



Saint Francis of Assisi Parish
Religious Education Program/R.E.P.

2010/2011 rev.8-31-10

Family Handbook

School #: 610-272-0501

(answered between 10am-noon Sundays)

Rectory: 610-272-0402

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We would like to welcome you and your family to St. Francis of Assisi's Religious Education Program (CCD/REP). We have developed this handbook in order to assist you in answering any questions that you may have in the upcoming year. We offer religious education for grades K through 9. This program is open to all parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi. Please **register** with the Rectory office, if you have not already done so. We offer sacramental preparation

for Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

Our Parish is committed to the religious education of its children, as taught by Jesus Christ. Our goal is to **assist you**, as **your child's first and PRIMARY teachers**, to continue to nourish the Faith through instruction in Church doctrine and in the reception of the sacraments, in accordance with our Church teachings.

Religious Education is a life-long journey. Since we, as the catechists, have only a brief period of time with your children, we will need your continued support and affirmation of this life-giving message. As a parent, your modeling of the faith is the greatest of teachers. As a community of believers we look forward to assisting you and your children in this great act of salvation, with the help of the Holy Spirit: to know, love, and serve God.

This year we begin a **special Mass attendance requirement**, which helps everyone practice our faith. A supply of prayer-intention-cards for each child will be distributed by 9/26. Since the Eucharist is the "**source** and summit of the Christian life"(CCC1324), and Mass attendance is the bare minimum of the communal Christian lifestyle, we all need to attend weekly. Each child in school or REP weekly places his/her card in the labeled wooden box in the Church, so we will be keeping track of this essential expression of Catholic life. It is a matter of spiritual life-and-death for us! It will be *further outlined at the Parents' Meeting*. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

God bless you and your family,
Mrs. Kathy Pugh, Director of Religious Education
610-272-0402

pugh.katherine4@gmail.com

Mass Schedule

Saturday 5:30 p.m.

Sunday 7:00 a.m.

9:30 a.m.

12:00 p.m.

5:30 p.m.

Confession Schedule

Saturday after 8:00 a.m. Mass & between 4:00-5:00 p.m. or anytime by appointment

Information and Procedures

CCD/REP Calendar

A copy of the yearly calendar has been included in the parents' folder, given out at the Parents' meeting. Please refer to it for important dates and times. The calendar, along with many other helpful forms and information, is always accessible on our parish website at:

www.stfrancisorristown.com , by clicking the REP (CCD) button on the left.

Arrival and Dismissal

Religious Education classes are held on Sundays, September to May, from 10:30-11:45 a.m. Classes are scheduled so that families can attend the 9:30 a.m. Mass together and then the children may be dropped off for class.

Students are to **arrive by 10:30 a.m.** They may be dropped off at the main building's front entrance (Buttonwood St.) or walked in by a parent. Students are asked to wait in the hall until their catechist/teacher has arrived. No student should be left unattended in a classroom.

Students will be dismissed at **11:45 a.m.** from the main building's front doors. Parents are asked to park in the lot or in a legal space and enter the building by the front doors. Please do not double park when dropping off or picking up your child. No child will be permitted to leave the building unaccompanied by a parent/guardian, without express written permission. **A *note* needs to be given to the catechist if the child is going home with a different adult or is allowed to walk home.** This year we will have a door monitor with a list of persons authorized to pick up your child.

Attendance and Absences

All students should arrive on time. If a child has a problem with chronic lateness, the director may elect to track the minutes and count the minutes as an unexcused absence. If your child is absent, please call the rectory (610-272-0402) before 10am or the school office after 10:00 am **610-272-0501**. Please follow-up with a note to your child's catechist at the next CCD/REP class. A call will be placed to any family that has not reported their child absent by 10:45 a.m. No child is permitted more than **3** unexcused absences during the year. Any child who is unexcused more than 3 times is in danger of not being promoted to the next grade level. In the event that your child is absent, missed lessons will need to be made up. Please feel free to contact your child's catechist for further information regarding missed lessons.

Class Cancellation

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that classes be cancelled, you will

receive a phone call from your child's catechist or from the director.

Class Assignment Policy

Since each year is built upon the previous year's knowledge, a child will generally not be permitted to skip grades. Children receiving a late start or missing a portion of a year (or more) of catechesis will have their knowledge evaluated for grade-level placement.

Report Cards

Progress reports will be issued once a year and report cards will be issued twice a year. The dates of issuance are stated in the calendar. Progress reports and the first report card are to be signed and returned the following Sunday. You may request a parent/catechist conference to discuss any concerns you may have.

Report Card and test grade equivalents:

90-100% = Excellent

80-89% = Very Good

70-79% = Satisfactory

69 & Below = Unsatisfactory

Promotion to Next Grade

All students meeting the requirements set for each grade level will be promoted at the close of the yearly program, unless the DRE or pastor has determined that the child is not ready.

Non-promotion may occur if a child, who is capable of meeting the full requirements, fails to do so (achieving less than a 70% average for the year). Non-promotion may also occur if the child has more than 3 unexcused absences and has not fulfilled the class level requirements. This decision is made by the catechist, the director, and the pastor.

Homework

The purpose of home assignments is to reinforce concepts learned and to support growth in responsibility. Since our children only meet once a week, reinforcement is especially important. Homework will be assigned according to the individual catechist. Please check your child's folder weekly for assignments or notes from the catechist.

The best arrangement is for parent/guardian and child to work together on these assignments. In this way, both will experience enrichment and as a parent/guardian you will experience your child's spiritual growth.

