

Saint Francis of Assisi Parish Religious Education Program

Rectory: 610-272-0402
Sfa600prep@gmail.com



2019-2020 *Family Handbook*

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We would like to welcome you and your family to St. Francis of Assisi's Religious Education Program. St. Francis of Assisi offers religious education for grades K through 6 on Sunday mornings from 10:30 AM – 11:45 AM, and for grades 7-12 on Sunday afternoon from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM, and 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM. This program is open to all parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi. If you are not yet a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi, please register with the Rectory office as soon as possible. We offer Sacramental Preparation for Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation within the Religious Education classes. When a child is properly prepared, then recommendations will be given to the pastor for reception of a sacrament.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish is committed to the religious education of all our children. Because parents are the first and primary teachers of the faith, our goal is to assist you; to help you continue to nourish the Faith of your child through instruction in Church doctrine, the reception of the sacraments, and in participation at Sunday mass in accordance with the Catholic Church teachings.

Religious Education is a life-long journey. Since we, the catechists, have only a brief period of time with your child(ren) weekly, we need your continued support and affirmation of this life-giving message at home every day. Each week your child will be given homework; we ask that you work with your child in completing all homework assignments and become an active teacher of the faith for your child. As a parent, your modeling of the faith is the greatest example of holiness your child will have; how you live your faith life, is how your child will live his/hers. As a parish family, we will continue to help you foster a life of holiness for your child(ren).

Mass attendance is intrinsic to faith life, and participation as a family is equally important. To encourage family participation, we are implementing a Family Mass once a month at 12:00 Noon and expect all families of both Religious Education and St. Francis School to attend. Please look at the Annual Calendar and make a note of the monthly Mass date so that you can participate.

God bless you and your family,
Sean Crosby
610-272-0402
Sfa600prep@gmail.com

Mass Schedule

Saturday	5:30 p.m.
Sunday	7:00 a.m.
	9:30 a.m.
	12:00 p.m.
	5:30 p.m.
Spanish Mass	2 nd Sunday of Month
	4:00 p.m.

Confession Schedule

Saturday after 8:30 a.m. Mass
& between 4:00-5:00 p.m.
or anytime by appointment

Information and Procedures

Religious Education Calendar

A copy of the yearly calendar will be included in the parents' envelope, and given out at the parents' meeting during Open House. Please refer to it for important dates and times. The calendar is always accessible on our parish website at: www.stfrancisorrstown.com, by clicking the Religious Education button on the left.

Mass is the most important part of your child's Religious Education.

The Mass is central to the Catholic Church & religious education of everyone. For this reason, we require weekly mass attendance for all students in our program, except for serious matters (e.g. family emergencies, illness, etc...). We ask that students bring proof of weekly mass attendance with them, such as a bulletin for that week. Religious Education classes are held on Sundays, September to May, from 10:30-11:45 a.m. Classes are scheduled between the end of the 9:30am Mass and the beginning of the 12:00 noon Mass so that you and your child can attend Mass together. Please remember to attend the Monthly Family Mass at 12:00 noon. See calendar for specific dates.

Arrival

Students are to **arrive at least 5 minutes before class** so that classes may begin promptly. They are to be escorted into the school building by a parent, or authorized adult with written permission from the parent, through the main entrance. Students are asked to wait in the hall until their catechist/teacher has arrived. *No student should be left unattended in a classroom.* We ask that parents please bring your child into the school building and to please park along the sidewalks to decrease traffic or in the school parking lot. Parents, or an authorized adult with explicit written permission from the parents, are to escort the child to and from their classroom each Sunday.

Dismissal

For the safety of all children; parents are to park in the lot or in a legal space and enter the building by the front doors. Do not double park your car and expect your child to come to the car. CHILDREN WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO TO ANY CAR WITHOUT AN ADULT. Students will be dismissed at **11:45 a.m.** from the main building's front doors where parents are to pick them up. Students in Levels 7 & 8 will be dismissed at **2:30 PM & 4:30 PM accordingly** from the main door in the Meeting House. Parents of students in Levels 7 & 8 are to enter the Meeting House to pick them up. No child will be permitted to leave the building unaccompanied by an adult. **A note needs to be given to the Director of the Religious Education Program as well as to the catechist if a child is going home with a different adult or is allowed to walk home.** A copy of this note will remain in the students file for the academic year in which it is written.

