

*Catholic Community of Saint Peter
Religious Education Program*

Parent Student Handbook



Pastor: Rev. Bob Benko, O.F.M., Conv.

*Director of Religious Education:
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Greetings:

As the Director of Religious Education, I extend a warm welcome to you and your family at the beginning of this catechetical year. I look forward to working closely with you throughout the coming year.

This booklet is your reference for the policies and procedures of the religious education program. Keep it handy and use it as your guide to answer questions regarding the program.

Catechesis is an integral part of the mission of the Church. Christ is at the center of catechesis, and intimacy with Christ is its goal. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops teaches, "Catechesis leads people to enter the mystery of Christ, to encounter him, and to discover themselves and the meaning of their lives in him." Our catechetical journey is life-long and life-changing, and it can be deepened at both parish and home.

Let us join in prayer for each other and hope that our efforts this year will bear much fruit.

Sincerest regards,

Merrie Brambilla

Merrie Brambilla
Director of Religious Education

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL



Sunday Morning Program *Classes are held in St. Peter School*

Grades 1—5: 8:45AM— 10:15AM

Students are expected to arrive no earlier than five minutes before the beginning of class and enter St. Peter School from the parking lot through the double door (with the green awning).

DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS—Grades 1 & 2

At dismissal time parents may enter the building from the parking lot entrance under the green awning to pick up their children in the classroom.

DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS—Grades 3—5

A bell will be rung at dismissal time. Students accompanied by their catechist are to proceed to the Atlantic Avenue exit where parents are expected to meet them.

Session III: 7:00—8:30PM

MONDAY EVENING PROGRAM

Students will enter and exit St. Peter School through the lobby doors at Atlantic Avenue.

WALKER PERMISSION SLIP

Only students whose parents have signed and returned a **Walker Permission** slip may walk home. This slip must be signed and submitted to the Religious Education Office at the beginning of each catechetical year.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The following pages outline the Religious Education Program policies and procedures. Our hope is to help parents and children become familiar with the guidelines in place to make the program run smoothly.

SAFETY AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Recent experiences of tragedies in our society and schools nationwide have led us to form policies and guidelines to insure the safety of our children, youth and adults who participate in the religious education program.

SECURE BUILDING

St. Peter School maintains a security camera system. In order to provide a safe environment for the children access to the school building is limited during class time. Please be aware that the building is locked during class time and reopened at dismissal. When classes are in session ***NO ONE*** is permitted to walk through the building.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

All Parish Religious Education Programs are responsible to implement the RCL Family Life Program. The dates of the lessons are included on the teaching schedule.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is essential that attendance in the program is regular and punctual. In addition to the work accomplished in the textbook, the children participate in a variety of learning activities during class time. It is important that the students are part of the community and participate in all of the prayer experiences and instruction.

Attendance will be taken at every class, and grade level liturgy.

The Diocese of Trenton requires a minimum of 33 hours of instruction per year. Absences require a call to the Religious Education Office prior to the beginning of class. When a student is absent it is the parent's responsibility to assume the role of the Catechist and see that any missed work due to absence is made up. In order to assist with the completion of the work, a grade level teaching schedule is distributed in the Fall. The completed work will be submitted to the Religious Education Office, who will review the materials and return the corrected book to the student.

Excessive absences (more than 3 classes) will be evaluated on an individual basis and may include an evaluation of the material. Please contact the Religious Education Office, if you are aware of family obligations or other activities that will conflict with your child's regular attendance in the program.

LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DISMISSAL

Any child arriving late is required to report to the Teacher Lounge on the first floor and sign in before reporting to class. Late arrivals are discouraged as they are disruptive to the class.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Parents are to send in a note requesting early dismissal. Should you wish your child to leave early you must come into the building, report to the Teacher Lounge, and sign your child out. Students will be dismissed only to adults who are indicated on registration forms. Any changes in dismissal must be provided in writing by the parent. An Office Aide will have your child meet you in the Teacher Lounge. *No students will be dismissed to the parking lot.*

DISCIPLINE

Most of the children in the program are eager and interested to learn about their faith. At times some children are unable to control their behavior, thereby disrupting the class. Any child disrupting the class will be removed from the classroom and instructed to call home. You will be asked to pick him/her up immediately.

