



CO-CATHEDRAL OF  
ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Trenton

# Religious Education Parent Handbook

2017 - 2018 School Year

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

Dear Parents/Guardians:

When you baptized your child in the church, you made a promise before God and the church community that you would be your child's first teacher in the faith. The church community prayed for you that you would also be their best teacher. We truly appreciate that you have invited us to assist you in this most important responsibility. Our program is designed to provide an orderly, progressive method of imparting the basic precepts of our Catholic Faith. It is impossible for us to do that in 1 ¼ hour of classroom work. Much more is required. The only way a child can truly acquire a full appreciation of the great gift that is our faith, is by experiencing it at home. The way you live out your own faith commitment will have the most profound effect on your child's faith development.

We respectfully ask that you:

- **most importantly: worship at Sunday Mass as a family.** The Mass is the source and Summit of our Faith.
- participate weekly in your child's homework.
- pray for your child's spiritual as well as physical growth.
- give **priority** to your child's Religious Education Program.
- see that your child arrives on time and is prepared for class.
- encourage your child's participation in the planned special liturgies.
- show respect and cooperate with your child's teachers who have **volunteered their time** to help **you** to teach your child the Catholic faith.
- follow the safety rules for dropping off and picking up your child.
- volunteer to assist in our program, so that your child will see your faith in action.

Please read the rest of this handbook for important information about your child's Religious Education Program. Please keep it handy along with the school calendar for reference during the school year. For your convenience, a copy of this handbook is posted to our website.

May God Bless You,

*Lisa Clarke*

Director of Religious Education

## Religious Education Office Hours

Office hours are Monday, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm; Tuesday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Please call the office (732-642-7429 Ext.122 or 134) to schedule any necessary appointments. Voicemail is available for your convenience to leave a message. You may also contact the Religious Education Office by email: [LClarke@strobert.cc](mailto:LClarke@strobert.cc) or [FNielsen@strobert.cc](mailto:FNielsen@strobert.cc)

## Registration/Enrollment

Registration is completed via an online process. The instructions and link to access the Online Registration form can be found on the Religious Education page of our website: [www.strobert.cc](http://www.strobert.cc)

**Students are to be re-enrolled every year. It is not automatic.**

- **You must be a registered parishioner to participate in our Religious Education Program.**
- **Students transferring into our program are required to provide a Letter of Transfer from their previous program along with a copy of their Baptismal Certificate and any other sacramental records.**
- **Because Faith Formation is a practice which builds from year to year, a student who has missed a grade level in formation will be required to make up that year before being permitted to register in the next grade level.**

## Communications

**The primary mode of communication will be via e-mail.**

**Please be sure to notify the Religious Education Office of any changes to your contact information**

**ESPECIALLY e-mail!** We will also post notices on our website and will make use of push notifications via the St. Robert Bellarmine App (Please download it at your earliest convenience, it's FREE).

## Class Cancellations

Unless you are contacted by e-mail, push notification or posting on our website: [www.strobert.cc](http://www.strobert.cc) , all **regularly scheduled** religious education classes will be held. If a class is missed, the student will be required to make up the chapter work missed. This is done via an online Chapter Review. The instructions and link to access the Be My Disciples website can be found on our website. (Please see **Attendance/Absences** p.5 for our Policy). Please refer to the school calendar which is posted to the website.

## Parental Involvement

It can't be said too often that education, especially Religious Education, is most effective when the parent is involved. Therefore, we offer some specific ways in which parents can fulfill their obligation as the "primary and principal educators" of their children.

- **Worship with your children as a family at Mass on weekends. Participate fully in the life of our Parish Community.**
- **Children should be on time for class and attend weekly (with textbook and pen/pencil).**
- **Make certain that any work missed is completed and submitted through the online chapter review program.**
- Follow the Religious Education news in the Parish Sunday Bulletin. Information regarding the program is communicated through the bulletin, at Mass during Pulpit Announcements, via email and push notifications through the SRB App.
- Review/discuss with your children the lessons learned in class.
- Read the Rules and Regulations and reinforce them with your child.

- Introduce yourself to your child's teacher when you pick him/her up in the Parish Hall after class. Parents deserve to meet the person who is talking to their child about God.
- Work with the Teacher and the Director of Religious Education in matters of discipline.