Attendance and Absences

All students should arrive on time. *Children arriving late will be posted in a tardy log; continuous late arrivals will result in a need for parents, children and Catechist/DRE to meet to verify that all materials are being understood. If not, parents will be required to assist children with the necessary materials and children will be tested for knowledge of content.* If your child is absent, please call the rectory (610-272-0402) before 10am or email (SFA600PREP@gmail.com) after 10:00 AM. Please follow up with a note to your child's catechist the following Sunday at class. A call will be placed to any family that has not reported their child absent by 10:45 a.m.

No child is permitted more than **3** unexcused absences during the year. Any child who is unexcused more than 3 times will have to make up that time with their parents and Mr. Crosby as well as make up the missing work. An evaluation of the work will be performed by Mr. Crosby in order to help teachers, students and parents continue working together. In the event that your child is absent, missed lessons will need to be made up. Please feel free to contact your child's catechist for further information regarding missed lessons.

Class Cancellation

If inclement weather or some other emergency requires that classes be cancelled, you will receive a phone call from your child's catechist or from the director. There are two possible snow make up days. Please review the annual calendar for details.

Class Assignment Policy

Since each year is built upon the previous year's knowledge, a child will generally not be permitted to skip grades. Children receiving a late start or missing a portion of a year (or more) of catechesis will have their knowledge evaluated for grade-level placement. Please be confident that we will keep in mind the dignity of your child and their entrance level will be based on knowledge, age and appropriate group.

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued three times a year to help you track your child's progress. Report cards will be issued as noted on the annual calendar. Please refer to it for end of trimester dates and for report card dates. Report cards will be viewed by Sean Crosby, the Director of Religious Education and a copy will be attached to your child's file. You may request a parent/catechist conference to discuss any concerns you may have. And should you feel a need to speak with the Director, please don't hesitate to call for an appointment.

Report Card and test grade equivalents:

Your child's report card will reflect, "Very Good", "Good", or "Needs Help". This will help you and your child know how they are progressing. If your child needs extra help at home than what they are getting, you will see that indication. When your child receives a test within class, those tests will be monitored and will help determine your child's preparedness to move on to the next level. If for any reason your child's catechist does not believe your child should be moved on to the next level, I will be willing to meet with you and discuss a summer plan to help your child.

Promotion to Next Grade

All students meeting the requirements set for each grade level will be promoted at the close of the yearly program, **unless** the DRE or pastor has determined that the child is not ready. **Non-promotion** may occur if a child, who is capable of meeting the full requirements, fails to do so (achieving less than a 70% average for the year). Non-promotion may also occur if the child has more than 3 unexcused absences and has not fulfilled the class level requirements. This decision is made by the catechist, the director, and the pastor.

Homework

The purpose of home assignments is to reinforce concepts learned in class and to support growth in responsibility. Since our children only meet once a week, reinforcement is especially important. Homework will be assigned according to the individual catechist. Please check your child's folder weekly for assignments or notes from the catechist. The best arrangement is for parent/guardian and child to work together on these assignments. In this way, both will experience enrichment and as a parent/guardian you will experience your child's spiritual growth.

Supplies

Students are required to bring a folder and writing instrument each week. We will provide the books and art supplies.

Discipline

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. All children are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner. Students are asked to respect the parish property, especially the property that might be in the desks and/or on the tables and bulletin boards of the rooms we share with the day school. If a discipline problem occurs, a parent will be contacted. Serious breaches of discipline will be brought to the attention of the pastor and may constitute a dismissal from the program.

Dress Code

All students in the St. Francis of Assisi PREP Program are expected to dress appropriately and modestly for their religious education classes. No "short shorts", t-shirts with inappropriate imagery or language, or flip-flops. Please use discretion with clothing choices for class. Casual clothing is permitted for classes.

