

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Is the RE program open to non-parishioners?**

The RE program is available to our parishioners. There are some exceptions and these must be dealt with by the Pastor. Please contact the RE office for more information.

### **Should I fill out a registration form even if my child is returning?**

Yes. We want to make sure we have your current contact information in case of an emergency.

### **Should I pay the registration fee even if my child is returning?**

Yes. These low fees help the parish and the program to continue offering religious education to our children and families.

### **Should I read the RE Handbook even if my child is returning?**

Yes. It is only four pages and we want to make sure you know the rules.

### **Why should I provide my cell phone carrier?**

The data system the parish uses has a feature with which we can text the parent's cell phone without incurring extra expenses for the RE program. This feature is mainly used with those parents that have not provided an email address. Email is the preferred means of communication with parents.

### **What is ERE and HRE?**

For the religious education program, ERE stands for English Religious Education, which takes place in the morning (8:45 am, ending with the 10 am Mass), and HRE stands for Hispanic Religious Education, which is held in the afternoon (2:45 pm, ending with the 4 pm Mass). The HRE program does not imply that we "teach Spanish," but many of the classes are taught by Hispanic catechists, aided by English speakers. Junior high classes (grades 6-8) are taught entirely in English. Please specify the program at the time of registration.

### **Are the ERE calendar and the HRE calendar the same?**

No. They are different. Please make sure you have the one for which your child is registered.

### **Can my child move from ERE to HRE or vice versa if they skip a class in one of them?**

No. Your child must remain in the program for which he is registered.

### **Are the books the same for ERE and HRE?**

In most cases they use different books.

### **What should I do if I know that my child will not be in attendance at a future class/event?**

You should notify the catechist via email as soon as possible. Feel free to copy the RE office, especially if the event is a meeting conducive to a sacrament.

**When should my child receive First Holy Communion/Confirmation?**

In the diocese of Arlington, children receive First Holy Communion in second (2<sup>nd</sup>) grade and Confirmation in eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grade. When children are behind in their sacraments the RE program prepares them for the missing sacrament and places them, with the help of the parents, to the expected grade.

**Do I need a sponsor for First Holy Communion?**

No. A sponsor is not required for First Holy Communion.

**How can we plan family activities/trips during the weekend when there is an attendance requirement?**

The mission statement of the RE program is to assist the parents in their role as primary educators of the faith, not to replace the parents. We encourage you to spend time with your family and do at home the part of the textbook that should have been covered in any class missed. Don't forget to take your family to Mass wherever you are! Please notify the catechist via email before or after your trip.

**Are there other fees in addition to the registration fee at the beginning of the year?**

Yes, depending on the class. There are additional fees for sacramental classes. The parents will be informed at the meeting required for the sacrament.

**What type of training do catechists have?**

At the parish level, we offer a retreat before the school year begins. The Diocese of Arlington offers various courses and seminars throughout the year, and a Master Catechist program every two years. In most cases, the parish covers the costs so that our catechists can attend free of charge.

**Are background checks performed on the catechists in the RE program?**

All adult catechists have to be cleared by the diocese before being able to work/volunteer in children's activities. The clearance process involves paperwork, background checks, and a four-hour long class on the safe environment for minors.

**Is it required that my child keep attending RE after his First Holy Communion?**

As it is stated in our mission statement, our role is not to replace the parents. We are here to help you in the faith formation of your child. Since religion is not taught in our public schools we offer guidance and the witness of many unpaid volunteers willing to sacrifice their time for the sake of our parish family.

**What happens if my child misplaces his textbook?**

The cost of the first textbook is included in the registration fee. The parents will have to buy another book if the first one is misplaced. This can be purchased from the RE office.

**Why are drop-off and pick-up procedures so strict?**

The RE program seeks to maintain the students under the supervision of an authorized adult. In consideration of the program and our volunteer catechists we ask that parents abide by the rules contained in the RE handbook.

**How do I know if the RE is in session during inclement weather?**

The RE program follows Fairfax County Public School for weather closings. In case of inclement weather, please visit the FCPS website. We can't guarantee that the RE office will contact the parents.

**How do I contact the RE office?**

The best way is email (StPhilip.CCd@gmail.com). You can also call and leave a message at 703-573-1899.

**What meetings should I attend?**

As the primary educator of your child, we recommend that you be informed of what is happening in the program. The best way to be informed is attending the general meetings for parents, and the sacramental meetings, depending on the sacramental needs of your child.

**Why should I attend sacramental meetings?**

Parents need to know the requirements for and the procedure of the sacrament their child is preparing for. Even if you have a child who went through the same preparation, it is expected that you attend the meetings.

**What happens if I skip a meeting that was required for a sacrament?**

We understand that there are circumstances when the parents are not able to make it to our meetings. It will be the responsibility of the parent to contact the RE office for forms that given at the meeting.

**How can I become an aide or catechist?**

Communicate your desire to the nearest catechist. You can also speak to our priests or the RE office. We will direct you in the process to become a volunteer for the RE program.

**How can I give a financial contribution to the RE program at St. Philip?**

By using the blue envelope and tithing every Sunday in our parish collection, all parishioners, not only those with children in the program, are contributing to the faith formation of our young members. Additionally, every year in September, we have a parish wide Religious Education collection that is entirely retained by St. Philip.