## Volunteering

As a condition of participation in our program, **ALL** parents are required to volunteer during the Religious Education year. This is an opportunity to model for our children our own discipleship and full and active participation in the life of our Parish. Failure to volunteer, however, will result in the delayed processing of your registration which may impact getting your preferred class day and time. At the time of registration, you will be notified of the link to use to register for a volunteer assignment. The volunteer links will also be posted to the website for future reference.

## Course of Study

The texts chosen provide the children with a catechesis based on "Sacred Scripture, Tradition, Liturgy, and the Magisterium: the teaching authority of the Church.

## Our Program

The scope and sequence of this series provides a complete and accurate Vatican II Theology distributed across the grades K-8. It is spiraled so that each year the young person's catechetical program is both deepened and expanded. Each year of the program provides young people with:

- a growing experience of and a reverence for the Sacred Scriptures.
- a faithful presentation of the Church's teachings.
- encouragement to make a lived response to the faith presented.
- a meaningful participation in the communal, sacramental, and liturgical life of the Church, especially the Mass.
- more and more profound prayer experiences.
- an appreciation both for the lives of the saints and of Catholics today who are valiantly trying to transform our world.
- a stimulation of their religious imaginations so they learn to think more critically, and are better prepared to proclaim and live their faith.
- a religious literacy that will support an enthusiasm for growing up Catholic in today's world.

**All students will be required to demonstrate their knowledge of the required prayers per grade level in order to advance to the next grade level.**

## Family Life

This program was promulgated by Bishop O'Connell in 2014 and provides a catechesis for moral living focusing at each grade level on five unit themes:

- God's Gift of Family
- God's Gift of Self
- God's Gift of Life
- God's Gift of Love
- God's Gift of Community

Through these five unit themes across all grade levels, Family Life will help support families through a moral catechesis. The gift of Catholic family living is understood and appreciated at each level and a continual process that is a life-long journey. Using these five unit themes will equip children with the skills and knowledge to navigate their way through life according to Catholic values.

This program also satisfies the VIRTUS/ Touching Safety Diocesan requirement.

## HOME SCHOOLING PROGRAM

### THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS/GUIDELINES APPLY FOR THOSE SEEKING HOME SCHOOLING FOR THEIR CHILDREN:

1. Must submit a request to Home School to the Director of Religious Education at the time of Registration.
2. The program itself will involve the following:
  - a) Parents and students must attend the Orientation for Home Schooled students in addition to three (3) other required meetings(Advent, Lent and Year-end).
  - b) Students must complete and submit online chapter work weekly along with periodic written unit assessments (distributed at the HS meetings).
  - c) Demonstrate knowledge of the required prayers per grade level.
  - d) Completion of Unit Assessments at the end of each unit. All work must be completed and turned in at the final Home School meeting. **Failure to submit all completed work by the final Home School meeting will impact the ability to register for the next grade level.**
3. Please note that for the home schooled student to advance to the next grade level, the above requirements must be met.
4. There will be no home schooling approval for sacramental preparation years. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade for First Holy Communion and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade for Confirmation.
5. **The Home School Program is subject to the same tuition payment as the Traditional Class Program.**

## Attendance/Absences

Attendance at all Religious Ed. scheduled classes is required in order for the student to move on to the next grade level. If a student misses a class for any reason, the student will make up the classroom time missed by completing an online chapter assessment. **If the makeup work is not completed and handed in, the student will be required to take a final assessment before being allowed to register for the next grade level.** Classroom attendance will be taken. **Any student who has been absent in excess of 3 times, will be required to repeat grade level chapter work and unit assessments over the summer.**

Children are expected to arrive to class on time and will not be dismissed early from class except for emergencies. **All students arriving late or leaving early are to sign in/out with the Religious Ed Office. No student will be released directly from the classroom.** Late arrival and early dismissal is very disruptive. It is suggested that every child come to class each week prepared to fulfill their class time obligation. **Late arrival/early dismissal is counted toward attendance and will impact their overall attendance record. 3 late arrivals/early dismissals are the equivalent of 1 absence.**

**Please Note: Attendance requirements for Confirmation Year are as follows: Students are permitted ONE Absence ONLY. Any early dismissal is counted as an absence.** **Any additional absences will result in the student being referred to an alternate formation process. The Student will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Celebration of Pentecost.**

## Sacraments

### Sacrament of First Penance

Our students will receive the sacrament of **First Penance** in the 2nd grade. This year, this celebration will take place **Saturday, February 10, 2018.**

Students in grades 3 through 8 will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance during the Religious Education year.

