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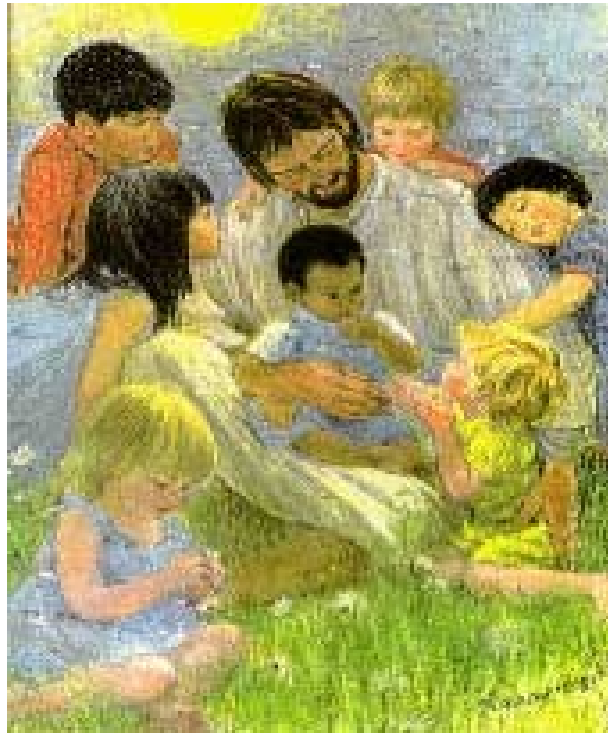
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Welcome

Dear Parent(s),

Thank you for registering your child in our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP). This handbook is designed to provide an overview of our religious education program.

PREP classes are vital to the complete religious education of your child. However, they are not meant to be the sole provider of your child's faith formation. Rather, they are intended to support and supplement the religious formation you are already giving your child at home, and the experience of joining our parish community for the celebration of the Mass and sacraments.

Consistent with this approach, this handbook describes our administrative and curriculum policies. It is our hope that it will give you an understanding of our program and encourage you to actively participate.

Together we will grow as a community of believers.

Together in Christ,

Donna Heeney
Director of Religious Education

Adriana McGrath
Administrative Assistant

Purpose and Use of this Handbook

This handbook has been prepared for the benefit of all who participate in the Religious Education Program at St. Robert Bellarmine Parish. It exists to foster the efficient operation of this program by providing pertinent information. In appropriate circumstances, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) or pastor have the discretion to take actions other than those specified in the handbook.

This handbook is subject to change at any time when determined to be necessary by the Director of Religious Education or the pastor. If changes are made to the handbook, parents will be notified promptly.

This handbook will also be posted on the parish website under PREP.

Philosophy

Our Parish Religious Education Program is structured to provide catechetical instruction and knowledge of Catholic practices and rituals to all our children.

Parents, by word and example, are the primary teacher of their children and teach them from birth through their entire life. At Baptism, the parent undertakes the responsibility of providing for their child's faith formation.

The Religious Education staff, catechists and aides are here to assist parents in the spiritual formation and ongoing moral development of their child through a formal program of continuous religious education.

In our program, we seek to provide the catechesis and skills for each child to grow and mature in understanding, positive attitudes, and faithful practice of the Catholic faith.

Through the process of catechetical instruction and participation in Catholic rituals, we hope to deepen the faith and sense of belonging to the Catholic church in our children, so they will be moved to share their time, talent and treasure in the life of the church now and for the rest of their lives. We strive to assist children in committing themselves to a personal relationship with God, characterized by a vigorous sacramental life, a lifelong pattern of prayer, Christian service, and growth in understanding the catholic faith.

To this end, the Parish Religious Education program seeks to provide children with opportunities for Church visits, Mass, confession, and other catholic rituals such as the rosary, stations of the cross, and benediction. This process is achieved with the joint efforts of our parish priests, religious education staff, catechists, aides, parents and students.

Committed to this active partnership, we place our efforts with confidence in God's loving hands.



Parental Responsibility

By enrolling their child(ren) in the Religious Education Program at St. Catherine of Siena Parish, parents are expected to participate with their child(ren) in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on Sundays as well as Holy Days of Obligation. Parents are also expected to participate in the sacramental life of the Church (specifically Reconciliation and Eucharist) and to include their children in these sacramental celebrations as the children are eligible to participate in them.

