

Saint James Parish Religious Education Handbook 2011 - 2012



Religious Education Office
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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 Saint James Parish Religious Education Program:

Faith is the foundation from which we grow. Saint 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. Our curriculum stresses academic excellence based on Catholic values. In conjunction with the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, our mission is to be a vibrant, faith-filled, educational community.

Saint James Parish Religious Education Staff

Rev. Edward Windhaus	Pastor	frwindhaus@stjamesparish.net
Mrs. Jeanna Lane	PREP Principal	jlane@stjamesparish.net
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In accordance with directives from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, all Catechists and volunteers have successfully completed the Archdiocesan Safe Space 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 catechist 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 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 just 30 hours per 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 monitored in the Religious Education database.

An absence will be classified as **excused** if it is the result of a death or illness in the immediately family or the result of a mandatory school function that is posted on the school calendar. Any other absence is considered **unexcused**.

Communication with Parents

Adequate and clear communication with home is essential for the success of any education of students. Parents should feel free to email 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 key handouts to parents from the catechists or PREP

Principal. Information will be communicated via the parish **Weekly Bulletin** and **Saint James Parish Website**, www.stjamesparish.net by clicking on the "Religious Education" button found on the left side of the page. Parents are encouraged to provide email addresses at the time of registration for direct communication.

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 later in this handbook. Textbooks selected are chosen to help reach the goals set forth by the published curricula.

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

If a student does follow the above guidelines...

- He/she will be asked to leave the classroom and report to the PREP Principal
- The catechist will send a note to the Principal 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 parents/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 student will be asked to leave the program.

Students are not permitted to have wireless phones, electronic devices, games, or toys in the classroom. Such items will be sent to the Religious Education Office and the parents will be notified should the child bring them to class. Telephone access will always be granted to their parents before and after class or in the case of an emergency in the Religious Education office.

Suspension and Dismissal from the Religious Education Program

Archdiocesan policy states that immediate action shall be imposed for serious misbehavior. A student may be automatically suspended or dismissed for:

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

The PREP Principal, catechist, parent, and student will sign a written record of suspension.

Dual Parenting Reporting

In cases where this applies, the names and addresses of both parents should be given at registration time. On file, the parish should have custodial information indicating to which parent the child should be rereleased after class. Unless otherwise instructed, information commonly made available to parents of any student in attendance will be made to both parents.

Emergencies

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

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 immediately posted to the parish website at www.stjamesparish.net. An email will be sent to all parents who provided email contact information. Additionally, local media outlets will be notified. If Cheltenham or Abington School Districts are closed, Saint James PREP will also be closed.

Fees

The Religious Education program fees for the 2011 - 2012 year are due at the time of registration. The fees are \$100.00 for one child, \$55.00 for the second child, and \$40.00 for every child thereafter. These fees help cover expenses such as: upkeep of facilities including utilities, student textbooks and catechist manuals, basic supplies, gifts for the students and catechists, postage, copy paper, photocopying, and catechist in-services.

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

Home Schooling

The Archdiocesan guidelines allows for home schooling be within the jurisdiction of the Pastor. The PREP Principal facilitates this effort. Please contact the PREP Principal if there is a decision to home school any child in Religious Education. Parents of students in grades two through seven are strongly encouraged to send their children to classes, due to the concentrated instruction and preparation for the reception of the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

Homework

Homework in the content area of Religion is encouraged to help a student gain a better knowledge and understanding of his/her faith. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in helping his/her child grow in faith by ensuring that homework is completed. Many times, family activities will be sent home with the student. Please ask your child regularly about such activities.

Prayer Services

Special prayer services are planned throughout the calendar year. Please note these dates and times on the annual calendar. Opening and closing prayer services are scheduled in which all students are report directly to the Church.

Masses in which ALL students in the program participate include the Thanksgiving Mass, held the Monday before Thanksgiving, and the May Procession, held the second Monday of May.

Report Cards

Report Cards are distributed twice throughout the year. The report card will be sent home to the parents/guardians on these designated class meetings, as indicated on the PREP calendar. While the report card does not contain a "grade", it will provide feedback from the catechist to parents. Parents/guardians are encouraged to request an appointment to meet with the catechist with any issue the student may be having.

Registration

Registration for new students and re-registration for those already in the program takes place in the Spring during the last month of class. It is important to accurately fill out all forms and return them as soon as possible. This is important for recruitment of catechists and to order the appropriate materials for the following year.

At the time of initial registration, the following are necessary:

- A copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate
- The fee for the year

Sacramental Preparation

Sacraments are intended to strengthen a child's bond with the Mystical Body of Saint James Parish. A child is expected to attend a minimum of two consecutive years of formal Religious Education and actively participate in Saint James Parish in order to begin formal preparation for any Sacrament. Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are celebrated in the second year of Religious Education. Confirmation is celebrated during the sixth or seventh year of Religious Education.

Parents are expected to attend sacramental preparation meetings or events as scheduled.

Service Learning

Grade 8 Religious Education will take the form of service learning. The curriculum in Grade 8 emphasizes moral formation as well as social justice education. Grade 8 students will learn in a hands-on way how the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

apply in everyday life. The Catholic Social Teaching of the preferential option for the poor, respect for all life will be stressed through preparation of meals, social outreach to the needy in the community, and by serving in local food pantries.

Special Needs

If your child has any special needs, please notify the PREP Principal by indicating on the registration form any information that will help us help your child. Every effort will be made to include your child and accommodate any individual needs.

**Archdiocesan Religion Guidelines
Religion Curriculum for each Grade**

Grade 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 Christian Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
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 Myster 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 in 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 Mt. 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; the Our Father, Praise and Thanks, Eucharistic Prayers, Act of Contrition

Grade 5: Sacraments: Definitions; Purpose
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, 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 in Honor of Mary

Prayers:

Purposes of Prayer: adoration, thanksgiving, petition, contrition;

Grade 7:

Kinds of Prayer; Communal prayer - Liturgical; Private, personal
Sources of Prayer: the Word of God, the Liturgy of the Church
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

Grade 8:

The Church: Meaning
Concepts of Church: People of God; Body of Christ
Temple of the Holy Spirit
Marks: One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic
Development of the Church in History
Liturgy
Sacraments and Sacramentals
The Liturgical year
Life in Christ: The Human Vocation
The Dignity of the Human Person; Human Freedom
Human Conscience: the Virtues, Sin; Mercy
God's Salvation: Law, Grace; Christian holiness; The Ten Commandments
Christian Prayer: Prayer of Jesus; Prayer of Mary
Mary: Titles of Mary (Mother of God, Immaculate Conception)

Prayers:

Definition; Kinds; Purposes; the Seven Petitions of Our Father; Other
forms
