



Office of Religious Education
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To Our Religious Education Teachers:

You are here because of your gift of faith and your desire to share that gift with your faith community. It takes a special person to be able to celebrate and articulate the love and relationship she/he feels with God. You are that person. You have been called to this ministry because God has chosen you and you have answered his call.

We, as a parish, are very grateful for your heart-felt commitment to the youngest in our community. By participating in this ministry you not only build and strengthen the faith life of our parish, you also participate in the building of the Kingdom of God. It is an honor and a labor – that's what service to God is all about. And we thank you each and every day!

This handbook will provide you with practical information about the program, the grade level themes, and prayers to be teaching at each grade level.

Most importantly, remember that we are here to give you all the support and guidance that you may need. If you have any questions or concerns, our door is always open.

The Religious Education Office
Nancy Lucash, DRE
Betty Malkiewicz
Jean Joyce

CATECHIST HANDBOOK
SAINT JAMES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
2009-2010

ARRIVAL/SUBSTITUTE/CHANGE OF CLASS TIME OR CANCELLATION

Catechists are requested to arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the beginning of class. They are encouraged to be punctual in dismissing the students. Catechists will keep the children in their classroom until each student has been signed-out. Catechists will arrange for a substitute [either personally or] by contacting the Religious Education Office preferably in advance of class.

While in the building, Catechists are required to wear an ID lanyard issued by the Diocese. These are kept in the Rel. Ed. Office.

ATTENDANCE RECORD

In accordance with the Diocesan Policy, each Religious Education Program must maintain formal records of attendance. The attendance/sign-out sheets provided by the office are to be completed and turned in each week. When a student is absent more than 2 consecutive weeks, kindly contact the home and notify the office.

CARE OF PROPERTY

Catechists are encouraged to remind the students of their responsibility to care for the classrooms, textbooks, and other education materials.

We all strive to maintain common courtesies of sharing a space, therefore windows need to be closed, no foods should be left in the room and papers need to be picked up from the floor. Notify the office of any breakage.

CATECHIST MATERIALS

These materials are available for each catechist / class

Teacher Manual, CD's & Player

Student Textbooks

Catechist Handbook (*available online*)

School Calendar / Special Level Activities

Curriculum Outline

Catechist List and Class List of Addresses and Phone Numbers

Fire Drill Procedures / Housekeeping Chores

CLASS CANCELLATION

For inclement weather, the Religious Education classes follow the Hopewell Twp/Lawrenceville Public School schedule. Radio stations 1350AM WHWH and 97.5 WPST, as well as the St. James Website: www.stjames-nj.org provide closing information.

CLASS/DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Catechists and students each have expectations about class and perhaps different experiences regarding discipline. Respect for all is a priority, therefore classroom rules need to be established. When students are repeatedly causing a disturbance, are defiant or destructive, they need to be removed from the situation. When this occurs, please send him/her to the Office accompanied by another student.

EFFECTIVE CATECHISTS

Effective Catechists have these qualities in common:

- a desire to grow in and share our faith
- an awareness of God's grace and the desire to respond to that grace
- a commitment to the Church's liturgical and sacramental life and moral teachings
- a strength of character built on patience, responsibility, confidence and creativity
- a generosity of spirit, respect for diversity, and a habit of hospitality and inclusion

We ground our efforts as Catechists in these fundamentals:

- a basic understanding of Catholic teaching, Scripture, and Catholic tradition
- honest and caring relationships with children
- an ability to plan, organize, and work well with others
- a familiarity with basic teaching skills

IMPORTANT "VIRTUS" TRAINING

As you know, the Diocese of Trenton requires that anyone who interacts with our children MUST attend Virtus Awareness Training. This includes fingerprinting and background checks.

END OF THE YEAR PROCEDURES

After the last class Catechists are required to return teachers' manual, unused student textbooks, attendance sheets that have not been returned yet, AV and resource materials.

FIRE DRILL

Fire Drill procedures for all students must be practiced at least **twice** a year.