Weekly Mass and Confession Schedule

All students in our Parish Religious Education Program are expected to participate in Sunday Mass. Religious Education classes cannot and do not substitute for the Sunday liturgy. The commitment to attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation is especially important in the years in which a child is preparing to receive a sacrament.

Mass Schedule

Sunday Obligation: Saturday evening: 5:00 PM

Sunday morning: 7:00 AM, 8:30, 10:00 AM, 11:30 AM

***** As of July 1, 2011 the Mass schedule will change to the following times:**

Saturday evening : 5:00 PM

Sunday morning: 7:00 AM, 9:00AM, and 11:00AM

Holy Days of Obligation: Eve of the Feast – 7:00 PM

Day of the Feast: 6:30 AM, 9:00 AM, 12:05 PM

**** Always check the parish bulletin or website for any changes**

Holy Days of Obligation: Jan. 1—Mary, Mother of God, Ascension Thursday – 40 days after Easter, Aug. 15—Assumption of Mary, Nov. 1—All Saints Day, Dec. 8—Immaculate Conception and Dec. 25—Christmas.

Confession Schedule

Saturday afternoons – 3:30 to 4:30 PM

Please check the bulletin for additional times during Advent and Lent.

Registration, Tuition and Sacrament Fees

Registration for returning families will take place in the spring.

Summer Program-- March

Traditional Program-- April

** dates are subject to change

It is recommended and necessary that all forms be returned by the registration dates so that the correct number of books, materials and class sizes can be adequately determined.

Upon initially registering for the program, you must provide a baptismal certificate for your child(ren). If your child(ren) was baptized at St. Robert Bellarmine Parish this is not required.

If you are transferring from another religious education program or catholic school, please provide the necessary documentation from the previous parish such as copy of permanent record card, dates of sacraments, etc.

If you can not find your registration form, copies of the form can be found on the parish website saintrobertwarrington.org and look under PREP.

Custody or Legal Agreements

It is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the parish with the latest, most up to date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. St. Robert Bellarmine Parish will request these documents at the beginning of the year. If either the Custody Order or Custody Agreement change during the course of the year, it remains the responsibility of both biological parents to provide that document to the parish immediately.

If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

Special Needs policy

Children with special learning needs are welcomed and included in our programs. Parents are asked to indicate their child's special needs on the registration form so that the needs of your child may be met and any additional help or materials needed in the classroom can be obtained . Any information provided by the parents is held in strict confidence by the staff and your child's catechist.

Tuition and Fees

The current tuition for the 2011-2012 school year is as follows:

Summer PREP

1 child	\$ 110
2 children	\$ 185
3 or more children	\$ 335

Monday and Tuesday Classes

1 child	\$ 100
2 children	\$ 175
3 or more children	\$ 325

Sacrament Fees (all 3rd and 6th graders)

Confirmation	\$45
Eucharist and Penance	\$30

If your family is experiencing any financial difficulty, please contact the Religious Education Office. All information will be held confidential

Sacramental Preparation

Important sacramental information is mailed out to all families. This information contains important dates and forms. Confirmation, 1st Penance and 1st Communion will be mailed in June. Please transfer all important dates to your home calendar.

In order to prepare to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation, the following requirements need to be met:

The child must be baptized and have a baptismal certificate on file in the Religious Education Office (not necessary if baptized at St. Robert Bellarmine).

The child must participate in the Religious Education Program for two (2) consecutive years.

Students must have a basic understanding of the course content and knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Families need to attend Mass every Saturday evening / Sunday.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (3rd Grade)

Parents need to attend the Parent Meeting for the Sacrament.

Parent and Child need to attend the following

Parent- Child Retreat

Parent- Child 1st Communion Practice (Sunday Mass choice only)

Reconciliation usually takes place the last Saturday in January at 10:30 AM

First Communion usually takes place the 1st weekend in May.

You have the choice of a Group Mass which takes place on Saturday at 10:30AM or a Sunday Family Mass at 11:00AM



Confirmation (6th Grade)

Parents need to attend the Parent Meeting for the Sacrament.

Child needs to attend the Confirmation Retreat.

Child and Sponsor need to attend the Sponsor Practice. If the

sponsor is not available, a parent may fill in for the sponsor. Confirmation is usually administered in the spring of the 6th grade year.