### Sacrament of First Eucharist

2nd graders will receive the Sacrament of **First Eucharist** on **Saturday, May 5, 2018.** Before a child receives the Sacraments of First Penance and First Eucharist, he/she must have at least one year of previous religious instruction. Further information on the times for 1<sup>st</sup> Penance & 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist will follow.

**Parents are required to attend a mandatory Parent Meeting scheduled in October. Please see the Religious Ed. Calendar.**

### Sacrament of Confirmation—Received during 8th grade

Confirmation at St. Roberts is not just a question of attending a number of Religion classes, it is definitely a community affair involving the whole Parish on many different levels. Our Religious Education Program is gradual and continuous through the eighth grade. Therefore, it is necessary for a child to attend formal classes every year. **A child cannot drop out after First Communion and return later for Confirmation without making up grade levels missed.**

**Parents are required to attend a mandatory Parent Meeting scheduled in September. Please see the Religious Ed. Calendar.**

## Requirements for 8th Grade Confirmation:

- attend Religious Education Classes each week
- weekly Mass attendance is a **requirement** to receive the sacrament of Confirmation
- attend the **Covenant Mass (Sunday, November 11, 2017 at 11:30 AM)** with their families.
- attend the **Confirmation Retreat (Saturday, February 17, 2018. The Retreat is a full day.)**
- Perform a minimum of five (5) hours of community service

**Confirmation this year is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8, 2018. The Confirmation will be held in two sessions; 2PM and 5PM.** Confirmation Session is based on class assignment.

## Rules and Regulations

1. We ask your cooperation in maintaining a safe parking lot!

**On ARRIVAL:** You **MUST** park your car in a designated parking space only and walk your children to the building through the Parish Hall entrance.

**At DISMISSAL:** You **MUST** park your car in a designated parking space and walk to the building to pick-up your children. **All students are dismissed from the classroom.** Please be advised that our **Dismissal Procedure** will be as follows: We ask parents to come into the building through the Parking Lot doors and line up outside of their child's classroom 5 minutes before the end of class. Students will be dismissed by the teacher directly to the parent. We ask that the parents then exit the building from the classroom wing. Classrooms 102 – 108 should exit through the door at the beginning of the hall and classrooms 110 -117 should exit through the doors at the end of the hall. **NO ONE** should enter through those doors. They are **EXIT ONLY**.

**No student is permitted to leave the building without a parent. *Your child's safety is our first priority!***

2. **For their safety, children are NOT to enter their classrooms before the teacher. Doors are not opened to students until 5 minutes prior to class. Only teachers and their children are in the building beforehand. Children will be dismissed as a group, with their teacher to the Parish Hall.**

3. Children are responsible for bringing their books to class each week. If a child loses his/her book, a second book will be provided at an additional cost. The family will be billed accordingly. **Please place the student's name in the book.**

4. Children are expected to respect our classrooms and Church property. Children are asked to be careful of displays, projects, teacher materials, etc.

5. Hallway Monitors are present to ensure that all children safely reach their class. Classes will begin and end on time. Parents of older students are discouraged from walking the children into their classrooms after the first few weeks of class.

6. **No parents are allowed in the building during class time without prior approval. For the safety of all our children, anyone entering the building MUST sign in at the education office.**

7. During the school year, by state law, smoking is prohibited anywhere on Church or school property.

## Building Security

The security of our building during class time is a major concern. To that end, the Parish Hall doors from the back parking lot will only be open 15 minutes prior to arrival; **5 minutes after the beginning of classes after which they will be locked.** The doors will then be reopened 10 minutes prior to the beginning of dismissal.

That means....

