

## *Religious Education Handbook*

Welcome to St. Pius X religious education program. The information within this handbook is designed to help parents and guardians to be informed participants in their child's faith formation process. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. Our job is to use the tools and resources that we have available to us and help that educating process along. In order to do that effectively, caregivers need to be aware as to what we expect from participants in our program and the steps we have taken to ensure that children receive the most comprehensive, pleasant and safe education experience possible.

Please take the time to become aware of all the information included in this handbook and website. We look forward to partnering with you in helping your child develop and maintain a loving relationship with Christ.



## CLASS SCHEDULES

Kindergarten: (Optional and If Available)  
Wednesday 5:30-6:30 p.m.

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grades:  
Tuesday 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesday 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Grades:  
Tuesday 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.  
Wednesday 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Classes (Limited Schedule As Announced)  
Monday 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. (True Love Waits...alternate Mondays)  
Monday 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (Faith Formation...weekly)

Special Sacrament (catch-up program):  
Year 1: Tuesdays 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Year 2: Wednesdays 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Special Education (If Available)  
Schedule varies yearly depending on availability of instructor

***Weather Related Closings—If the public schools cancel classes due to bad weather, our classes are also canceled even if the weather clears during the day. If the weather should become bad during the day, catechists will make every attempt to contact their students; however, parents should listen to WOBF (92.7 FM) in the event that their child's catechist is unable to make a phone call. Parents may also check this website or call the Religious Education Office (609) 693-0368 and listen for an outgoing message.***



### *Teacher's of The Word....The Catechist*

We are very blessed to have the involvement of so many dedicated men and women who volunteer to be teachers (catechists) and classroom aides. Their service to our program is deeply appreciated, and we encourage parents to meet their child's catechist at the start of the school year.

Our catechists are carefully screened and trained in an attempt to ensure the safety and best learning experience for our students. These measures include:



All catechists and aides complete an application prior to being accepted as teachers in our program. They are required to be active parishioners and are required to provide both personal and professional references.



All volunteers who participate in any children's ministry in the Church are required to be fingerprinted and have a federal background check done. These child protective measures are monitored by the Office of Child Protection at the Trenton Diocesan Center.



All volunteers involved in children's ministry are required to attend a 3 hour VIRTUS awareness training session which deals with the steps we can all take to prevent sexual abuse of children. Compliance of this requirement is carefully monitored on both a parish and diocesan level.



Our catechists and aides are offered catechist certification. This involves up to 52 hours of training and educational opportunities that cover a range of liturgical topics. Certificates are awarded upon completion of each level of certification.



## **RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES**

1. Students should take care of bathroom needs prior to the start of classes.
2. Students are responsible for bringing the following to class each week:
  - A. A pencil
  - B. A pocket folder
  - C. A spiral notebook
3. Students should report to their classrooms upon entering the building. If the teacher is not present, the student is to wait in the hallway outside his/her classroom. No one is to enter an unsupervised classroom.
4. Students and parents are responsible for familiarizing themselves with our Behavior and Attendance policies .
5. Students and teachers are asked to make sure that all classrooms are put in order before leaving class. Desks should be aligned properly. Floors should be clear of any debris.
6. For safety reasons, students will only be released to parents or other legal guardians unless written authorization is provided to the catechist. If you want your child dismissed to an older sibling or a carpooling parent, please provide us with written permission stating your request. We will not release students to the parking lot regardless of grade level. PLEASE use caution when driving in the parking lot.
7. Students arriving late should report to the office for a late slip before going to their class.
8. Parents wishing to pick up their child early from class **must** report to the office BEFORE going to the classroom for their child. We will call the classroom and ask to have the child sent to the office for dismissal.
9. Students should dress appropriately for class.

***Thank you for your cooperation in adhering to these rules and regulations which help our program to run smoothly and ensure the safety of all of our students and catechists.***



## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BEHAVIOR POLICY**

It is the policy of the Religious Education Department to enforce a code of conduct that ensures a pleasant learning experience for all children and a productive teaching experience for all catechists.

--All catechists are to be treated with respect. It is the job of each student to be attentive in class and to avoid disruptive behavior. Failure to demonstrate appropriate behavior will result in the following:

In one class period:

First Offense—A verbal warning will be given.

Second Offense—A “time out” lasting at least 10 minutes will be given. The student may be asked to separate himself/herself in the classroom or may be sent to the R.E. office. Unless otherwise instructed, the office will return the student to his/her class within a 10-15 minute time frame.

Third Offense—Student will be removed from class. Parent/guardian will be notified, and the student will be sent home. Student will not receive credit for attendance for that evening.

--If disruptive behavior continues, the R.E. Coordinator will confer with parents and may recommend a student/parent conference with the Pastor or Deacon to determine whether the student should continue his/her religious education for the remainder of the school year. If a student is discharged from the program due to behavioral issues, the student must repeat the grade. No refund of tuition will be granted.

--The Coordinator may also find it necessary to contact a parent/guardian at any time if a student exhibits defiant or uncooperative behavior. In addition, a catechist may contact parents of their students if they feel that a conversation regarding the student’s behavior is warranted.

Disruptive/uncooperative behavior includes the following: Persistent talking during class time when the catechist has requested quiet, discourteous attitude toward catechists or other students, destruction of materials or property, unwillingness to cooperate with the catechist's instructions, disregard for classroom rules.

Submitted by:

Patricia Colando (Coordinator of Religious Education)

Approved by:

Reverend Richard Basznianin (Pastor)



## Attendance Policy

Our program is designed to run over the course of 28 weeks each school year and we expect that children will make every effort to be present for class in order to get the most out of their religious education learning experience. For that reason, we will accept up to 5 absences for the school year. Once a student exceeds that number of absences, a notice will go home to parents to inform them of their child's excessive absenteeism and instructions on how to avoid an incomplete status for the year.