Fire Drills and Safety Precautions

We will discuss fire drill precautions with the students to insure the safety of all students, teachers, and staff. Students are asked to follow the directions given to them by their catechist. They should leave the building in a quiet and orderly manner. If there is a true emergency that requires evacuation, students will be escorted to the grassy area next to the Church at Marshall and Buttonwood.

It has been mandated by the state of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government that every effort be made to protect children, teachers, and staff from the possibility of transmitting an infectious disease. We have disposable gloves constantly available in the Religious Education closet. Each catechist should have on hand disposable gloves in his/her folder each week, in case of an emergency

Release Time from Public Schools

All children who attend public schools are permitted by Pennsylvania State Law up to 32 hours of release time. This time is allowed by Act 175 of the Public School Code as amended in 1982. When release time is required for any student, a permission form will be sent home for parental signature. These forms are then submitted to the principal of your child's school. Release time is required for the sacramental programs and any event that may be deemed important for the religious education of any student. Please note that in the event your child should lose the form provided, parents have the authority to write a note requesting release time or modifying dismissal times.

Registration & Tuition

New registrations require the following:

1. The family to be registered parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi or have the permission of their pastor, and submit a letter of permission to the rectory to the attention of Sean Crosby.
2. A copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate, as well as dates of other sacraments received. This may be acquired through the rectory of the parish where the sacraments were received. If the sacrament was received at St. Francis, all that is needed is an approximate date.
3. A transfer letter from the program director if the child is transferring from another program.
4. If your family is registered at another parish, and is enrolled in a Sacrament Preparation class, ***the child must return to your home parish for the sacraments***. If you wish for your child to receive sacraments at St. Francis of Assisi, an additional letter of permission must be obtained from the pastor of your home parish.
5. Most recent Custody Agreements or Custody Order, (if applicable)
6. The tuition fee is as follows:
 - 1 Child: \$160
 - 2 Children: \$170
 - 3+ Children: \$180
7. Tuition payments are to be made at the time of registration or following a payment plan given by the Director. Payments may be made in cash or check made out to "St. Francis of Assisi Parish" with "PREP" on the memo line.

Re-registration for students presently enrolled in the program will be held in the spring of the current year. Please respect the deadline date for return on the registration form. Any family not returning the form by the established date will be charged a \$40.00 late fee. If a child withdraws from the program after classes have started, no refund will be issued. A **registration and re-registration** fee is established for children attending Religious Education. The fee is determined by the pastor and the director to help offset the cost of the total program, which includes texts and supplies. A portion of the fee is also applied to the cost of courses, workshops, and seminars for the catechists, as required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. So that all students are given the chance to receive a religious education, a family may contact the director in order to make financial arrangements based on one's ability to pay the tuition.

Sacrament Programs

The Sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion are celebrated in 2nd and 3rd grades or higher. The Sacrament of Confirmation is administered on a schedule given to the parish by the bishops of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in grades 7 & 8. When students are prepared, they are recommended to the Pastor. There will be mandatory meetings for parents and retreats noted on the calendar along with other formation activities and events for preparation; please note these important dates and events in preparation for the reception of the sacraments. Failure to attend parent meetings may affect the student's readiness for reception of the sacrament.

Homeschooling Policy

St. Francis of Assisi adheres to the guidelines issued by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Pastor has also implemented a bi-annual testing which should be done to regulate the content knowledge of the child's religious education. A child receiving a sacrament will be mandated to participate in all events/retreats pertaining to that sacrament. Parents who wish to home-school their child should contact the director to discuss these guidelines and for assistance.

Catholic Youth Organization (CYO)

CYO Sports are open to all parish youth who are attending our Religious Education Program, St. Francis School, or are homeschooled. At St. Francis of Assisi, there are 7th and 8th grade Varsity teams and 5th and 6th grade Junior Varsity Teams that compete against other schools in the Philadelphia Archdiocese Region 21. We offer participation in the following sports: Volleyball (girls), Field Hockey (girls), Basketball (boys and girls) Baseball, Softball, and Track. See bulletin for updated information.