**Classes that begin at 4:15:** Parish Hall doors will open at 4:00PM and remain open until 4:20. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 5:10 in preparation for dismissal which begins at 5:20(1<sup>st</sup>) 5:25 (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) and 5:30(5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>). Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade dismissal will be at 5:30.

**Classes that begin at 5:45:** Parish Hall doors will be open at 5:30 and remain open until 5:50. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 6:40 in preparation for dismissal which begins at 6:50 (1<sup>st</sup>) 6:55 (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) and 7PM (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>). Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade dismissal will be at 7PM.

**Classes that begin at 11:00AM:** Parish Hall doors will open at 10:45AM and remain open until 11:05. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 2:10PM in preparations for dismissal which will be at 2:30PM.

**For any late arrivals, parents are required to escort their children into the building from the front parking lot and sign them in at the Religious Education.**

In the event of an early dismissal. Parents are required to come into the Religious Ed. Office and sign their child out. As the Parish Hall doors will be locked, they should park in the front parking lot and enter the building through the front doors of the Parish Center. We will call down to the classroom and have the child dismissed to the R E office. The classroom wing will be closed to parents while classes are in session.

Hall monitors will be stationed where appropriate.

**A reminder to all parents: No child will be permitted to leave this building without an adult escort.** This is for your child's safety!

**Please Note: Fire and Lock Down Drills will be scheduled and conducted during class time.**

## **Discipline**

Most of the children in our program are interested in learning about their faith. At times, some children are unable to control their behavior, and disrupt the class. All students and parents are required to sign a Code of Conduct, acknowledging the responsibility to behave appropriately. Any child disrupting the class will be removed from the class, and the parent/guardian will be called in to pick up the child from the Religious Education Office.

All students are expected to come to class willing and eager to learn. Chronic disciplinary problems will require a meeting with the teacher, child, parent and Director of Religious Education. If the disciplinary problem cannot be resolved through this meeting and the student cannot control his/her behavior, it will be recommended that the student be home schooled until such time that the student has demonstrated a willingness to control his/her behavior in the classroom.

## **Food/Liquids In Classroom**

**Unless there is written medical notification, There is to be NO food or beverage in the classrooms!**

## **Cell Phone Policy**

**The use of cell phones is NOT permitted during class time.**

**All cell phones are to be turned off and placed in a basket on the teacher's desk at the beginning of class. They are to remain that way until class is dismissed.**

**Any student using their cell phone during class will have it confiscated and will be returned only to a parent.**

**When entering the building, students are asked to turn off: cell phones, iPods, etc. and remove hats, earbuds and headphones.**

# Prayers for Each Grade Level

The children will be expected to memorize specific prayers\* and have a good knowledge of other prayers\*\* at each grade level. **Please pray with** and encourage your child to say these prayers frequently in order to foster the memorization process. All the prayers are found toward the back of your child's textbook.

## Kindergarten

- Sign of the Cross\*
- Our Father\* (begin introduction)

## First Grade

- Sign of the Cross\*
- Our Father\*
- Hail Mary\*
- Glory Be to the Father\*
- Grace Before Meals\*

## Second Grade

- Same as Grade 1, plus
- Great Commandment\*
- Act of Contrition\*
- Prayer to the Holy Spirit\*\*

## Third Grade

- Same as Grades 1 and 2, plus
- Apostle's Creed\*\*
- Seven Sacraments\*

## Fourth Grade

- Same as Grades 1, 2 and 3, plus
- 10 Commandments\*
- Corporal Works of Mercy\*\*
- Spiritual Works of Mercy\*\*

## Fifth Grade

- Same as Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4, plus
- Beatitudes\*\*
- Rosary\*\*
- Hail Holy Queen\*\*

## Sixth Grade

- Same as Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, plus
- Stations of the Cross\*\*
- Nicene Creed\*
- A Vocation Prayer\*\*
- Precepts of the Church\*\*

## Seventh Grade

- Review of all Prayers on Each Grade Level

## Eighth Grade

- Review of all Prayers on Each Grade Level

Please note that in addition to learning these prayers at home, these prayers will also be said prior to the beginning of each Religious Education class as well as at the end of each class.

No Standing / Parking at Any Time

**Back Parking Lot:**  
Parents are to park their cars and enter the building via the Parish Hall entrance to drop off and pick up their children.

