



# St. James Parish

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## Religious Education Program

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### GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The philosophy of the St. James Parish Religious Education Program is to aid the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student in preparing that child to become a mature and contributing member of the Christian community and society at large. The program will aid parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their child by providing opportunities for their child to increase his/her knowledge and experience of God, the Church, self, and society.

The program further assists the parents/guardians by cooperating with them in preparation for their child's reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Similarly, the program aids the parents/guardians in increasing their child's understanding of, appreciation for, and participation in the Church's celebration of these sacraments and in fulfilling the Church's mission of service to society.

The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in Him. In catechesis, "Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, is taught—everything else is taught with reference to Him and it is Christ alone who teaches—anyone else teaches to the extent that he or she is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his or her lips. Every catechist should be able to apply to themselves the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me.'" (CCC 427)

These Guidelines have been developed to provide the family with information regarding the policies and procedures of St. James Religious Education Program.

### ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The family of each student in the Religious Education Program should be registered members of St. James Parish. All new students at the time of their registration are required to provide a photocopy of their Baptismal Certificate. Certificates of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist must be provided if these sacraments have been received at a parish other than St. James. Any student presented for admission without sufficient documented catechetical history shall be evaluated and placed accordingly in a class.

In order to defer the cost of books and materials used for instructional purposes a fee is assessed to each family. Other fees for sacramental preparation (First Reconciliation/Eucharist and Confirmation) will be charged separately. A child will not be denied enrollment in class or sacramental preparation due to a family financial hardship.

### TIME AND PLACE

Classes are held on Sunday mornings from 9:00 am to 10:15 am in St. James Elementary School for Grades K thru 7 and in Red Bank Catholic High School for Grade 8. All students are expected to be on time and ready to begin class promptly. Students must respect the property and items in the classroom in which



they meet. Please refer to the REP calendar for holidays and special activities for students in sacramental preparation classes.

In the event of inclement weather, look for an email from the Religious Education office. Please keep your phone and email information updated.

### **DROP OFF AND PICKING UP STUDENTS**

For the safety of all students and parishioners using the parking lot, please park your vehicle or drop off your child(ren) between the orange cones placed behind St. James Elementary School and follow the directions of our volunteer parking lot directors. Dismissal will take place from the back of the building into the designated section of the parking lot. At dismissal children will proceed by class in double file beginning with the lower floors. Grades K-1 will be dismissed at 10:05 a.m., and grades 2-3 at 10:10. All other grades will be released by 10:15 am.

If a person other than the designated person is to pick up a child at the end of class, a signed note from the parent naming that person must be submitted to the catechesis. If a child is to be dismissed early from class a signed note from the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be submitted to the religious education office prior to the day of class in order for the child to be dismissed early. The child will be dismissed from the religious education office.

Additional parking is available in the municipal lot behind the St. James lot. No one is permitted to pull up to the back door of either building.

Visitors are required to report to the Coordinator's Office in room 6A first floor.

Please note that doors will be locked at 9:00 am for the safety of the children. You will need to call the office (732-747-6006) to be admitted after this time.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Classes will begin promptly at 9:00 am and attendance is recorded each day classes are scheduled. Children are expected to attend all scheduled classes and activities. After four absences, parents will be contacted to discuss plans for successfully completing the necessary material.

### **SUPPLIES**

Each child will receive a religion textbook for his/her appropriate grade. Grades 2 and 8 will also receive Sacramental textbooks in preparation for their respective sacraments. There is a book replacement fee of \$15. Each child is required to bring his/her textbook to class each week, as well as a pen or pencil.

