

**St. John Fisher
Parish Religious Education
School of Religion**



***Parent, Guardian & Participant Handbook
2018-2019***

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

Treasuring the belief, commitment and sacrifice evident in the lives of our forebearers from Holy Saviour, Immaculate Conception of Lourdes and Saint John Fisher Parishes, we affirm our Roman Catholic faith in Christ Jesus who defines our identity and mission.

With hearts sustained by the graces of the Trinity communicated through the Sacraments, we gather as a family to be nourished by our Risen Savior at the Eucharistic table of His Word and His Body and Blood.

Called by the Holy Spirit to a discipleship animated by prayer, worship, pastoral outreach and faith formation, we strive to welcome, witness to, transform and serve the greater community as a beacon of inspiration and truth. We offer our minds, hearts and efforts to God through stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

Our future relies upon the grace of God, His Providence and committing ourselves to His Holy Will. Hope abounds that this generation and those to come will live saintly lives reflecting the joyous examples of our patrons, Saint John Fisher and Mary, our Mother, upon whose prayers we humbly depend.

Dear Parents,

The Catechists, Aides and I welcome you and your children to St. John Fisher Religious Education School of Religion. We look forward to partnering with you in deepening your child's faith life and relationship with the Lord. As a parent or guardian, yours is the God-given, primary role in nurturing the faith formation of your children. At the final baptism blessing, parents are reminded that they are the first and primary teachers of the faith. Our school is not intended to be the sole provider of your child's faith formation. They are intended to support and supplement the religious formation you are already giving your child(ren) at home and the experience of joining our parish community for the celebration of the Mass on a regular basis.

Our dedicated catechists and aides are volunteers who accept the call of the Holy Spirit to minister to the children of the parish. They generously give of their time and talent and treasure to the catechetical ministry. The children will live the Church's liturgical year as they study scripture and have faith discussions to apply their religious learning to their daily lives.

In our society today, often the Catholic family has lost its Catholic culture. The stability of the local church community depends upon the building blocks of Catholic family to fulfill its mission, to make Jesus Christ known and loved both individually and in the world.

Our School of Religion is structured after our Parish Mission statement. As members of the human family, you and your children will always share the deep internal longing to know God better. This opportunity in religious education nourishes that longing to share the Good News and is meant to foster your relationship with Jesus.

Encountering God in the practice of faith WITH your children is the surest way to find meaning in your own spiritual life, to be reminded of your own life in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

When the church of the home and the church of the parish work together, LASTING faith formation results. Together we will grow as a community of believers.

Please take the time to peruse the enclosed handbook and keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it throughout the year. This handbook has been prepared for the benefit of all who participate in our school of religion. It exists to foster the efficient operation of this school by providing pertinent information about our administration and curriculum policies. It is our hope that it will give you an understanding of our program and encourage you to actively participate. In particular, we urge your cooperation with attendance, punctuality and expected student behavior. Our standards encourage respect and consideration towards one another and their volunteer catechists and aides. In addition, please pay close attention to the arrival and dismissal procedures.

**** Please sign the Handbook Verification Form (last page of handbook) and return it to the Catechist of the youngest child in the family.**

Thank you for entrusting your children to us each week. Our goal is to provide a vibrant faith encounter in which each student recognizes and strengthens his/her own God given identity and gifts. We aim to develop their understanding that from their baptism into the Catholic faith they have been commissioned to become disciples of Jesus Christ and instill an appreciation for being active members of the Church.

God bless you!!

Kathy A. Aaronson, Director of Catholic Faith Formation

WEB SITE: stjohnfisherchurch.com

PREP Office: kaaronson@sjf71.org



St. John Fisher PREP school is open to all parish-registered members with children preschool age (3 and 4 year olds) and children from grades Kindergarten through 6th grade who attend public or non-parochial schools.

