

Saint Philip Religious Education Office

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Please keep for future reference

Si necesita una copia de este informativo en español, por favor solicítela en la Oficina de Educación Religiosa durante las horas de atención o por email, stphilip.ccd@gmail.com

Our Mission

The mission of the Religious Education program at St. Philip is to inspire and assist our parishioners in their journey of understanding the “mystery of Christ” in all its dimensions (cf. *Catechesi Tradendae* 5); to assist parents in their role as primary educators in the faith of their children.

“The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called “the domestic church,” a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church 1666

Eligibility

Religious Education Classes are open for children in Kindergarten through 8th grade and those children missing Sacraments, whose families are registered members of St. Philip Parish. To become a registered member please visit the rectory during opening hours or call 703-573-3808.

Registration Fee

Please refer to the registration form for fees. Students in of First Communion preparation and those in Confirmation preparation will have an additional charge to cover the cost of retreats, days or recollection, Confirmation robe, etc.

Documentation Needed

At the time of registration the parents of new students need to provide the RE Office with a copy of their child’s Baptismal certificate. Returning students who have not done so will be asked to present it as well. Children in their last year of sacramental preparation will have to submit additional forms. These forms will be given at the corresponding meeting and will be available from our website.

Students Who Have Not Been Baptized

We will hold an informational meeting for parents whose children have not been baptized in the fall. Please consult the calendar for the current academic year for the date and time.

Class Schedule

Classes begin at 8:45 am. Parents are asked to drop off their children **in** the classroom on time, out of respect to the teachers and the rest of the class. Children will proceed to the **10 AM Mass** with their class and teachers. They need to be picked up **from** their classroom after the Mass, i.e. at 11 am. Parents are welcome to attend this Eucharist.

Mass Waiver

Children and their parents must attend the Eucharist as required by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, sections 2180 and 2181:

2180 – “The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.” 117 “The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day.”

2181 – “The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.” 119 “Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.”

With our current Mass schedule, it is not possible for children in the RE program to attend the 8 am Mass, for this Mass ends 15 minutes after the start of class, which would cause your child to be late. If you and your family wish to attend Mass at another time please request a **waiver** from the RE Office or downloaded from our website. The signed waiver will be kept on file and the teacher will be notified. If the RE Office does not have a waiver signed by one of the parents, the child will be expected to attend the 10 AM Mass with his class.

Attire

Children should wear modest clothes which are **appropriate for Mass attendance**. Please no shorts. Bermudas are allowed.

Attendance and Make-up Work

There are a limited number of religious education classes and your child is expected to attend every class unless he or she is ill. You are responsible for making sure that your child makes up all missed class work to be handed in at the next class attended, unless serious extenuating circumstances are brought to the attention of the Director of RE and approved by him/her.

Children are required to have a note from a parent for all absences and turned into their teacher prior to the absence or immediately upon the students return to class. This *Excuse from Class* form can be obtained from the teacher, RE office or website. **More than three unexcused absences** or too many excused absences may result in your child repeating a year of instruction.

Children in any of the sacramental preparation classes may not receive the sacrament if there is an attendance problem.

Drop Off and Pick Up

We want your assistance in assuring that the students remain under the supervision of an adult. To facilitate continual supervision, minors (children and young people under the age of 18) will no longer be permitted to be dropped off unattended outside the building, or to leave the building unattended in order to be picked up.

Students in all classes have to be signed in at drop off and signed out at dismissal by a parent or guardian. The sign-in/sign-out process will take place within the child’s classroom. At the start of the school year, the parents must fill out a form indicating who has permission to sign-in and sign-out their child (uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc). This form will be available from your child’s teacher or the RE office. Please instruct your child to remain with the teacher in the classroom after the Mass until the designated adult arrives.

We appreciate your compliance with our procedures for drop off and pick up. These procedures are in place for the safety of your children and failure to comply with them will result in your student's withdrawal from the in-class program.

Homework

Children in all grade levels will be expected to do either follow-up activities or preparation for the next class (i.e., homework). Please help your child follow through with any assignments given and discuss what they are learning.

