

## ST. JAMES PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK

This handbook is to serve as a guide for parents, guardians, catechists, and students in St. James Parish Religious Education Program (PREP).

### The Mission of St. James Parish Religious Education Program:

Faith is the foundation from which we grow. St. James Parish Religious Education Program endeavors to reach out to our students, parishioners, and community through prayer and service. In a Christocentric atmosphere, we accept the challenge to witness and to teach as Jesus did.

Our students are called to live the Gospel message and to develop an active faith life. The curriculum stresses basic Catholic values. In conjunction with the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, our mission is to be a vibrant, faith-filled educational community.

Our teachers, volunteers and staff, in accordance with directives from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, have successfully completed the Archdiocesan Child and Youth Protection training, have passed a criminal background checks and have child abuse clearances.

### Guidelines and Procedures:

#### Arrival/Dismissal

To ensure the safety of all children, please observe the following procedures when dropping off children for class. When dropping off children, please make sure that children have safely entered the building, either through walking them to the front door or by keeping them in the line of sight until entering the building. After class, please park your car and come greet your children at the door.

If for some reason a child must be dismissed early, the parent/guardian must send a note to the teacher (catechist) or principal PRIOR to leaving. A child may not be permitted to leave the building otherwise.

All doors will be locked once class has started. While they will be monitored for the duration of class, please be sure that children are on time for class.

## Attendance

Regular attendance at classes is essential for any measure of success in a Parish Religious Education Program. Weekly attendance enables children to grow in the knowledge of the Faith, to develop a sense of belonging to the parish community, and, through regular prayer to build a relationship with God.

Diocesan guidelines call for 40 hours of classroom instruction throughout the course of the academic year. Since this time is very short, we ask that students not be absent or dismissed early unless there is an extreme emergency. Parents must send a note in this event.

At the beginning of each class, attendance is taken. Rosters are then collected, and attendance is monitored.

Masses scheduled as part of the Religious Education curriculum are required, as part of the schedule of classes. Parental Sacrament Classes are required, in order for students to receive any Sacrament.

## Calendar

Students in Grades K – 6 meet on Monday afternoons, early September until mid to late May from 4:30pm – 5:45pm. Confirmation students in Grade 7 meet on Sundays, early September until Spring Confirmation from 9:30am – 10:30am in the Church meeting room. In some cases, community masses replace class. These masses are considered part of the schedule, and students are expected to attend.

## Communication with Parents

Adequate and clear communication with home is essential for the success of any education of students. Parents should feel free to e-mail catechists or the PREP Principal with any questions or concerns.

Communication with parents will be regular during the year. In some cases, students will be responsible for delivering handouts to parents.

## Curriculum

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia sets forth clear guidelines for the teaching of Religion for all grades. A summary of each year's curriculum is published in this handbook.

## Code of Conduct

Students in Saint James Parish Religious Education Program are expected, at all times, to be respectful, courteous, and honest to the faculty, staff, and fellow students.

In class, students are expected...

- To arrive to class on time, prepared for class with their homework and supplies
- To respect the property of the parish and other students
- To listen to the catechist (teacher) and follow directions
- To show respect, through words and actions, to the catechist and to students
- To not call out in class or be a distraction to other students
- To not leave their seats unless asked to do otherwise

If a student does not follow the above guidelines...

- He/she will be asked to leave the classroom and report to the office
- The catechist will send a note explaining why the student was asked to leave the classroom
- The catechist will notify the parents/guardians

If a student has been asked to leave the classroom on three separate occasions...

- The parent/guardians of the student will be contacted to set up a meeting that includes the PREP Principal, student, and the catechist.
- If the behavior of the student does not improve after the aforementioned meeting, the parents/ guardians will be notified and the student will be suspended from class for one week.
- If behavior of the student does not improve after a suspension, the parents/guardians will be notified and the students will be asked to leave the program.

## Suspension and Dismissal from the Religious Education Program

Archdiocesan policy states that immediate action shall be imposed for serious misbehavior. The Principal, catechist, parent, and student will sign a written record of suspension. A student may be automatically suspended or dismissed for:

- Verbal and non-verbal disrespect for authority, using foul language or actions
- Vandalism or marking parish property
- Absence without parent knowledge
- Leaving school or classroom without permission
- Stealing
- Smoking or vaping in the building or parish grounds
- Fighting, physically or verbally
- Carrying or using drugs or alcoholic beverages
- Carrying weapons

- Other serious offences not listed  
Emergencies

At registration, parents/guardians are asked to provide an e-mail address, home and work place phone numbers, as well as any other phone number which would be used in case of an accident or emergency. Should these contacts change during the year, please notify the Religious Education Principal.

