parent/student/catechist/REL conference during which time an agreement will be made between all parties as to how future disruptions/disciplinary problems will be handled.

CELL PHONES

While it is recognized that many of our students carry cell phones for safety and convenience, students need to refrain from using their phones while in religious education, it is rude and distracting to everyone. If student's cell phone's cause a distraction, teachers will ask for the phone and parents can retrieve the phone from the religious education office following class.

FIELD TRIPS

Catechists who wish to take their class on a field trip or any other activity out of the ordinary routine are to request permission for the activity at least two weeks in advance in writing. Once permission is granted the activity may be arranged under the following conditions:

- The activity or field trip must have a catechetical purpose.
- The event must involve reasonable activities and distance.
- The catechist is responsible for informing parents and getting permission slips from all students in advance, in writing.
- A copy of the Medical Release Form must be obtained for each student and attached to the permission slip. The forms are on file in the Religious Education Office.
- The field trip/activity must be limited to the pre-arranged plan and should not be altered.

- At least one adult chaperone for every 10 children above 4th grade and one for every 5 children, fourth grade or younger must accompany the group.
- If cars are used as transportation, drivers must be over 25 years of age. A copy of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance must be obtained. Each driver should be informed of the route to be taken and must follow that route. No side trips should be permitted.
- No field trip or special event is considered sponsored by the parish unless the permission of the religious education leader or pastor is granted in advance.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

St. Bartholomew offers preparation programs for the sacraments of **First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation**. Confirmation classes include students from both public and parochial high schools. No distinction is made.

Sacramental Preparation/Parish and Diocesan policies

Acknowledging the importance of complete sacramental preparation and in accordance with Diocesan policies and preferences, St. Bartholomew's children's/youth sacramental preparation programs have been developed as follows:

FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST

First Reconciliation Preparation is a two-year program*, beginning in grade 1. In order for a student to be a candidate for this sacrament in **grade 2**, he/she must be enrolled in a religious education program both years.

First Eucharist Preparation is a three-year program*, beginning in grade 1. In order for a student to be a candidate for this sacrament in **grade 3**, he/she must be enrolled in a religious education program for all 3 years and have received the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Children who enter the program uncatechized between grades 2 - 8 must first be enrolled in a religious education program for one year prior to reception of the sacraments. Also, remedial training under the guidance of the religious education leader and a parent is required. Students must be able to show progress by demonstrating required skills (i.e.: recite required prayers and show knowledge of facts appropriate for that age level) to be considered candidates for the sacraments.

*NOTE: Diocesan Policy changed the year of reception of First Eucharist to the third grade. This policy went into effect in the 2006-2007 school year.

CONFIRMATION

Preparation for Confirmation is conducted by volunteer catechists along with the Coordinator of Religious Education and uses both a whole group and small-faith group format. Regular sessions are held. There is also a retreat and service projects. **Please note: Confirmation is held at St. Peter's Cathedral in Erie for St. Bartholomew confirmandi.**

Confirmation Preparation is a three-year program, beginning in grade 9. In order for a student to be a candidate for Confirmation in grade 11, he/she must be enrolled in a religious education program and/or Catholic School for all three years. Both Public and Catholic School youth participate in the Confirmation preparation program during their junior year and it is considered mandatory to be eligible for Confirmation.

Catechized youth who enter the program in grade 11, but were not part of any religious education program in grades 9 and 10 must participate in both remedial training and the regular Confirmation preparation program in order to be considered candidates for Confirmation in the 12th grade.

Youth in Grades 11 or 12 who enter the program uncatechized must become part of the RCIA program to be considered candidates for Confirmation.

CATECHISTS (TEACHERS)

All of our catechists give their faith, time, and talent for the children of our parish - your children. All of them are volunteers. They do not get paid; they do it out of their love for God and their call to the ministry of helping children on their faith journey.

Would you think about giving your time? No special talents are required, just a strong faith in our Lord, a call to spread His Message and the willingness to take advantage of some of the training offered by our diocese. Contact Rosemary and we will gladly talk to you about becoming a part of this parish ministry.

CATECHISTS 2016-2017

Grade One:	Mrs. Colleen DeJulia and Mr. Vincent DeJulia
Grade Two:	Mrs. Suzanne Combine and Mrs. Tammy Budek
Grade Three:	Mrs. Mindy Lucas and Mrs. Renee Combine
Grade Four:	Mrs. Shannon Adkins and Mrs. Jennifer Sarchet
Grade Five:	Mrs. Susan Miller and Mr. Andrew Kimpan
Grade Six:	Mrs. Carole Yudt and Mrs. Joyce Antos
Grade Seven:	Mrs. Kim Conti and Mrs. Cindy Mehler
Grade Eight:	Mr. Ian Elliott and Ms. Jessica DeRicco
Grade Nine:	Mrs. Lori Brenemen and Mrs. Mary Pollock
Grade Ten:	Mrs. Maureen Herrmann and Mrs. Shannon Toth
Confirmation	Mrs. Lynn Bresnahan and Mr. John Tuskan
Children's Liturgy of the Word:	Rosemary Ferguson, Shannon Adkins, Mindy Lucas, and Jill Kimpan

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

To share in the ministry of Christ is a great privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility. The privilege is the joy of sharing in the mission of Jesus Himself. The responsibility is acting in a way that conforms to the attitude and actions of Christ. As is evident in the Gospels, Jesus had a deep, abiding respect for each human being and never did anything that harmed or misled people in their personal or spiritual life.

The public needs to know that the Church is committed to protecting the children/youth who are entrusted to its care and to ensuring that those offering services are in right relationship with the children/youth receiving services.

There is a challenge in the Scriptures to "live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:1-3).

In this spirit, Personnel

- are expected to represent the Church in a faithful, authentic and loving way, supporting the teachings, disciplines and tradition of the Catholic Church;
- will exhibit the highest Catholic ethical standards and personal integrity in their day-to-day work and personal lives;
- will conduct themselves in a professional manner in both church and work environments, avoiding any flagrant or public misconduct;
- will hold one another accountable to conduct and standards appropriate to their respective roles;
- will foster the dignity of each person and be committed to the best interests of others;
- will respect the integrity of all individuals and protect the confidentiality of all information to which they have access;
- will not take advantage of any relationship with a child/youth for their own benefit;
- will not physically, sexually or emotionally abuse anyone;
- will not neglect a child who is in their care.

**ST. BARTHOLOMEW RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
ABSENTEE FORM
2016-2017**

Student's Name _____

Grade _____

Date of Absence _____

Reason for Absence _____

Signature of Parent _____

Date _____

Office use only

Date form received _____

Facilitator _____ Pastor _____

Make up work assigned _____

Date make up work was returned _____

Service Record

7 & 8th grade hours of community service – 10 hours.

9th grade hours of community service – 15 hours.

10th grade hours of community service – 30 hours

NAME: _____

Besides the service projects completed with the Confirmation class, you are to a total of at least 30 hours. (You may copy this form if you complete service at different places/times.)

Place where you did service: _____

Name of Contact person: _____ phone: _____

Date of service: _____ Number of hours of service: _____

Service performed: _____

Why did you choose this service? _____

What did you learn from this service/ or how have you grown from doing this service? ____

Verified by: (please print): _____

Signature: _____