PARISH LEADERSHIP

Pastor:	Rev. Robert B. McDermott
Pastor Emeritus:	Rev. Joseph Amalfitano
Permanent Deacon:	Rev. Mr. Daniel Bingnear
Weekend Assistant:	Rev. Francis X. Devlin
Director of Faith Formation And Director of Music & Liturgy	Mrs. Kathy A. Aaronson
Assistant to Mrs. Aaronson	Mrs. Patricia Donnelly
Business Manager:	Mr. Daniel Kinnick
Parish Staff:	Mrs. Renee Divine
	Mr. John Leahy
	Mrs. Regina Robinson
	Mrs. Patricia Donnelly(Weekend)

MASS SCHEDULE

Daily:	Monday through Friday, 7:30 AM Mass
Saturday evening:	4:00 PM Mass
Sunday:	8:00, 9:30 & 11:30 AM Masses
Children's Liturgy of the Word:	During the 11:30 AM Mass

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AND PENANCE

Saturday:	3:00 PM to 3:45 PM
	Other times by appointment
	2.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Sharing the Light of Faith (The National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States) identifies four primary components of effective religious education:

- MESSAGE
- COMMUNITY
- WORSHIP
- SERVICE

Our Parish Religious Education Program strives to incorporate all four elements in its ministry to children and youth.

1. MESSAGE

The purpose of all catechesis is "*to make faith become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction*" by proclaiming Christ's message and passing on the Church's teaching. The instruction we provide in the classroom focuses on three primary areas:

- WHAT CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS BELIEVE
(the doctrines and teachings of the Church)
- HOW CATHOLICS PRAY
(the traditional prayers of the Church, especially the Our Father, and the Sacraments of the Church)
- HOW CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS LIVE
(particularly Jesus' law of love, the Beatitudes and The Ten Commandments)

2. COMMUNITY

In our classrooms, the sense of community or belonging is nurtured as the students come to know one another and work together under the guidance of caring adults. We provide occasions for teachers and aides to share time together and participate in professional in-service programs. We provide regular communication with our parents and try to involve them in as many activities as possible.

3. WORSHIP

Worship is an important part of who we are as Catholic Christians. We emphasize the importance of worship by gathering all students each week for community prayer. During this time, we expose students to a variety of worship experiences in order to help them grow in their relationship with Jesus, Mary and the saints. Our teachers include prayer time and Scripture in their weekly lessons.

4. SERVICE

Love flows from community service. People who care about one another live out the corporal works of mercy. We provide numerous opportunities for our students and families to practice Christian service throughout the year:

SCHOOL SUPPLIES(AUGUST)
PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY COLLECTION & STOCKINGS FOR SOLDIERS
(OCTOBER)
THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE (NOVEMBER)
ADVENT GIVING TREE (NOVEMBER & DECEMBER)
BREAKFAST BAGS (JANUARY)
OPERATION BABY CARE & BABY FORMULA(FEBRUARY)
OPERATION RICE BOWL (MARCH & APRIL)
OPERATION CARE(TOILET ARTICLES & CLEANING SUPPLIES) (APRIL)

All the above service projects help stock the food cupboard in Linwood for the needy families and other agencies in Delaware County and also helps Catholic Social Services in Springfield and Chester.

Let us walk in the light of the Lord. Is. 2

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

GUIDELINES

1. **RECONCILIATION** (Penance)

Students wishing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation must be at least in the 2nd grade. They are required to be in a Parish Religious Education Program/Parochial school at least one year prior to entrance into our sacramental program. Reconciliation is usually celebrated in January. The child must know an Act of Contrition and attend scheduled practices and complete the required curriculum.

2. **EUCCHARIST**

Students wishing to receive the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist must be at least in the 2nd grade and are required to be in a Parish Religion Program/Parochial school at least one year prior to entrance into our parish sacramental program. The Sacrament of Holy Eucharist is usually celebrated in early May. Students are required to participate in a retreat and attend scheduled practices and complete the required curriculum.

3. **CONFIRMATION**

Confirmation preparation (2 years) and the actual celebration of Confirmation takes place in the 7th grade. Students are required to have completed grades 3, 4, 5 and 6 religion curriculum of the Archdiocese before entrance into our parish sacramental program. Candidates for Confirmation are also expected to attend weekly Mass, special liturgical celebrations, retreats and perform at least 24 hours of Christian service each preparation year.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Parents play a very important role in forming the values and attitudes of their children, especially as those children prepare to receive the sacraments of the church. Through their words and actions, "parents nurture faith in their children by showing them the richness of lived faith" (NCD, #212). In order to help you in your responsibility as Christian parents, we offer several **PARENT MEETINGS** during the course of your child's sacramental preparation—whether that maybe for Eucharist, Reconciliation or Confirmation. The purpose of these meetings is to help you understand the sacrament more fully and to provide practical ways in which you as a Christian family can enhance the sacramental preparation of your child.

