

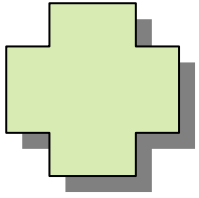
St. Francis de Sales Parish

2009-10

Religious Education Handbook

Mission Statement

**The Educational Ministries of Saint Francis de Sales Parish
provide opportunities to all for their faith formation
in light of the Gospel Message**



Our Religious Education Program follows the policies of the Diocese of Wilmington and we have been granted full accreditation through the Diocesan Office of Religious Education

WELCOME

Welcome to the Saint Francis de Sales Religious Education Program.

Our classes are taught by volunteer catechists who give generously of their time and talent. Our average catechist volunteers approximately eighty hours a year to make our program exceptional. In addition to classroom preparation, catechists attend workshops and conferences that enable them to grow in faith and understanding. Our catechists use the most up to date textbooks, videos and other visual and audio aides.

Your child is an integral part of each class session. We grow in faith through community- your child's weekly presence and participation is needed for us to grow together in faith.

This handbook was designed to provide you with basic information about our program. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Religious Education at 410-546 - 2908.

Peace and blessings,

Pat Burbage
pburbage@visitstfrancis.org
Director of Religious Education

Parish Religious Education Program

The Parish Religious Education Program supports parents in their efforts to help their children learn, pray and act in their Catholic Christian Faith. The Pre-Kindergarten through Sixth Grade Classes use a systematic approach to share the Good News of Jesus, understand the meaning of the Gospel Message in everyday life and respond to the gift of faith. Weekly participation in Liturgy helps children to experience what is taught in the classroom. We are called to life-long learning and the Parish Religious Education Program is one step along the journey of life.

Parish Sacramental Programs

The Parish Sacramental Programs compliment our parish's two schools of religion: Parish Religious Education Program and Parish School. Sacramental preparation is done by means of a tri-fold method: religion classes, parish meetings, and home program. To be a part of the Sacramental Programs of First Eucharist or First Reconciliation, a student must have completed one year of religion classes prior to the year of sacramental preparation.

Program Information

PHONE NUMBERS

Office of Religious Education	410-7546-2908	Monday-Tuesday-Thursday 8:30 a.m. -3:30 p.m.
School	410-749-9907	During Sunday classes
Holy Redeemer	410-896-3519	During Sunday classes

INTERNET INFORMATION

Parish Website:	www.visitstfrancis.org Many links to other Catholic sites
Family Program website:	www.faithfirst.com

PROGARM TIMES

St. Francis de Sales	Sunday 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Holy Redeemer	Sunday 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
St. Francis de Sales	Tuesday 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Please make every effort to have your child at class each week and on time with materials requested by the catechist. Please notify office if child is ill and unable to attend classes.

For unexcused absences:

Absent 5 days-post card notification will be sent home.

Absent 10 days-a letter will be sent home giving options for the child to complete the curriculum for that year.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Cancellation of classes will be recorded on the answering machine in the Religious Education Office one hour before class begins. Please call 410-546-2908 to hear the message.

GATHERING

For your child's safety, all children are to be walked into the building by an adult. Children are not allowed to leave their classroom at dismissal until their parent or an older sibling who has written permission on file comes for them. Late arrival requires that a parent/guardian go to the office to sign in.

CORRESPONDENCE

Program information can be found in the weekly parish bulletin. Important information is also written on the board at the entrance of the school building. Please keep yourself informed by looking for these items.

Students will receive a Mid-Year and an End-of-Year Progress Report. This will help you understand your child's effort, participation and understanding. The reports will be included with correspondence in Information Folders.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

If a student has a difficult time maintaining proper classroom behavior, the student will be directed as to the expected behavior. Students who have been given three opportunities to improve behavior without evidence of correction will be sent to the office. A Discipline Report Form will be completed with a copy going to parent/guardian and one remaining in the office files. Consistent disruptive behavior will result in a conference being scheduled with the catechist, parent and DRE.

FIRE DRILLS AND EVACUATION

Students will participate in fire drills periodically throughout the year. All emergency exit procedures are posted at the exits of each room.

ACCIDENT REPORT

If your child sustains a minor injury, the office administrators will complete an Accident Report and a copy will be given to the parent/guardian and one will be on file in the office. In case of an emergency, the adult listed on the Information-Contact Form will be notified. Please call the office with current information in the event of a change in any of the Contact Information.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Please encourage your child to be responsible for items brought to class-coats, sweaters, book, or folder. Children may not bring toys or valuables to class. A lost and found box is located in the hall across from the office.

TAKING A CHILD OUT OF CLASS EARLY

A note is to be sent with the child to religious education office indicating that an early dismissal is needed. When you arrive at the religious education center kindly observe the following:

1. Parent picking up child reports to the office.
2. Office notifies classroom catechist.
3. Classroom assistant will bring child to office.
4. Parent signs for the child in the office. ID may be requested.

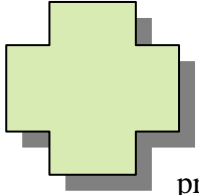
DISMISSAL

Children must be picked up from the classroom by an adult. Parents arriving early may wait downstairs until the time of dismissal. Children will not be allowed to leave the building without an adult.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Please complete and return the Information-Contact form attached to this handbook. If there is a change in phone number, address, guardianship or such, please contact the office with the updated information.