All children are expected to come to class willing and eager to learn. Chronic discipline problems will require a meeting with the Catechist, child, parent and Director of Religious Education. If the situation cannot be resolved through this meeting and the child cannot control his/her behavior, the child may be permanently removed from the class.

DRESS

Students are expected to dress neatly and modestly. Low cut exposed midriffs, pajama bottoms, slippers, extremely short skirts or shorts are not appropriate. The dress code for your particular public school should be followed for religious education classes. For safety reasons sneakers with wheels and cleats should not be worn to class.



Electronics/ Food/Snack Policy

Cell phones, IPODS and hand held video games are not permitted in class.

*Candy, food and gum should **not** be brought into the building by students.*

REGISTRATION AND SACRAMENT FEES

Registration takes place in the Spring. Each family is required to re-register yearly. For current students registration was held from March—August 2017. The tuition fee helps to defray some of the cost of the program which includes textbooks, paper, pencils, glue, crayons and technology.

SACRAMENT FEE

In addition to the tuition fee there is a fee for students preparing to receive the Sacraments of First Eucharist and Confirmation. This fee covers in part the cost of additional materials needed to prepare for the reception of the Sacrament.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

To enroll in the program, the family *must* be registered members of St. Peter Parish.

NEW STUDENTS

Any student entering the program for the first time is required to present a copy of his/her baptismal certificate at the time of registration.

If your child received First Reconciliation and First Eucharist at another Parish, please supply the Religious Education Office with a **transfer form** from your former parish.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

On the religious education registration form parents are requested to note any special needs that might affect the performance of children in class.

TEXTBOOKS

Each student is expected to come to class prepared and ready to participate with his/her textbook (and bible for students in grades 6, 7, 8). If the textbook or bible is lost or misplaced, a replacement will be provided and parents will be billed \$20.00 for the new book.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The program is designed to assist parents in fulfilling their responsibilities as the primary religious educators of their children. This goal can be accomplished by the following:

- Your child's attendance at class.
- Parents becoming familiar with the lessons.
- Reading the material which is sent home and participation in the activities.
- Making certain that homework is completed and returned.
- Assisting with any special class projects.
- Worshiping with your child at weekly Sunday Mass.
- Participation at Parent Meetings.
- Participation at Grade Level Gatherings and Liturgies.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

We acknowledge that parents are the first and foremost catechists of their children and we welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with you, to fulfill our mission, to bring the good news of Jesus to our children. During the year, each Catechist will complete a Parent/Teacher Communication Form evaluating the progress of the students in their class. The completed forms will be mailed to parents to keep them abreast of the progress of their children in the program.

VOLUNTEERS

Your help and assistance is essential to the successful operation of the religious education program. Please consider how you may participate as a Hall Monitor, Office Aide, Substitute Teacher, First Aid volunteer. Help is also needed on the Hospitality Committee and with Arts and Crafts projects. **Religion is more "caught than taught" and what you do with your time speak much louder than what you say.** Show your children the importance of faith formation in your family by volunteering in the program.

CATECHISTS

The parish community is grateful to all who share their faith, time and talent by volunteering in the program. All adult volunteers who work with the children are required by the Diocese of Trenton to participate in the fingerprinting process, submit to a criminal background check and attend VIRTUS Training.

CURRICULUM

Classes follow grade appropriate textbook and Diocesan Guidelines for the Elementary Religion Curriculum.

The children explore each lesson through a series of activities, discussion, storytelling, and prayer experiences. With great affirmation, the children recognize that God made everything, including themselves, out of love and they realize that God's love gives them a caring friend and teacher in Jesus.

