

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STUDENT HANDBOOK

Religious education for the children of Prince of Peace Catholic Church is intended to help parents prepare their children for spiritual life in the Catholic Church. While religious education is primarily the responsibility of the parent, we strive as a community to help prepare Catholic Christians in a world whose values are often the opposite of Christ's Gospel. We hope to give the young people the basics of their Catholic religion, but, more importantly, to nurture in them the gift of faith that God gives each of us; to show them how to build healthy, loving relationships; to awaken in them an awareness of the needs of others and to encourage them to actively respond; to help them become comfortable with prayer as a personal and communal experience; to foster a sense of belonging to a community of believers.

PURPOSE

The parish's Religious Education program is concerned with the Christian message of Jesus Christ. It aims to support the student's foundation of faith that has been provided by the parents and to foster a faith that becomes living, conscious, and active. We will:

1. Provide students with teachers who themselves profess a living faith.
2. Provide an atmosphere of learning where Christian community can flourish.
3. Provide times for liturgies in which students, parents, and teachers can participate.
4. Provide opportunities for Christian service to one another and the larger community.
5. Prepare students to celebrate the sacraments.

TEACHERS, AIDES AND STAFF

Young people need an environment where their faith can grow. They need the witness and example of adults who will guide them while listening and being sensitive to their circumstances and values.

- Religious education teachers, called catechists, are persons who give their time, talent, and effort to reaching others while continuing to grow in faith and knowledge themselves.
- They who minister as catechists represent the Church and set the tone for the overall program.
- They give witness by prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments.
- They have the duty of lesson and activity planning.
- The catechist shares these responsibilities with an aide when possible and necessary. Teacher's aides also assume the responsibility for personal growth and study.

CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR

1. Brings only those items needed for Religious Education.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to oneself.
3. Remains quiet and listens when someone else is talking.
4. Uses respectful language and actions.
5. Positively participates in class activities and discussions.
6. Is respectful of surroundings in the church and the classroom.

Possible consequences if rules are broken:

1. Verbal warning by the catechist.
2. Conference with the DRE.
3. Parents contacted by phone.
4. Parents contacted for meeting with the teacher and the DRE.

SAFETY

- Children are not to be in the classrooms without a catechist or parent present.
- Precautions must be taken when driving in the parking lot, as the children are not always looking out for moving vehicles. On Wednesday evenings, please pick up students in the front of the church. ***Do not drive around behind the church***, as many children will be crossing from the Education building to the Church.
- Unless otherwise stated, both parents will have access to their children. If neither parent is able to pick up their child after class, they ***must*** notify the Religious Education Office stating who has authority to take their child.

EMERGENCIES

Parents should give valid emergency phone numbers at the time of registration. This information will be kept strictly confidential.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

- If a student is planning to celebrate the Sacraments of First Holy Communion or Confirmation, he or she must attend Religious Education classes regularly at least one year prior to celebrating the Sacrament.
- The student must also meet attendance requirements during both the year prior and the preparation year.
- Students wishing to celebrate these sacraments are asked to present their certificate of baptism at the time of registration.
- Sponsors must be in a valid sacramental marriage and present their marriage certificate.
- Sponsors must also present baptismal certificates in a timely manner.
- For more information about celebrating a sacrament, contact the pastor or the deacon.

SERVICE/PARTICIPATION HOURS

Each student is to complete 25 service and participation hours each year. It is important for students to consider what true "service" consists of and why the church requires it. When performing service hours, the individual should experience growth in spirituality, satisfaction in giving of oneself, and growth in maturity. There are a number of tasks around the church that qualify as service. Following are some other examples:

- Volunteering/visiting at nursing homes
- Helping St. Vincent de Paul Society
- Doing yard work for those who are unable
- Assisting with a church fundraiser
- Rendering assistance to a worthy organization
- Please be honest in assessing whether your hours are truly a service. If in doubt, ask the DRE or the Pastor. The person receiving the benefit of the service hours must indicate the specifics in writing. Forms are available in the office.

Prince of Peace will provide a variety of activities and trips that are beneficial spiritually and help foster a sense of community. All students that are able are asked to participate in these activities.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN (RCIC)

RCIC is a program for unbaptized students and baptized students from another religion.

