

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title

Welcome Letter

Purpose and Use of this Handbook

Mission Statement

Parental Responsibility

Weekly Mass and Confession Schedule

Registration

 Custody or Legal Agreements

 Special Needs

 Tuition and Sacrament Fees

Sacramental Preparation

Class Times

Attendance

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Student Textbooks and Required Materials

Dress Code

Conduct and Discipline and Building Usage Rules
Student Code of Conduct
Cell Phone Policy

Communication with Parents

Classes Not in Person

Yearly Calendar

Parish Website with Link to PREP

Junior High and High School Youth Ministry

Parish Staff and Contact Information



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,

Chris Kerrigan
Director of Religious Education
215-343-9433
Donna Carter
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 Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) 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 Coordinator 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.

Mission Statement/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 teachers 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. Robert Bellarmine 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: 4:00 PM

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

Holy Days of Obligation:

Day of the Feast: 6:30 AM, 9:00 AM, and 7:00PM

**** 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 – 3:00 to 3:30 PM

Sunday mornings—10:15 to 10:45 AM

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-- February or March

Family Program—February or March

** 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.

Registration is done electronically through the Parish Giving Company. Tuition is also collected through Parish Giving.

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 this school year is as follows:

Summer PREP

1 child	\$ 190
2 children	\$ 370
3 or more children	\$ 540

Family Option

1 child	\$ 160
2 children	\$ 310
3 or more children	\$ 460

Sacrament Fees (all 3rd and 6th graders)

Confirmation	\$65
Eucharist and Penance	\$60

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 emailed out to all families. This information contains important dates and forms. Confirmation, 1st Penance and 1st Communion will be emailed in the summer. 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

Reconciliation usually takes place in November/December at 10:30 AM

First Communions take place during our weekend Masses. They take place after Easter.



Confirmation (7th Grade)

Parents need to attend the Parent Meeting for the Sacrament.

Child needs to attend the Confirmation Retreat.

Child needs to attend the practice and confessions.

Confirmation is usually celebrated in the spring of the 7th grade year.

Class Times

Summer Session

Grades 1-6

usually held a week in June

(depends on closing date of schools)

8:30 AM to 12:30 PM – Monday through Friday

Family PREP Option

Grades 1-6

1st Sunday of the Month—Parent and child attend the 9:00 Mass

Gatherings are held from 10:00 to 11:00 AM

Work completed at home

Confirmation Preparation—Grade 7

Confirmation Camp is held for a week in June (depending on the closing date of school). It is held from 8:30 AM to noon.

Attendance

Regular attendance in Religious Education classes is mandatory for students to move to the next level. Consistent attendance during sacrament preparation years is essential for your child to be ready to receive Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation.

For Family PREP – attendance by parent and student is important as we only meet once a month. If there is sickness or other important events/emergency, please contact our office for directives.

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 grade) **must** attend **all** sacrament refresher classes / practices.

Reconciliation—1 class / practice

Eucharist – 1 class /practice/confessions

The list will be mailed to you during the summer.

Family Gatherings and Activities

Sunday Family Option—families attend 2 Spiritual gathering, participate in 2 Service opportunities and 4-6 grade 1 penance service.

Summer session--As part of your signed agreement, students/adult must attend 3 Spiritual gatherings, 2 Service opportunities, 4-6 grade 1 penance service and 2 Adults only formation. This **must** be met or you will not be able to continue in the summer session. A list of all parish activities will be emailed to you during the summer. Remember that religious education is not only for 1 week. It is a continuous and life-long journey.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

We expect students to be on time for class. 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

Family Program

Parents and children will come from the 9:00 AM mass. Parents will drop children to their classrooms.

Summer Program

Parents are to drop off their children using the bus lane 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.

Dismissal

Family Program

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 1-6.

Summer Program

Parents are asked to park in the upper lot and come down in front of school to pick up your child. A Dismissal form must be submitted for each child. All children needed to be picked up by an adult. Please drive carefully as children and cars will be walking in the parking lot.

All these procedures are put into place to ensure 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/materials. If a student loses their book, we can order a new book with the parents paying for the book. We encourage parents to review the material from the textbook/pamphlet that is taught in each session.

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 (Kid Talk) 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 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 continues, the student will be sent to the Religious Education Office and we talk with the CRE 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 our office Gmail **e-mail** and Flocknote email and text. 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.

Sacrament information and a yearly calendar will be emailed 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.

Inclement Weather

It is sometimes necessary to cancel for Religious Education classes due to inclement weather. Decisions will be made as soon as possible if our PREP classes will be cancelled. Class work for that day will be e-mailed to parents to be completed at home.

In case of emergency closing or an unforeseen circumstance when classes would need to be cancelled, you will receive an email or text. The closing will also appear on the parish website (if possible).

Yearly PREP Calendar

A yearly calendar will be emailed 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 –8th grade
High School Youth Ministry

Mrs. Barbara Palo will send information regarding these programs

These programs are open to all teens in the parish. Please consult the bulletin, website, and e-mails to learn more information.

Parish Staff and Contact Information

Rev. Msgr. James D. Beisel, Pastor

Mrs. Mary Landry, Business Manager
Mrs. Joan Fitzpatrick, Director of Adult Faith Formation
Mrs. Pamela McCloskey, Parish Secretary
Mrs. Marilyn Salisbury, Parish Secretary

Parish Office – 215-343-0315