You will receive a calendar of specific dates and times for our Parent Meetings. Please make note of these dates and plan to attend. At least one parent is required to attend each of these sacramental meetings.

The reception of a sacrament is a special time in your child's life—a grace-filled experience of God present in a very special way in your son/daughter. With your help and cooperation, we hope that your child's sacramental preparation will be rewarding and joyful—a truly "graced" experience for one and all!

EVERY CHILD IS A CHILD OF GOD

As parents and catechists it is important to share these faith messages with your children to foster their sense of well-being and self-esteem:

God loves you and so do I.
God believes in you and so do I.
God will be with you in every situation.
God will help you and care for you.
God listens to you and so do I.
God cares for you and so do I.
You are unique and important to God, and
I think you are unique and important too!

UNBAPTIZED CHILDREN

Children need to have two (2) years of catechesis in preparation to receive sacraments.

CHILDREN FOR FULL COMMUNION

Children need to have two (2) years of catechesis in preparation to receive sacraments.

CHILDREN BAPTIZED IN BYZANTINE RITE

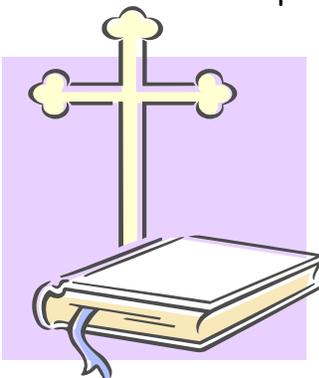
The local Byzantine See needs to grant permission for the child(ren) to be baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.

CHILDREN BAPTIZED IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

The local Orthodox See needs to grant permission for the child(ren) to be baptized in the Roman Catholic Church.

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN: During the 11:30 AM Mass on Sundays for children in Grades K to 2nd. Children are dismissed at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word and go to the Chapel. Children return to Mass at the preparation of the gifts. Children hear and discuss the readings on their level.

STUDENT OF THE MONTH: Each month, a student from each class will be recognized as a "Student of the Month". This is a student selected by his/her catechist who shows enthusiasm and puts forth effort in learning about his/her faith. This is a student who shows concern and respect for others and who is courteous and well-behaved in class. Each month the pictures of these students will be posted on our PREP bulletin board in the



Church hall.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

I. ATTENDANCE

The faith formation received in the program is consecutive and cumulative in that each session builds upon the previous session. Therefore, it is imperative that children attend their program sessions regularly.

If your child is unable to attend a session for any reason, a parent *MUST* complete the following procedures:

1. Call the PREP office (485-0581x5) to report the absence. Please be sure to leave your child's name, grade level, and the program for which they will be unable to attend.
2. If your child will be attending the session late, you must call and notify the PREP office as described in #1 above.
3. If your child fails to report to a session and no phone call is received, then the absence will be recorded as unexcused unless a doctor's note is provided upon returning to the program.
4. Any student who is absent may be given Make-Up Work upon his/her return. Please return the following week with the work completed and signed by a parent.
5. After the third unexcused absence the program director will contact the parents by phone to notify parents that the child may be required to repeat the grade level and that dismissal from the program could result should unexcused absences continue.
6. **ANY PARTICIPANT ACCUMULATING SIX UNEXCUSED ABSENCES WILL BE DISMISSED FROM THE PROGRAM.** The participant may re-enroll the following school year. Upon re-enrollment the participant will be required to repeat the previous grade level that was not completed. This proceeding may delay the reception of sacraments.
7. Extended absences due to illness require a doctor's note upon return to the program. In addition, parents should be in regular contact with their child's catechist in an effort to obtain assignments and keep their child's formation up-to-date when possible.

8. Since we encourage **PUNCTUAL** and **CONSISTENT** attendance, **PERFECT ATTENDANCE** will be given to students who have missed no classes at our closing PREP class and also **GOOD ATTENDANCE** for those students who have missed one (1) class.