RE classes are effective and worthwhile when home and church work together. Please support this program, by reviewing your child's work every week, helping with homework, and participating in your child's sacramental preparation.

Student Discipline

All students are expected to behave respectfully toward their teachers and other students. All students are expected to treat the school building and classroom equipment with care.

Our teachers are volunteers who offer their time and talent to teach RE. Children come to RE to learn the teachings of the Catholic Church and Christian Faith. Both children and teachers must expect this time to be a time to learn and come to a deeper understanding of their faith in a positive and nurturing setting. In light of this, *if a child is being disruptive or unruly and continues to be so after a warning, he or she will be taken out of the classroom and a parent will be called to pick them up. Should a second incident occur that is disruptive to the teacher and other children, the child will be dismissed from the in-class program without refund of the tuition fee and put in the home-based catechetical program.*

Use of Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Cell phones or other electronic devices are not to be used by the students during the Mass, RE class or other RE related activities. Unauthorized use of a cell phone or another electronic device will result in immediate confiscation of the apparatus and a \$25.00 fine to be paid by the parent.

Progress Report

Your child's teacher will issue a progress report three (3) times during the year. The approximate dates for this report are December, March and May. The purpose of the progress report is to inform parents of their child's attendance, academic progress and discipline in class and in Mass. The report has to be signed and returned to the teacher.

Picture Policy

Please refer to the Waiver Information/Right to Object form available from our website. Hard copies are available from the RE office.

Student Supplies

Students will be provided with a textbook and handouts as the year progresses. Every week your child will need the following items that **you** provide:

- A tote bag or backpack
- Two pencils or pens
- 2nd – 8th graders need a highlighter
- 2nd – 8th graders need a composition book for notes

Volunteers

The Religious Education office relies on volunteers to help us in our task of providing our children with a sound religious formation. If you feel called to this ministry, please contact one of our priests, the RE office or the parish office. Our volunteer teachers have to be compliant with diocesan requirements, Catholic in good standing, and living according to the laws of the Catholic Church.

Snow Days or Cancellations

We follow FCPS for cancellations due to weather. Masses will never be cancelled. Please use your best judgment to determine the road conditions and your family's ability to attend the Holy Eucharist.

Communication with Parents

The RE office relies on the contact information parents provide at the time of registration. We ask that parents supply a current email address, cell phone number and cell phone provider.

Home-Based Catechesis

As stated by the *National Directory for Catechesis*, "parents have the right and the duty to choose the kind of educational environment that they determine best suits their children's needs" (p. 259). We recognize the parents' commitment of time and energy providing assistance and support to these families.

Textbook: You will be provided with the information about the book and where to obtain it.

Syllabus: Parents will be provided with a copy of the part of the syllabus that pertains to their child's grade. This syllabus is prepared by the Arlington Diocese and used by our catechists.

Mass: We strongly encourage you and your family to attend the 10 AM Mass, because our parish priests make every effort at that Mass to focus their homily message to the parish children. Children and their parents must attend the Sunday Mass as required by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, sections 2180 and 2181, stated above.

Reconciliation Sessions: These opportunities for the wonderful sacrament of reconciliation are available for home-schooled children. Please check the calendar for the appropriate session for your child. Apart from these dates, families can make use of the normal parish hours for reconciliation.

Parents Meetings: Parents of children in sacramental preparation must attend the meetings scheduled in our calendar. You are welcome to attend the Back-to-school-Night if you wish to meet the teacher for your child's grade.

Audio-visual Material/Books: You are welcome to borrow books and movies from the Religious Education office for a week (from Sunday to Sunday, between 8:30 AM and 12:30 PM). Please know that there will be a \$25.00 fee towards lost audio-visual items; for lost books, the fee will depend on the catalogue price. Since we have a reduced number of items, we ask that you please do not exceed the lending time (one week).

Guidance/Assistance: Should you have questions about catechizing your child, please do not hesitate to contact one of our parish priests.