Class Times

Summer Session

Grades 1-6

Usually held 2 weeks in June

(depends on closing date of schools)

9:00 to 12:30 PM – Monday through Friday

Traditional Classes – September through April / May

Grades 1-6

(usually begins the Monday after Labor Day)

Monday evenings – 4:45 to 6:00 and 6:30 to 7:45

Tuesday evenings 6:00 to 7:15

Attendance

Regular attendance in Religious Education classes is mandatory for students to move to the next level.

For Monday and Tuesday classes: No more than 3 absences are

permissible.

After 3 absences, a letter will be sent home from the Religious Education Office notifying the parent of the number of absences. All missed work should be obtained from the child's catechists.

Excessive absences of 6 or more may result in the child not moving to the next level.

If your child is absent please call the Religious Education Office and then contact the child's teacher for any missed assignments / work.

Consistent attendance during sacrament preparation years is essential for your child to be ready to receive Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation.

For the Summer Session: Attendance at all sessions is imperative because of the amount of information covered each day.

All children preparing for Sacraments (3rd and 6th grade) **must** attend **all** sacrament refresher classes / practices.

Reconciliation—1 class / practice

Eucharist – 2 classes /practices

Confirmation- 2 classes and 1 practice

The list will be mailed to you during the summer.

Family Gatherings and Activities

As part of your signed agreement, you must attend / complete 4 Gatherings / activities. This **must** be met or you will not be able to continue in the summer session. A list of all gatherings/ parish activities will be mailed to you during the summer.

Remember that religious education is not only for 2 weeks.

It is a continuous and life-long journey.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

We expect students to be on time for class each week. Parents should refrain from dropping off the students too early since we do not permit students in the classroom without the Catechist being present. Students should also be picked up on time.

Arrival

Parents are to drop off their children using the bus land which is directly in front of the school building. Please be efficient in this matter by having your child(ren)'s school bag and snack with them in the car. If you would like to walk your child into school, please park in the lot and come across the crosswalk directly in front of the school. Please drive cautiously, since at certain times of the year, it will be dark during class times.

Dismissal

All children must be picked up by a parent or designated adult. They must be picked up in their classrooms. This applies to all children in grades K-6. Older siblings will be allowed to go down to their younger sibling's classroom just prior to dismissal. The same applies to those who are part of a carpool. **A note must be sent to your child(ren)'s catechist letting him/her know what room your child will be going down to for dismissal. If we DO NOT have a note, the child will not be allowed to leave the classroom.** If someone other than the carpool person or parent is going to pick up the child, please send a note to the catechist. If a child must leave early from class, please send a note to the catechist.

All these procedures are put into place to insure the safety of your

child. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Student Textbooks and Required Materials

Every student enrolled in our Parish Religious Education Program will receive a grade level student textbook. If a student loses their book, a new book must be purchased. We encourage parents to review the material from the textbook that is taught each week.

Every student is required to bring the following material to class each week:

pen and / or pencil, copy book, folder, crayons, glue, and scissors.

Please be sure your child's name is in their textbook as well as on all their supplies.

Keeping God's Children Safe

Teaching Touching Safety Lessons are presented to the children in our Religious Education Program. The Lesson is approved by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Safe Environment Office. It is presented once a year and tied into the Religion Guidelines. Parents will be notified 1 week before the lesson is to be taught. Lessons are available for parent perusal in the Religious Education Office.

Dress Code

All students are to come to class dressed appropriately. Casual clothing is permitted. Absolutely NO short shorts, tank tops, t-shirts with inappropriate pictures or wording, flip flops or "heely" sneakers. No hats or caps are to be worn indoors.

Conduct, Discipline and Building Usage

The Parish Religious Education Program offered by St. Robert Bellarmine Parish is designed to assist parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behaviors that are in accord with the Catholic Church teachings. The program has NO TOLERANCE for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional and psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behaviors such as name calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment.

These categories do not cover every possible situation. The parish determines what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, both in and out of the classroom, in the school community and generally outside the school community where such improper behavior affects the school community.

Conduct by children or parents / guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the parish is grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate.

Student Code of Conduct

Students must always act appropriately. They must always show respect to all their brothers and sisters in Christ. The list of our brothers and sisters in Christ includes, but is not limited to: priests, catechists, aides, parish staff, religious education office staff, other volunteers, fellow students and parishioners.

Lack of respect toward persons or property or irresponsibility will not be tolerated. Students are expected to maintain this standard of

behavior.