II. LATENESS

Sessions begin promptly at their designated times. Therefore, any participant arriving after the designated starting time will be considered late. It is strongly recommended that children arrive at least ten minutes prior to the scheduled class time. Lateness will be noted on Progress Reports. Chronic lateness will require a conference with a parent and might interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments.

III. ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

LOCATION OF CLASSES

There are 5 classrooms in the Parish Center. Three (3) are located in the rear of the building and two (2) are located in the back of the Center's Hall. At the beginning of all sessions, the children are to report to their classroom if the Catechist has arrived. Then the class will proceed to the chapel for community prayer unless it is a big celebration like All Saints, Advent, Christmas, etc., where we will then meet in Church.

Participants should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of a program. Parents/guardians are asked to park their cars in the area blocked off by the orange cones and walk their child(ren) from the parking lot, along the sidewalks, into the Parish Center. Parents and students are to enter the Center through the main doors and wait in the lobby until their catechist has arrived. **PLEASE BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL COMING AND GOING IN THE PARKING LOT ESPECIALLY WHEN IT IS DARK. CAUTION SHOULD ALWAYS BE PRACTICED IN ORDER TO INSURE THE SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS. PLEASE DO NOT PARK IN ANY OTHER AREAS OF OUR PARKING LOT.**

At Dismissal Time, all parents are to wait in the Parish Center's Lobby until children are taken to the Parish Center's Hall. Parents are not allowed to go to the classrooms to pick-up your child(ren). Children are not allowed to leave the Center without a parent or designated adult present in the Center. N.B. No child is to accept a ride home with

another family without permission from the child's family. If you are running late, we appreciate a phone call so the child does not get upset. A teacher, aide or DRE will stay with the child until someone comes for him/her.

IV. ENROLLMENT & ATTENDANCE

The faith formation provided in our programs involves incremental learning. That is each year builds upon the learning of the previous year. Therefore, it is essential that participants remain enrolled in the program consistently from year-to-year.

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for a period of one year will be required to make-up the missed year upon re-enrollment into the program. (e.g., a student who leaves the program for a period of one year after completing level 3 and re-enrolls in the program when they are in grade 5 will be placed into the 4th level.)

Any participant who voluntarily leaves the program for two or more consecutive years must fulfill the following two requirements:

1. The participant will be placed into a grade level that is one below their current day school grade level.
2. For example, a student who leaves the program after completing level 3 and re-enrolls when he is in 6th grade.
 - The parent is required to provide home based catechesis for level 4.
 - Upon completion of level 4, the child is accepted into level 5 to continue his/her faith formation.

SACRAMENTAL RECORDS

A copy of your child's Baptismal certificate (if he/she was baptized outside of St. John Fisher Church) should be given to the Program Director when you register into the program. A child **WILL NOT** receive any sacrament unless his/her Baptismal certificate is on file in our office.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

With the amount of sessions we offer, children SHOULD NOT have to leave early for other activities. Please schedule other activities around your designated PREP time. No student will be excused from class due to baseball, football or any other athletic sport/event. Parents are urged to schedule other appointments (i.e., doctor, dentist, etc.) outside of our class time. NO PARENT CAN ENTER THE CENTER AND PICK UP YOUR CHILD EARLY FROM CLASS. You must present a letter before the session begins to the teacher who will then forward it to the DRE. The DRE will open the Center and get your child from class.

EMERGENCIES

In the event a child becomes sick or injured, all efforts will be made to contact the parents first. If we are not able to reach a parent, the person listed as the "EMERGENCY CONTACT" person on the child's registration form or permanent record card will then be called.

LEARNING CHALLENGES AND HEALTH CONCERNS

Please help us help your child by alerting the PREP Director to any special learning challenges your child has. We want to support each student in the way that is best for him or her. Also, please make sure we know of any concerns and/or medications.

SHELTER IN PLACE

We always want to make sure that the children are safe, sound and secure during their religious education classes. In the event that we should need to act in behalf of their safety, the students will be moved from their respective classrooms to a designated safe place. All catechists are given the necessary information to put this plan into effect.

V. NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

It is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the Parish with the latest, most up to date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. St. John Fisher Parish will request these documents in the beginning of the year. If either the Custody Order or Custody Agreement changes during the course of the year, it remains the responsibility of both biological parents to provide that document to the Parish immediately.

Our program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and other program related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official and latest copy of the court order.

If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

VI. DISCIPLINE

The Parish Religious Education Program offered by St. John Fisher is designed to assist parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behavior that are in accord with Catholic Church teaching. The program has **NO TOLERANCE** for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional or psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment. Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and will not be tolerated in any form.

These categories do not cover every possible situation. The parish determines what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, both in and out of the classroom, in the school community generally, and outside the school community where such improper behavior affects the school community.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS

Prohibiting Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing or Bullying

A safe, secure and respectful educational environment is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards and build appropriate relationships with others. The Saint John Fisher Religious Education School environment refuses to accept any such behaviors. Therefore, acts of harassment, hazing intimidation and bullying(including cyberbullying) are unacceptable behaviors and are prohibited in our program. The personnel cannot monitor the activities of students at all times and eliminate all incidents of bullying between students, particularly when students are not under their direct supervision. However, to the extent such conduct affects the educational environment of the religious education program and the rights and welfare of the students and is within

the control of the program in its normal operations, it is the St. John Fisher Religious Education School's intent to prevent bullying and thus, must take actions to investigate, respond, discipline and remediate those acts of bullying. Administration and the catechetical staff are to demonstrate appropriate behavior by treating others with civility and respect and being aware of and not tolerating harassment, intimidation, hazing and bullying. If incidents do occur, students should be able to report and know that inappropriate behavior will be dealt with promptly and effectively. There will be no retaliation against a victim, reporter or witness.

Policy

Bullying involves actions or words against one another for the purpose of inflicting physical or emotional harm or discomfort or damage to a person's reputation that is intimidating or threatening and affects the learning and school environments. The following describes types of bullying but is not an exhaustive list.

- a. Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling or throwing something
- b. Getting another person to hit or harm a student
- c. Teasing, name-calling, making critical remarks or threatening in person or by other means
- d. Demeaning and making another the victim of jokes
- e. Making rude and/or threatening gestures
- f. Excluding or rejecting the student
- g. Intimidating(bullying), extorting or exploiting
- h. Spreading harmful rumors or gossip

If the bully is threatening harm, a student should tell a catechist, adult volunteer and /or the Director of Religious Education immediately.

Conduct by children or parents/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the Parish is grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to, immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

In addition, in the case of threats of violence or harassment, in any form, including oral, written, or electronic, by a child against any member of the school community, the child, if suspended but not dismissed, may be required to have psychological or psychiatric clearance before returning to school.

In the event a participant engages in any of the above listed behaviors or any other inappropriate conduct, and has failed to respond to a catechist's attempt to stop or correct the behavior, the following action may be taken and at the discretion of the Pastor or Director of Religious Education:

1. **First Incident:** The student will be removed from the session and the parent or guardian will be immediately notified by phone by the program director. The program director will schedule a conference with the parents/guardians, student, and catechist to discuss the matter.
2. **Second Incident:** The student will be removed from the session and be suspended from the program for a period of one session. The parents/guardians will be immediately notified by the program director and required to pick up their child. Prior to returning to the program the program director will schedule a conference with the parents, student, and catechist to further discuss the matter.
3. **Third Incident:** The student will be removed from the session and dismissed from the program. The parents or guardians will be immediately notified by the program director and required to pick up their child. Following a conference with the program director, parents, student, and catechist, the parents will be provided with the option of having their child repeat his or her current grade level the following school year or opting to complete the current year's material by home-schooling their child. In either case, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made.

However, St. John Fisher Parish reserves the right to supersede the forgoing course of action depending on the particular circumstances of any given situation.

Also, the students are expected to

- enter and leave church buildings in an orderly fashion;
- leave their classroom in good order;
- complete all classroom assignments prior to class.



VII. PROHIBITED ITEMS

PROHIBITED ITEMS BROUGHT TO PROGRAM SESSIONS WILL BE CONFISCATED AND RETURNED TO PARENTS ONLY! Depending on the item confiscated, the proper legal authorities could be notified.