CYO also offers Bidy Sports: Indoor Soccer in the fall and Basketball in the late winter (February-March) for grades 1st – 4th. For more information please see bulletin. From time to time, you will receive information from CYO through Religious Education.

Altar Servers

Altar Servers play a very important role during the Mass. Their role includes; assisting the priest, carrying the cross or candles in the procession, dressing the altar and assisting those distributing Holy Communion. Altar Servers also assist at other liturgical and devotional gatherings such as Advent and Lenten services, Forty Hours devotion, and more. Servers are scheduled for weekend liturgies, weddings, funerals, and daily Mass depending on their level of experience.

We are always looking for boys and girls who may be interested in serving God at the altar. **New servers must be in 5th grade or older and should have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Holy Communion and Reconciliation. Servers are able to continue serving through their high school years.**

Contact: Fr. James E. Goerner at the rectory: 610-272-0402.

Program Overview

At St. Francis of Assisi, we adhere to the Religious Education Guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. We use textbooks reviewed and approved by the Office for Catechetical Formation as well as by the USCCB. Each grade is expected to memorize prayers important to their Catholic Faith and appropriate to their grade level. ***The best way to memorize prayers is to say them with your child on a daily basis. Family prayer is so important because it instills in the child the understanding that prayer is special.***

The Kindergarten class will provide kindergarten children with a readiness for future catechesis. Bible stories, the celebration of the seasons and special days of the Church year, and key teachings of the Catechism of the Catholic Church will be presented to the children to meet the unique learning and faith development needs of kindergarten children.

Level 1 will focus on the children coming to know Jesus and how to celebrate the Kingdom of God. Activities foster Catholic identity and help the child to follow Jesus every day.

Prayers to be memorized:

Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Grace before Meals, Angel of God

Level 2 is a sacrament grade with a focus on the Sacrament of Penance and an introduction to the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. The children are called to enter into a sacramental relationship with Jesus and the Christian Community. They will explore the nature of celebration, the saving action of Jesus, and the moral choices involved in being a good follower of Jesus.

Prayers to be memorized:

Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Grace before Meals, Mass Responses, Introduction to the Rosary, Angel of God

Level 3 focuses primarily on the life of the Church and the reception of Holy Communion. The mission and structure of the Church are presented with emphasis on the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. Saints and Christian heroes offer role models. Activities stress the universal nature of the Church as a sign of God's Kingdom.

Prayers to be memorized:

Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Mass Responses, Act of Contrition, Grace before and after meals, the Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, Apostles Creed

Level 4 explores Christian morality. In this year the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are studied and learned. A deeper sense of examining one's conscience is also fostered and encouraged.

Prayers to be memorized:

Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, Hail Holy Queen, Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love, the Rosary, Mass Responses

Level 5 focuses on an in-depth study of the sacraments and also the Creed. The structure of the liturgy and the hierarchy of the Church is emphasized for a closer examination on the Tradition of the Church.

Prayers to be memorized:

The Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, The Angelus, The Memorare, the Creed, and all prayers of lower grades

Level 6 focuses on Scripture, specifically the Old Testament, Introduction to Church history, and the lives of the saints. Key and notable figures of the Old Testament are examined in order to provide a closer examination of salvation history as illustrated through Scripture.

Prayers to be memorized:

The Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, The Angelus, The Memorare, the Creed, and all prayers of lower grades.

Level 7 focuses on the topics of prayer, Jesus, and prayer. Key topics of discussion focus on the person of Jesus Christ, Trinitarian theology and liturgical prayer and how it transforms the person to grow in their relationship with God.

Prayers to be memorized:

The Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, The Angelus, The Memorare, the Creed, and all prayers of lower grades

Level 8 focuses on the Church, the History of the Church, the Liturgy, and Church Councils with a focus on how the Church has impacted the culture throughout history and today.

Prayers to be memorized:

The Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, The Angelus, The Memorare, the Creed, and all prayers of lower grades

May God bless you and your family as your journey together toward Him!