GRADES 1—6

Students use the We Believe with Project Disciple religious education series published by William H. Sadlier. In class your children will be taught in a more structured way about doctrine, Scripture and the liturgical year. Parents are invited and expected to partner with the Catechist in the faith formation of the children.

GRADE LEVEL FAMILY LITURGY

All students Grades 1- 6 are expected to prepare and participate with a parent in one Grade Level Family Liturgy for their grade level.

In order to assist you with the religious education of your children, please visit the www.Webelieveweb.com website.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Parents of children in grades 3—6 are expected to bring their children to the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once during the year. The Advent Reconciliation service will be on **12/13/17** and the Lenten service will be on **3/21/2018**. Reconciliation is also offered on Saturdays from 4PM to 4:45PM.

The reception of the sacraments of **First Reconciliation and First Communion** is a two year process and the sacraments are typically celebrated for the first time in Grade 2. However, the celebration may be held at any grade level following the completion of two years of preparation. In addition to class instruction, preparation for the reception of the sacraments includes family attendance at weekly mass, family participation in an enrollment liturgy, instructional mass, and retreat.

JUNIOR HIGH PROGRAM

GRADE 7

The seventh grade program is titled Decision Point and published by www.DynamicCatholic.com. The goal of the program is to not only prepare young Catholics for the Sacrament of Confirmation in a dynamic way but also to teach and inspire them to respond and cooperate with God's grace in all the circumstances of their daily lives.

The seventh grade also marks the initial year of a two-year process toward the immediate preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

SERVICE PROJECTS—Grade 8

In grade 8 students are expected to bear witness to the gospel message by designing and carrying out a service project. *The service project should be an expression of the Spiritual/Corporal Works of Mercy and should not be a project already engaged in by the candidate.* Each candidate for Confirmation is expected to complete 10-12 hours of service to the community during the summer prior to eighth grade. It is our hope that this experience will be the beginning of a lifelong effort to witness to the gospel message.



GRADE 8

In Grade 8 the teens continue their immediate preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The basics of our Catholic Faith are reviewed through a study of the Church, the Kingdom of God and the Sacrament of Confirmation. In addition to class instruction, immediate preparation includes weekly attendance at mass and participation in a special Sunday Enrollment Liturgy, Retreat, and an interview with a member of the Parish Community, as well as sharing faith with their sponsors and other activities.

Confirmation is typically celebrated during the spring of the 8th grade year. Preparation should continue without interruption from grade 1 through grade 7, if it does not the Confirmation process may be delayed. The date for the celebration of Confirmation is determined by the Office of the Bishop of Trenton. As soon as the parish is notified of the date of the celebration, all candidates will be notified.

Community Service Project

Opportunities for service will be presented throughout the year. Service projects are designed so that students may bear witness to the Gospel message.

The students in grades 1—8 will be asked to bring into class a non-perishable food item, to donate to St. Gregory's Pantry. More information on this project will follow. If you are interested in assisting with this project, call the Religious Education Office at 732-899-4839.

MISSION STATEMENT

We come together to share the message of Jesus,
to work together to foster Christian Community,
to lead children to worship and prayer
and to motivate them to serve others.

We acknowledge that parents
are the first and foremost catechists
of their children.

We welcome the opportunity
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to fulfill our mission.



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406 Forman Avenue
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Phone: 732/899-4839

Fax: 732/899-6841

E-mail address: religioused@saintpeteronline.org

Parish Website: www.saintpeteronline.org

Office Staff: Mrs. Nancy McCrink &
Mrs. Denise Jurasek

***Policy and procedure regarding cancellation of class
due to inclement Weather:***

The Honeywell Instant Alert System

will be used to contact parents regarding cancellation of classes. To register for your preferred method of communication go to the website at:

<https://instantalert.honeywell.com>.