1. Prohibited items include, but are not limited to, gum, food, beverages, toys, electronic games, beepers, walk-mans, weapons, drugs, & alcohol and tobacco products.
2. It is unlawful for minors to be in the possession of alcohol or tobacco products.
3. Participants found to be in the possession of such products may be immediately suspended from the program. Depending on the item confiscated, the proper legal authorities could be notified.

VIIa. SEARCH & SEIZURE

It is the policy of the Parish Religious Education Program of St. John Fisher to respect the privacy of its participants. However, in the event that a student is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his/her possession or is believed to be a threat to himself/herself or others, the director will be notified immediately. The director will conduct a search with an adult staff member as a witness. Refusal on the part of the student to cooperate will result in the parents/guardians being contacted and asked to assist with the search. Parental refusal to cooperate will result in the student's immediate dismissal from the program.

VIIb. ELECTRONICS & TECHNOLOGY

We realize that devices such as cell phones and tablets have become a necessary tool in keeping communications open with children, especially for working parents. However, it is the policy of this program that such devices must be turned off during class time. If a student brings a cell phone or tablet to the program and it becomes visible during class time, the device will be sent to the school office and must be picked up by a parent/guardian. If the catechist decides to have a learning situation using a cell phone/tablet, then the child may use **ONLY** during that time in class.

VIII. ASSIGNMENTS

Every catechist in the program assigns take-home assignments on a weekly basis in the form of written work, activities, or study. As those primarily responsible for the faith formation of their children, it is expected that parents will supervise the completion of these assignments.

Show an interest in what is happening in class each week. Read through the lessons in your child's book. Ask your child questions. Help your child be conscientious about any assignments given to him/her.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

As a parent you are the primary education of your child in almost all areas of life, including the life of faith. Being primary educators means more than simply helping your child learn prayers. It means that you share your own faith with your child and demonstrate by your life what it means to be a person of faith, a Catholic Christian . How can you do this?

By attending Mass on weekends and Holydays as well as by receiving the sacraments and by reading the Bible and praying together as a family.

Active parent involvement in the religious development of their children is a **MUST** for any parish program. By watching you as you live, pray and interact with others, your child develops a sense of what is truly important in life. If you live your faith every day, then you will help your child grow as a person of faith who is able to respond to life as a follower of Jesus Christ.

REPORT CARDS are issued in January and May as a way of communicating to parents the progress and behavior of their child.

MAKE UP WORK, TESTING: If a student misses a test, it will be completed by the student at the next class session.

GRADING: Our grading system follows the Archdiocesan guidelines for grading. The student is evaluated in the following areas:

1. Doctrine (displays knowledge of religion and faith principles);
2. Participation (participates in class and shares ideas to help build community);
3. Effort (completes home assignments and comes to class prepared);
4. Conduct (is attentive in class and displays Christian behavior).

The codes used for grading are: O (outstanding), G (good), S (satisfactory) and N (needs improvement).

IX. SERVICE INITIATIVES

From time to time, catechists may invite participants to engage in service activities as a means of deepening the formation process. These activities will take place outside the scope of the regular catechetical sessions. In the event that a catechist elects such an option, he or she will provide the participants with a detailed list of suggested activities as well as permission and release forms.

X. WORKBOOKS

Every participant is assigned a textbook at the beginning of the year and is required to bring the workbook to **EVERY** program session. Cloth tote bags will be provided to protect the textbook and to carry important papers home to the family. Pencils and looseleaf paper are also provided for the child's use. Some catechists may ask for the child to have a notebook. If a textbook is lost, a new textbook must be purchased for \$20.00.

XI. SACRAMENTS

PARTICIPANTS EXHIBITING CHRONIC ABSENCES (3 or more unexcused absences), LATENESS, OR WHO ARE A PERSISTENT DISCIPLINE PROBLEM MAY HAVE THEIR RECEPTION OF BAPTISM, RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, AND/OR CONFIRMATION DEFERRED UNTIL THE FOLLOWING YEAR OR LATER.