### **INSTRUCTION**

The Religious Education Program at St. James Parish consists of 27 class meetings, from September to May. The classes follow the textbook according to the Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Religion Curriculum for the Diocese of Trenton. Each class begins and ends with a prayer. All assignments or projects are to be completed fully and on time. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to take an active interest in their child's work and to see that assignments/projects are completed in a timely



manner. All lessons missed because of absence must be made up and submitted to the Religious Education Office electronically through the Christ Our life program at <https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/christ-our-life/christ-our-life-2016/parents-and-students>. Lessons should be emailed from the website to [fduchaine@sjredbank.org](mailto:fduchaine@sjredbank.org)

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students are expected to behavior appropriate before, during and after class. While in the building students are expected to:

- Respect and follow the directions of the Religious Education Program Staff and Catechists.
- Respect and speak to one another in an appropriate manner.
- Respect the property of the classroom.
- Walk in an orderly manner through the halls and on the stairs. Running is strictly forbidden.
- Only use authorized portions of the building.
- Arrive to class on time.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of any electronic device during class is prohibited. We ask that parents/guardians make sure that these items are left at home. If your child must carry a cell phone, make sure it is turned off before entering the building. Catechists are instructed to take electronic devices and to return them to the parent(s)/guardian(s) at the end of class.

## **THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY**

The Mass, the Eucharistic celebration, is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. Regular family Mass attendance reinforces and puts into practice the faith and formal instruction presented in the classroom.

Religious Education classes are not meant to be a substitute for attendance at Mass. The St. James Mass schedule found in the Parish bulletin offers ample opportunity for families to celebrate the Eucharist before or after the class meeting schedule. We also encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide opportunities for their child to frequent the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation once they have received this sacrament for the first time.

## **IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND THE BIBLE**

Prayer is communicating with God. Therefore, an essential element of the program is teaching our students the need for prayer and how to pray. It is also important for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid their child in learning common prayers of the Church so that the child will be able to participate in the prayers of the Catholic community. We encourage the parents/guardians of our students to provide an opportunity for the students to pray together as a family in the home as well as in the larger faith community, which is the Catholic Church.

We also stress the importance of the Bible in the life of the followers of Jesus. Scripture, as well as the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church, is a source of revelation—God’s self-communication. We ask



the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid our catechists by encouraging in their child a love and respect for the Sacred Scripture.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

### **PARENTAL/GUARDIAN WORKSHOPS**

In order to aid parent(s)/guardian(s) as the primary teachers of the child, there will be scheduled parent meetings for those parents who have children registered in Grade 2 (Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance) and First Holy Communion) and Grade 8 (Sacrament of Confirmation). The schedule for these workshops can be found in the REP Calendar.

These workshops are designed for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to increase their knowledge of the individual sacrament and to give information on how to assist their child in preparing for the sacraments. Important information regarding the theology of the sacrament, as well as guidelines and necessary forms, will be given during these workshops. At least one parent or guardian is asked to attend each workshop given prior to the child's reception of each sacrament.

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST**

In accordance with diocesan directives, the reception of First Penance precedes the celebration of First Eucharist. The reception of these two sacraments occurs in the second grade. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Diocese of Trenton that, in order for a child to receive these sacraments, the child be enrolled in a religious education program for one year prior to entering the sacramental preparation class. All students must have successfully completed the first-grade level in an approved religious education program in order to be admitted to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist. The celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation takes place in the Fall and First Eucharist takes place in the Spring. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and catechists will take care that the students are properly instructed in the celebration of these sacraments.

It is expected that children attend all classes and activities in this sacramental year. It is important that requests for additional forms, the fee and materials be returned by the requested date. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the preparation of these sacraments.

### **CONFIRMATION**

In preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, students are expected to attend all classes, the Welcoming Rite, Rite of Enrollment, and Confirmation Retreat with Penance Service. Candidates for Confirmation are expected to participate in a one-day service project including a one-page essay expressing their personal spiritual experience of the service project.

All forms and fees required for the celebration of this sacrament must be returned on time and fully completed. The candidates are to choose a saint's name and a sponsor for Confirmation, according to canon law and diocesan directives concerning the celebration of Confirmation. This information will be provided at the parent(s)/guardian(s) workshop. The date for Confirmation is provided by the bishop of the diocese and is celebrated in the Spring of Grade 8. Details concerning the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be provided as the date approaches.