1. No student may enter a classroom without the supervision of a Catechist or aide.
2. No running at any time, especially in the hallways and stairs.
3. No shouting or profane language.
4. Chewing gum is not permitted.
5. Students should not travel the building alone.
6. No student should touch any items inside a student's desk for any reason.
7. No student will write on any school or student property or destroy or take another student's property.
8. All students will maintain self-control in not touching or hitting another student or adult.

Discipline

Every person is worthy of being treated with care and the respect fitting one made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, classroom behavior needs to be characterized by genuine Christian care, mutual respect and honesty.

Disruptive behavior prevents learning for the whole class and can be frustrating for the catechists and other students. Because of the limited time students spend in the Religious Education classrooms every week, catechists understand that students stay in the classroom. Lack of self-discipline during class will be addressed promptly. In the event that a child causes a disturbance that a catechist is unable to resolve, the following steps will be taken.

If the inappropriate behavior does not improve the following procedure will be followed.

1. Verbal correction by the catechist.
2. If the behavior persists, the catechist will contact the parent.
3. If the behavior still continues, the student will be sent to the Religious Education Office and we talk with the DRE or Administrative Assistant. The PREP staff member will talk with the child, listening to what the child also has to say. The child may be asked to write a formal letter of apology.
4. If all these methods have not improved the student's behavior, the parent will be required to come to class with the student.

A student will be removed from the classroom immediately and parents will be notified promptly for any of the following violations:

1. Drugs, alcohol or substance abuse.
2. Verbal or physical harassment
3. Fighting
4. Stealing or damaging parish property
5. Jeopardizing another person's safety.

The pastor will be notified if any of the above circumstances occur.

Cell Phones

We realize that devices such as cell phones have become a necessary tool in keeping communications open with children, especially for working parents. However, it is the policy of this program that cell phones may not be used during catechetical sessions. Phones may be kept in their school bags only. If this rule is not kept, the phone will be confiscated by the catechist and sent to the Religious Education office and can be picked up after dismissal.

Building Usage Rules

It is the responsibility of the catechist along with the support and cooperation of the parents to enforce the following building usage rules.

1. Food is NOT permitted in the classrooms.
2. Students are not to touch items found in the classrooms.
3. Students are NEVER allowed to write on school / parish property, i.e. desks, books, bathroom walls, etc. These are serious offenses and will not be tolerated.

Communication With Parents

All communication with parents will be done via **e-mail** and the **School Reach** Phone Communication System. Please be sure that we have a current and correct e-mail and phone number on file. If either should change, please contact our office immediately.

Since most communication will come through e-mail, please be sure to check your e-mail on a regular basis. For any family that does not have a computer, you will receive a phone call to inform you of any pertinent information.

Sacrament information and a yearly calendar will be mailed home.

We also now have a page on the parish website. All pertinent information will also be placed on the website. The address of the parish website is saintrobertwarrington.org.

Class Cancellations

It is sometimes necessary to cancel Religious Education classes due

to inclement weather. If the Central Bucks schools are closed, our PREP classes will also be cancelled.

In case of emergency closings or an unforeseen circumstance when classes would need to be cancelled, you will receive a phone call through the School Reach Phone System.

The closing will also appear on the parish website.

Yearly PREP Calendar

A yearly calendar will be mailed to all families in August. Please be sure to mark your calendar with these dates. A copy of the calendar will be posted on St. Robert Bellarmine's Parish website www.saintrobertwarrington.org under PREP and scroll down to yearly calendar. All changes to the calendar will also be posted on the website.

Parish Website with Link to Religious Education Program

We now have a link for our PREP program on the parish website. All pertinent information will also be posted on the site. The parish website is

www.saintrobertwarrington.org and go to the tab PREP and scroll down to find information about our program as well as information on the sacraments.

Junior High Program – 7th and 8th grade

A new junior high program is in the process of being established. More information will be forthcoming and can also be found on the website.

High School Youth Ministry

This is a program for our 9th through 12th graders. It is open to all teens in the parish. Please consult the bulletin, website, and e-mails to learn more information. A calendar is usually available in September.

Parish Staff and Contact Information

Rev. Msgr. James D. Beisel, Pastor
Rev. Matthew Tralies, Parochial Vicar

Deacon George Morris, Business Manager
Mrs. Joan Fitzpatrick, Director of Adult Faith Formation
Mrs. Janet Cline, Parish Secretary
Mrs. Sheila Fehrman, Parish Secretary

Parish Office – 215-343-0315