FIRST AID KIT

Is available in the Rel. Ed. Office

OFFICE HOURS

The Religious Education Office is located in the Family Center. The Religious Education Office hours are 9:30AM to 4:30PM Monday through Thursday, and during scheduled class times. As a convenience, the Religious Education office has an answering machine for your messages.

OFFICE RESOURCES

Video Materials/Reference Books/Music Recordings may be borrowed from the Religious Education Office and the Resource Room (Library)

VCR's, DVD & CD players are available for your convenience at the Family Center. Please give notice to the office in advance.

PRAYER

A reminder of the importance of including Prayer during each class session. See your Catechist Book for opening and closing prayers suggestions.

PRAYERS/PRACTICES/BELIEFS FOR GRADE LEVELS

Kindergarten	Sign of the Cross Our Father (introduction)
Grade 1	Sign of the Cross The Lord's Prayer Hail Mary Glory Be To the Father Prayer Before Meals Morning Prayer / Evening Prayer
Grade 2	Same as Grade 1, and Act of Contrition
Grade 3	Same as Grade 2, and The Apostles Creed / Baptismal Promises
Grade 4	Same as Grade 3, and Ten Commandments Act of Faith, Act of Hope, Act of Love Praying the Rosary
Grade 5	Same as Grade 4, and The Seven Sacraments The Nicene Creed
Grade 6	Same as Grade 5, and Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
Grades 7 & 8	Review all of the levels Beatitudes Precepts of the Church

Religious Education Program

The Religious Education Program at St. James uses "Finding God" series from Loyola Press for **Grades 1 and 3-8** as the basis of our Curriculum.

Each grade level of "Finding God" focuses on a particular Catholic theme and relates it to the typical experiences and questions of children at that particular grade level. The 'Finding God' program offers background and preparation in Church Teaching, Scripture and Tradition, and prayerful reflection.

Students in **Grade 2** uses "This Is Our Faith" series from Silver Burdett-Ginn. Curriculum preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion.

The **Kindergarten** curriculum focuses on God as a loving God, and introduces the children to the family of the Church and its special celebrations.

The Grade level themes are as follows:

Kindergarten - The Lord Is My Shepherd

Grade One – God Loves Us, Jesus Loves Us. All are welcome

Grade Two – Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation

Grade Three – God wants us to know Him. The Father sends Jesus

Grade Four – All Seven Sacraments / The Ten Commandments

Grade Five – Eucharist / Liturgy / Moral Life

Grade Six – The Bible / Making Good Choices / Mission of the Church

Grade Seven – Our Response to God’s Gifts / Confirmation Preparation

Grade Eight – “Confirmation” – Knowing & understanding the meaning of Confirmation

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Grade 2 Catechists prepare students for the sacraments of First Penance and First Holy Communion.

Grades 7 & 8 Catechists prepare students for the sacrament of Confirmation (November of 8th Grade)

All other grade Catechists prepare students for a Penance Service (except for Grades K and 1) and celebration of a Class Mass.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Catechists will be alerted to students with special needs, which have been provided on the registration form by the parent/guardian. Catechists are advised of its confidential nature.

SUPERVISION

Catechists/Adults are required to supervise the students **at all times** whenever they are in the building. If a student must use the bathroom or needs a drink of water, have another student accompany them. In the event of an emergency, follow proper procedures include contacting the office and notifying the family. Children **may not** leave the building without a parent or guardian with them.

NOTE: Cell Phones are only allowed to be used in the Rel. Ed. Office.

SUPPLIES

Catechists will notify the office for special class needs. Standard supplies which are available from either closet. They include:

- construction paper (if you need a lot of a particular color – please let us know at least one week in advance)
- scissors
- crayons
- glue (stick and liquid form)
- staplers
- felt markers
- stickers
- pencils
- chalk and erasers
- masking tape
- Each Catechist will also have access to a CD player

Thank you for offering your time & sharing your faith with our children. We are here for you. If you have any questions, please see Nancy, Betty, or Jean in the Rel. Ed. Office or call (609) 737-2717.