#### Emergency Closing

If there are weather conditions (snow, ice, etc.) or an emergency that necessitates the cancellation of the Religious Education Program, the appropriate information will be e-mailed to parents/guardians. St. James is in the Cheltenham School District boundary. If Cheltenham Schools have a snow day, PREP is canceled.

#### Registration

Registration for new students and re-registration for those already in the program takes place early September. It is important to accurately fill out all forms. At the time of initial registration, the following are necessary:

- A copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate, if the Sacrament occurred at a parish other than Saint James (First year in program only)
- If registered at a parish other than St. James, a letter of permission to attend classes and or take Sacraments at St. James. Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are celebrated in the 2nd grade and Confirmation is celebrated in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.
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#### Fees

Tuition is due at registration and is as follows:

One child \$100.00  
Second child \$50.00  
Third child/all others \$40.00

Should financial assistance be needed, please contact the PREP Principal. Any such discussions will be kept completely confidential.

Archdiocesan Religion Guidelines  
Religion Curriculum for each Grade

Grade K&1:

Creation: human beings have a unique place in creation; human life is sacred.  
God the Father: the First Person of the Trinity. God the Son: Jesus Christ. God the Holy Spirit: the Third Person of the Trinity.

Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation  
The Liturgical Year  
Mary: Titles of Mary, Days in Honor of Mary

Prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Angel of God

Grade 2:

Blessed Trinity: Central Mystery of Our Faith; One God in Three Persons.  
Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation  
Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Anointing of the Sick  
Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Matrimony, Holy Orders  
The Liturgy: Liturgy of the Word, Liturgy of the Eucharist: Topics related to Liturgy;  
the Liturgical Year  
Mary: Titles of Mary; Days in Honor of Mary

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition,  
Angel of God, The Rosary, Prayers for the Liturgy, Prayers of Adoration, Contrition,  
Thanksgiving, and Supplication

Grade 3:

The trinity: Central Mystery of Our Faith; Community of Love of God the Father,  
Son and Holy Spirit.  
Sacraments: The Sacraments of Initiation; the Sacraments of Healing; the  
Sacraments of Vocation.  
The Liturgical Year  
Mary: Titles of Mary; Days on Honor of Mary

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, The  
Rosary, Apostles Creed, Prayers of the Mass, Angel of God, Stations of the Cross

#### Grade 4:

God the Father: revealed the Covenant on Mount Sinai  
Commandments: Words of God; Path of Life; Duties to God and to neighbor.  
Grace: Free help of God; Gift of the Spirit  
Sin: Original, Personal; Conscience: Formation; Examination  
The Beatitudes: The Heart of Jesus' Preaching  
Works of Mercy  
Virtue: Cardinal and Theological Virtues  
The Liturgical Year  
Mary: Apparitions; Days in Honor of Mary

Prayers: Models of Prayers; Aspirations; Our Father, Praise and Thanks,  
Eucharistic Prayers, Act of Contrition

#### Grade 5:

Sacraments: Definitions; Purpose; Rite; Elements  
Sacraments of Initiation: Definition; Purpose; Rite; Elements  
Sacraments of Healing: Definition; Purpose; Rite; Elements  
Sacraments of Vocation: Definition; Purpose; Rite; Elements  
The Liturgical Year  
Mary: Major beliefs about Mary; Days in Honor of Mary

Prayers: Understanding of vocal, mental, liturgical prayer;  
Prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, petition, contrition  
The Rosary; the Magnificat

#### Grade 6:

The Bible: Definition; Structure  
Hebrew Scriptures: Major Persons and Events ( Creation, Fall, Chosen People,  
Moses, Exodus, Covenant, Joshua, Judges, Kings, Important Queens and  
Prophets)  
Christ Fulfills the Hebrew Scriptures: Incarnation, Baptism, and Public Life;  
The Liturgical Year  
Mary: Dogmas Believed about Mary ( Immaculate Conception, Divine  
Motherhood, Virgin Birth, Assumption) Days of Honor of Mary

Prayers: Purpose of Prayer: adoration, thanksgiving, petition, contrition;  
Kinds of Prayer; Communal Prayer – Liturgical; Private, personal Sources of  
Prayer: the Word of God, the Liturgy of the Church

Grade 7:

Christian Scriptures

Jesus: Meaning of Name; Infancy Narratives; Childhood of Jesus

Public Life; Ministry, Roles of Jesus

Passion and Death of Jesus

The Resurrection

Jesus the Christ; Jesus is Lord

Liturgy and Worship: Definition; Purpose

The Liturgical Life of the Church: Sacraments; Sunday; Liturgical Year

Mary in the Gospels; Mary's Virginity; Mother of God;

Days in Honor of Mary

Prayers: Purposes of Prayer; Other forms of Prayer; The Eucharistic Prayer;

Kinds of Prayer