Supplies

Students are required to bring a folder and sharpened pencil to class each week. We will provide the books and art supplies.

Discipline

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. All children are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner. Students are asked to respect the parish property, especially the property that might be in the desks or on the tables and bulletin boards of the rooms we share with the day school. If a discipline problem occurs, a parent will be contacted. Serious breaches of discipline will be brought to the attention of the pastor

and may constitute dismissal from the program.

Fire Drills and Safety Precautions

We will discuss fire drill precautions with the students to insure the safety of all students, teachers, and staff. Students are asked to follow the directions given to them by their catechist. They should leave the building in a quiet and orderly manner. If there is a true emergency that requires evacuation, students will be escorted to the grassy area next to the Church at Marshall and Buttonwood.

It has been mandated by the state of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government that every effort be made to protect children, teachers, and staff from the possibility of transmitting an infectious disease. We have disposable gloves constantly available in the REP closet. Each catechist should have on hand disposable gloves in his/her folder each week, in case of an emergency.

Release Time from Public Schools

All children who attend public schools are permitted by Pennsylvania State Law up to 32 hours of release time. This time is allowed by Act 175 of the Public School Code as amended in 1982. When release time is required for any student, a permission form will be sent home for parental signature. These forms are then submitted to the principal of your child's school. Release time is required for the sacramental programs and any event that may be deemed important for the religious education of any student. Please note that in the event your child should lose the form provided, parents have the authority to write a note requesting release time or modifying dismissal times.

Registration & Tuition

New registrations require the following:

1. The family to be registered parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi or have the permission of their pastor.
2. A copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate, as well as dates of other sacraments received. This may be acquired through the rectory of the parish where the sacraments were received.
3. A transfer letter from the program director if the child is transferring from another program.
4. If your family is registered at another parish, and is enrolled in a Sacrament Preparation class, the child must return to your home parish for the sacraments. If you wish for your child to receive sacraments from St. Francis of Assisi, an additional letter of permission must be obtained from the pastor of your home parish.

Re-registration for students presently enrolled in the program will be held in the spring of the current year. Please respect the deadline date for return on the registration form. Any family not returning the form by the established date will be charged a late fee. If a child withdraws from the program after classes have started, no refund will be issued. A registration and re-registration fee is established for children attending CCD/REP. The fee is determined by the pastor and the director to help offset the cost of the total program, which includes texts and supplies. A portion of the fee is also applied to the

cost of courses, workshops, and seminars for the catechists, as required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. So that all students are given the chance to receive a religious education, a family may contact the director in order to make financial arrangements based on one's ability to pay the tuition.

Sacrament Programs

The Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion are celebrated in 2nd grade. The Sacrament of Confirmation is administered every other year to our 5th and 6th grade students. ALL sacraments require at least 2 years of preparation (religious instruction prior to our program will be taken into consideration). There will be mandatory meetings noted on the calendar regarding important dates and events in preparation for the reception of the sacraments.

Homeschooling Policy

St. Francis of Assisi adheres to the guidelines issued by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Parents who wish to homeschool their child should contact the director to discuss these guidelines and for assistance.

CYO

Parents are advised that our CYO is open to all students who attend St. Francis of Assisi Religious Education for the entire school year. Activities are open to all children in 5th-8th grades.

Program Overview

At St. Francis of Assisi, we adhere to the Religious Education Guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. We use textbooks reviewed and approved by the Office for Catechetical Formation as well as by the USCCB. Each grade is expected to memorize prayers important to their Catholic Faith and appropriate to their grade level. The best way to memorize prayers is to say them with your child on a daily basis. Family prayer is so important because it instills in the child the understanding that prayer is special.

The Kindergarten class will provide kindergarten children with a readiness for future catechesis. Bible stories, the celebration of the seasons and special days of the Church year, and key teachings of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* will be presented to the children to meet the unique learning and faith development needs of kindergarten children.

Grade 1 will focus on the children coming to know Jesus and how to celebrate the Kingdom of God. Activities foster Catholic identity and help the child to follow Jesus every day.

Prayers to be memorized: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace before Meals, Angel of God

Grade 2 is a sacrament grade with a focus on the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. The children are called to enter into a sacramental relationship with Jesus and the Christian Community. They will explore the nature of celebration, the saving action of

Jesus, and the moral choices involved in being a good follower of Jesus.

Prayers to be memorized: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Grace before Meals, Mass Responses, Introduction to the Rosary, Angel of God

Grade 3 focuses primarily on the life of the Church. The mission and structure of the Church are presented with emphasis on the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. Saints and Christian heroes offer role models. Activities stress the universal nature of the Church as a sign of God's Kingdom.

Prayers to be memorized: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Mass Responses, Act of Contrition, Grace before and after meals, the Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, Apostles Creed

Grade 4 explores Christian morality. In this year the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are studied and learned.

Prayers to be memorized: Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, Hail Holy Queen, Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, the Rosary, Mass Responses

Grades 5 and 6 focus on an in-depth study of the sacraments and also the Creed, Scripture, Church history, and the lives of the saints. It may also be a year of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation so the student may be required to memorize the material in the study guide, complete the required service project, retreat, and saint's project which are part of the preparation program.

Prayers to be memorized: The Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, The Angelus, The Memorare

Middle School Program incorporates grades 7, 8, and 9 (during Confirmation years). The lessons will be taught to instill a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ, morality, sacraments, the Church, the Trinity, Revelation, and the Kingdom of God. The activities in this class will encourage your youth to explore, understand, and live their faith.

Blessings upon you and your family!