Preparation for the reception of a sacrament is a time of prayerful reflection and discernment. A participant's desire to receive the sacrament is reflected in his or her positive attitude toward the preparation process. Thus proper attendance and behavior are expected.

Please see the calendar for meetings and activities concerning sacramental preparations. Reminder letters will be sent to the families involved and will be noted in the Parish Weekly Bulletin.

Archdiocesan policy requires that a child receive the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation) in the parish that their family is registered.

XII. TUITION

Tuition is a necessary and required part of the religious education school to ensure the most current and best catechetical resources.

TUITION

1 Child \$150

2 Children \$225

3 Children \$275

4 Children \$325

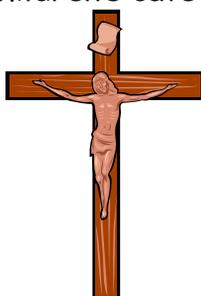
Sacrament Supplies Fees \$60

Tuition can be paid in one payment or on a payment plan—monthly or weekly - in consultation with our DRE. Tuition Angel program is also provided to help families who have financial burdens. The required paperwork can be found on our website and must be submitted in the fall at the beginning of classes. Any family experiencing economic hardship is to write a letter to our pastor concerning your financial situation.

In the event that your child is dismissed from the program due to excessive absences, lateness, problem behavior, or for any other reason for dismissal, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made to the family.

XIII. SNOW EMERGENCY & CANCELLATIONS

Our PREP calendar follows the Archdiocese of Philadelphia calendar. If the area public schools are unexpectedly closed (due to snow, sleet, emergency, etc.), any classes scheduled for that day will also be cancelled. All efforts will be made to announce any PREP closing on radio station KYW (1060 AM), Chi Channel, PREP answering machine, email and phone calls to your home by your children's catechist or aide.



XIV. COMMUNICATION

1. Calendar

Parents are provided with a yearly calendar at the beginning of the program year. *This calendar is subject to change during the course of the year.* Parents will be notified of changes. Communication will come to all families via Email which will include updated calendars and information on classes, activities and upcoming events. Monthly calendars will be provided with any changes that may occur in the schedule.

2. Parish Contact Information

Parents should feel free to contact the program director regarding any concerns or problems that may develop during the course of the year. The program director may be contacted using any of the means listed below:

Parents who wish to consult with the Program Director may do so by calling the PREP office, 610 485-0581x5, or by Email: kaaronson@sjf71.org, or stopping by the Religious Education Office.

The Parish Office is in the Parish Center. Office hours are Monday to Thursday, from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM; Friday, 8:30AM to 2:30PM; Saturday, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM and Sundays, from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. If we get parent volunteers, an adult volunteer will be in the PREP office during class sessions.

Direct communication with your child's catechist is also a necessary component of the catechetical process. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's catechist to discuss any concerns or information that will enhance the learning experience. Call the program director to make arrangements to meet or speak with your child's catechist. Parents who wish to consult with a catechist must do so outside the regular class time.

Director of Religious Education/Catechist Communication

Thorough communication between parents and the PREP school is extremely important to the achievement of our collaborative goals. Avenues of communication used to inform families of major happenings may take one of the following forms:

- Bi-monthly Emails sent to families
- Notices in the parish weekend bulletin
- Information meetings for Sacrament Preparation.

Parents should check their child's PREP bag weekly for important notices and homework assignments. Occasionally, a catechist may feel the need to contact a parent. Catechist-parent communication is encouraged to resolve troublesome issues and catechists have been encouraged to involve parents at the earliest sign of a problem. Parents are encouraged to contact the Director any time a question or concern arises.

PREP OFFICE 610 485-0581x5

XV. VOLUNTEERS

Prep is able to maintain a high level of performance because of the wonderful work of volunteer men and women who are an integral part of this program. However, to remain at a high level, our program must always seek to improve its operation and to bring in new, generous people willing to sacrifice time to further the work. YOU can help in many ways, all of which are important. Please contact the PREP office to see how your gifts and talents can be used! Thank you!

All volunteers are required to submit to a criminal record check and a child-abuse clearance. They are also required to take a "Safe Environment" training course.

FINAL NOTE

The program director reserves the right to amend this handbook. In the event of any such amendment, parents will be given prompt notification of the changes made.