For those who are between the ages of 8-17.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

This program is offered to those who are 18 and older. Contact Maureen Wortham at 301-3421 for more information.

REGISTRATION

Religious Education: Yearly as announced in the parish bulletin, usually held in August.

Students wishing to celebrate the Sacrament of First Eucharist, Reconciliation, or Confirmation ***must*** present their certificate of *Baptism* at the time of registration.

Totus Tuus: Yearly as announced in the parish bulletin, held in June or July.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY: Religious Education shall not be denied or limited to anyone because of a person's race, national origin, sex, age, or physical or mental ability.

CALENDAR

Please keep and pay close attention to the calendar provided at the time of registration. A breakdown of the different class times for the different age groups will be included. Notice the opportunities provided for you as parents to support your child's efforts. Also, watch for notices of any changes to the calendar in the weekly Sunday bulletin. The most up-to-date information will be on the website: www.princeofpeacealtus.org.

PARENTS MEETINGS

Parents will be required to attend meetings regarding sacramental preparation for their children. Besides the sacramental preparation, there will be special liturgies and classroom activities that will require parental support.

PARENT NOTES

During the year it will be necessary to contact parents through notices sent home with the children. Please be aware of this and encourage your child to bring these to your attention.

VISTORS

We cannot because of safety and liabilities rules allow students to bring friends with them to RE class without prior notification to the DRE or assistant DRE and a written note from the visitor's parents, which needs to include their address and phone numbers. Many times catechists have prepared crafts or snacks and if they are unaware of the visitor, they will not have enough to go around. A student may visit no more than twice per the school year. However, they are welcome to enroll at any time.

ABSENCES

It is extremely important that your student attend classes regularly. Each lesson reviews and builds on the previous lesson. If it becomes necessary that your student be absent, please contact the Religious Education office or catechist to arrange for making up the lesson at home. If the child is in sacramental preparation, there is a limit to how many absences are allowed. Please refer to parent handouts given at the beginning of the year or you may call the RE office for more information.

BAD WEATHER

If it becomes necessary to cancel classes it will be announced on the local radio, TV stations and parish website www.princeofpeacealtus.org by 6:00 p.m. Only the pastor, deacon and/or the Director of Religious Education can cancel classes.

FIELD TRIPS

From time to time a catechist may wish to enforce a concept by taking the students on a field trip. In order for this to happen, parents will be required to sign a permission form stating that the student has permission to attend the special event. Another requirement is there **must** be a minimum of two adults, PLUS one adult for every six students and adequate transportation. Only those students who have a signed Medical Consent Form on file will be allowed to participate provided the above criteria are met.

MEDICATIONS

Religious Education personnel will administer only non-prescription medication provided the parent(s) has given signed consent on a Medical Consent Form. **Under no circumstances will Religious Education personnel supervise the taking of or administer any medication without written parental consent.** Prescription medication will not be kept or administered to students. If it is necessary, parents must come to the Religious Education Office to dispense prescription medication to their child.

TUITION

\$15 for the first child

\$25 for two children

\$30 for three or more in the same family

Additional Fee: First Communion and Confirmation - \$10

It is important that this fee be collected as it helps provide the books and materials needed for the program. However, no person will be denied enrollment because of inability to pay.

CURRICULUM

Preschool and Kindergarten: Who Am I? Image of God series, Ignatius Press

First - Eighth Grade: Faith and Life series, Ignatius Press

Confirmation: Level I – Chosen, part 1, with workbooks and DVD set

Level II – Chosen, part 1, with workbooks and DVD set

First Communion Preparation: Faith and Life series, Ignatius Press and St. Joseph First Communion Catechism

MEALS

Due to the generosity of parishioners, Prince of Peace will now provide meals for RE students beginning at 5:45 p.m. Confirmation and RCIC students will be expected to be in class promptly at 6:15 p.m. Other students will assist in clean-up each week. They will then go to class promptly at 6:45 p.m.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS: Students should not arrive earlier than **15 minutes** prior to class time. There is no supervision provided before this time. *No one is to be in a classroom without an adult present.*

Please pick up students promptly after class in the front of the Church.

SUNDAY MORNINGS: Students should not arrive earlier than **5 minutes** before class time begins. There is no supervision provided in the classrooms before this time. All students should be brought to their respective classroom by a parent or older sibling. No one is to be left in a classroom without an adult present.