Typically, we do not count sick absences as part of the "5" because it is understood that children often get ill in school and these absences are difficult to control. If your child is absent from R.E. due to illness, parents should send a note in with their child the following week. If it is determined that a student has excessive "sick" absences, parents will be contacted by the coordinator of the program to discuss the options available in order to successfully complete the year.

We do not require a doctor's note for each individual sick absence however if absences are deemed to be excessive due to illness, a doctor's verification may be requested.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT



It is God's plan that parents take an active role in their child's religious education. The following are some specific ways which may help parents remain the primary and principal educators of their children.



Attend Mass regularly on Sundays as a family. This is the one most important thing you can do to form a strong and lasting relationship between your child and God. Parents are most effective when they set good examples. If **faith** is important to you, your child will embrace his/her **faith** as well.



Ask your child what he/she is being taught in Religious Education and don't take "nothing" or "not much" as an answer. Our teachers follow a teaching guide, and specific teaching goals are set for every grade level.



Pick up a Religious Education Newsletter and read the information provided in it. The newsletter has proven to be one of the most effective ways to keep parents informed about Religious Education and Church events and schedules. A newsletter, updating parents on each month's events, is available from September through April.



Read the policies and procedures of the Religious Education Program.



Meet your child's catechist either before or after class. Parents should know who is teaching their child, and teachers appreciate your interest. All our catechists are carefully screened prior to being assigned a position in our program. These volunteers must agree to the following before they are accepted as a catechist:

- Formal criminal background check
- Fingerprint screening
- Training in VIRTUS (child sexual abuse prevention)



Consider being a parent volunteer in the Religious Education Program or in Church ministry. The weekend bulletin lists all lay ministries in the parish and the contact person. Your service is always appreciated.



## Tuition and Fees

Tuition is the responsibility of the parents of our students and is due when re-registration takes place, usually beginning in April for the following school year. Families are determined to be either “active” or “inactive” parishioners based on their own participation in the Church community.

Our regular tuition is \$130.00 per child, which reduces to \$65.00 with the third child in a family. However, if it is determined that a family is “active”, a 50% discount is given to that family towards the tuition.

Please see below for an explanation of an active vs. inactive status and the corresponding tuition schedule.

To be considered an active parishioner:

1. Your family must be registered in the parish.
2. Your family must attend Mass regularly as directed by Catholic Doctrine.
3. Financial support of the church to the best of the family’s ability  
Financial support should be made by using envelopes when attending Mass. Due to the size of our parish, envelopes are the only way to accurately be able to document a family’s participation in the parish. If you prefer not to use envelopes at all, the only way to document your contribution would be for that contribution to be written from a personal checking account.

We ask our parents to understand that it is only by sharing the responsibility for the expenses of the Church equally that fairness is achieved. If you use your envelopes at Mass, we feel that you are already contributing to the support of the Church and, therefore are entitled to a tuition discount. Families must use their envelopes throughout the calendar year in order to maintain an “active” status.

~ Fees ~

	<u>Discounted</u>	<u>Regular</u>
Regular registration (grades 1-7)	\$65.00	\$130.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> child or more	n/c	\$65.00

Late Registration	+ \$10.00	+ \$10.00
Home study (upon Director's approval)	\$100.00	\$100.00
Book replacement	\$15.00	\$15.00

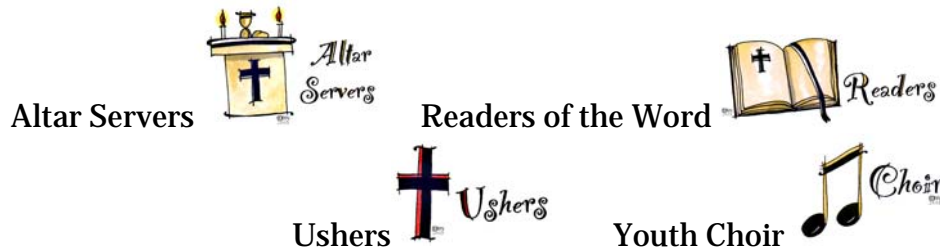
As always, special consideration will be made for families who are suffering financial hardships. A lack of funds should never prevent a child from attending our Religious Education Program. However, Mass attendance is still required and expected. Please contact us with questions or concerns.



Miscellaneous

Children's Envelopes – Each year in the fall, we give each child a box of his/her own envelopes to use when they attend Mass. Our hope is that children will learn at even a young age, that sacrifices come in many shapes and sizes. Each child's envelope has a place on it where a child can document what their sacrifice for Jesus will be that particular week. This sacrifice can take the form of a prayer or special intention for a loved one, a good deed that was done for Jesus, or a small monetary sacrifice from the child. The point behind the use of these envelopes is that children learn that all of us have something to offer in an effort to carry out Christ's mission on earth. Children's envelopes are numbered and we expect them to be used weekly. This process also allows us the opportunity to verify that our students are attending Mass, a curriculum requirement.

Children's Ministry Opportunities – The 10:00 Mass on Sunday mornings is primarily directed towards children and families. We try to utilize the talents of our parish children whenever we can during this Mass, while keeping within the boundaries of liturgical guidelines. If interested, children can sign up for the following Mass positions:



If interested in more information about any of these ministries, please contact us by phone or email.

Security precautions – We understand that you have entrusted your children with us and we will take every precaution to keep their safety and well-being a priority. We have both an evacuation procedure and a lock down procedure. These procedures are documented and displayed in each classroom. Each procedure is reviewed with catechists before the beginning of the school year.