PARENT PARTNERING

The Religious Education programs are meant to give support to the foundation work and practice you do at home with your children. We build on that foundation. These are some foundational practices that make all the difference in the world to our ministry.

*** Go to Mass regularly with your children.**

The gathering of the parish community each weekend is the central act of our faith and foundational to understanding ourselves as Catholic. All the church documents describe this act of worship as the “source and summit” of our faith. It is our experience that children who go to Mass understand the material we teach because they have experienced it. As experiential learners, anything we teach them has to be rooted in something they already know.

***Read/tell the stories about Jesus from the Gospels to your children when they are young and talk about them. Pay attention to the Gospel as children grow.**

Having a little chat in the car on the way home from Mass reveals much. Talking about the Gospels takes faith one step further as you share the values and attitudes you see in the Gospel stories and apply them to your lives. That practical application of “making the connection” is the informal parenting in faith that lasts a lifetime.

Participate in parish life.

Children who are part of families who join in on the events of parish life, outside of just going to Mass, typically have a deeper sense of belonging. Parents who also can volunteer in some way to help the parish over the course of the year, set an example for their children about belonging to a Catholic community. This community worships, learns and serves one another and is sent out to the world in which we live. Children who come from homes where parents are involved in their parish tend to grow up to be involved in parish life also. There are also growing opportunities for children and young people to be involved in our liturgical life. Watch for them and encourage your child’s participation.

Be aware of the content in your child’s religious lessons.

Taking time to read through your child’s religion book, whether each week or in units of time makes you our partner in the goals we have for each grade level. When you know what your child is being taught you are more likely to be able to make the connections. You have the unique ability of reinforcing the Gospel through your child’s live experiences.

Be adult learners.

Our parish has an active faith formation committee. Throughout any year, a number of opportunities are offered for us as adult learners. If you are in a sacramental preparation program, you will have a year of such experiences, also. It is not surprising that growth as adults has an effect in our homes. Watch for any opportunities that might support you as conscious, articulate Catholic parents.

Practice some kind of rituals and customs at home.

This may be prayer before meals or prayers before bed. It may be customary seasonal practices that happen during holidays, or church seasons or Advent or Lent. These rituals may be passed on from your own childhood, or be adaptations of what you were given or new practices. Rituals in any family are part of the gifts you can give to the religious heritage of your children.

Support your church and your child’s catechist.

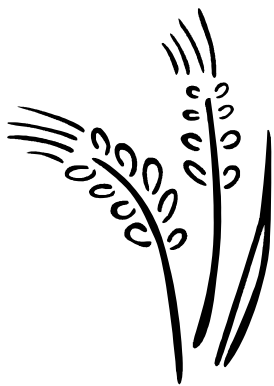
Speak of your parish with support and interest. Even in hard times, you teach your children through what you say and how you speak of church, priests, our parish, etc. Know the name of your child’s catechist and help your child respect and care for the catechist. As a parent, show interest in whatever ways you can. Stop in at the end of class to say hello. Find ways to thank the volunteer who teaches your child/ren.

If you are an interfaith home, support one another.

If there are two parents in the home, it may be that each practices a different faith tradition. It may be that one parent practices no formal tradition. Find ways to support one another. Recognize that children notice how you handle this. Be in unison about how you will lead your children together.

In this particular time in our world, the practice of a faith tradition cannot be assumed. If it is valued, it must be given attention. Children are offered a lifeline through the leadership of parents and/or guardians. A wide diversity of home configurations exists, but the religious formation of children is always affected by the adults that surround these children. May you listen to God’s urging, to take that role of leadership in faith within your person and in your practices. Live what you have chosen to the best of your ability.





Religious Education Association of Parents

Our programs depend on the full support of our parents. To facilitate that goal there is a parent association, the Religious Education Association of Parents, usually referred to as REAP. This is the support group for all our Parish Religious Education Programs for children in Pre Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. All parents are members of REAP upon registration of their children in any of our programs. You are encouraged to participate in all the activities of REAP and attend general meetings. Dues are set in August for the school year. Dues are \$15.00 per family or 10 volunteer hours.

In planning programs, the attempt is to offer a variety of options and flexible schedules that will enable families to grow together in faith. Yet, our Parish Religious Education Program is like the Church in that it is truly dependent on all of you. It takes many people with willing hands and caring hearts to nourish the faith that our children are seeking.

REAP is an opportunity for parents to offer their unique gifts in building the Reign of God's love by their participation in a variety of communal activities and fundraising events. Our advisory board is seeking members to help initiate plans to serve the objectives of REAP. Please call the Christian Formation Office if you would like to be a part of the planning team.

Goals and Objectives of REAP

* **Call to Holiness - To Live our Faith Fully**

To offer opportunities for active and personal faith enrichment through participation in communal experiences in which our children share, experience and apply the Good News to daily life.

* **Call to Welcome and Invite – To Share our Faith Freely**

To enhance the ability of parents to participate actively and effectively in their child's education.

* **Call to Transform the World in Christ**

To empower all to offer their gifts of time, talent and treasure to build the reign of God's love.

