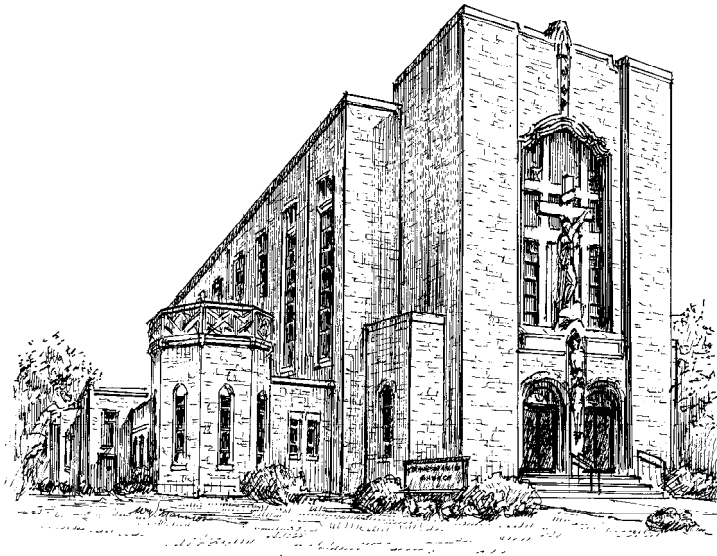


**Saint Francis of Assisi Parish  
Religious Education Program  
R.E.P.**

**2008/2009  
Family Handbook**



**Rectory: 610-272-0402  
School: 610-272-0501**

Dear Parents/Guardians:

We would like to welcome you and your family to St. Francis of Assisi's Religious Education Program (CCD/REP). We have developed this handbook in order to assist you in answering any questions that you may have in the upcoming year.

St. Francis of Assisi offers religious education for grades K through 8. This program is open to all parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi. We offer Sacramental Preparation for Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish is committed to the religious education of its children as taught by Jesus Christ. Our goal is to assist you, as your child's first teachers, to continue to nourish the Faith through instruction in Church doctrine and in the reception of the sacraments, in accordance with our Church teachings.

Religious Education is a life-long journey. Since we, as the catechists, have only a brief period of time with your children, we will need your continued support and affirmation of this life-giving message. As a parent, your modeling of the faith is the greatest of teachers. As a community of believers we look forward to assisting you and your children in this great act of salvation, with the help of the Holy Spirit: to know, love, and serve God.

If you have any questions or concern, please do not hesitate to contact me.

God bless you and your family,  
Madelyn O'Hara  
Coordinator of Religious Education  
610-272-0402  
madelynohara@yahoo.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.

**Confession Schedule**

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

## Information and Procedures

### **CCD/REP Calendar**

A copy of the yearly calendar has been included in this handbook. Please refer to it for important dates and times. Monthly calendars will also be sent home with your child.

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

Religious Education classes are held on Sundays, September to May, from 10:30-11:45 a.m. Classes are scheduled so that families can attend the 9:30 a.m. Mass together and then the children may be dropped off for class.

Students are to arrive by **10:30 a.m.** They may be dropped off at the main building's front entrance (Buttonwood St.) or walked in by a parent. Students are asked to wait in the hall until their catechist/teacher has arrived. No student should be left unattended in a classroom.

Students will be dismissed at **11:45 a.m.** from the main building's front doors. Parents are asked to park in the lot or in a legal space and enter the building by the front doors. Please do not double park when dropping off or picking up your child. No child will be permitted to leave the building unaccompanied by an adult. **A note needs to be given to the catechist if the child is going home with a different adult or is allowed to walk home.**

### **Attendance and Absences**

All students should arrive on time. If a child has a problem with chronic lateness, the director may elect to track the minutes and count the minutes as an unexcused absence.

If your child is absent, please call the school office after 10:00 a.m. **610-272-0501.** Please follow up with a note to your child's catechist at the next CCD/REP 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 is in danger of not being promoted to the next grade level.

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.

### **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. The tool for evaluation will be a final exam selected from the Archdiocesan Catechetical Guidelines and graded by the director. A score of 75% or better is required to test out of a grade.

### **Report Cards**

Progress reports will be issued once a year and report cards will be issued twice a year. The dates of issuance are stated in the calendar. Progress reports and the first report card are to be signed and returned the following Sunday. You may request a parent/catechist conference to discuss any concerns you may have.

#### **Report Card and test grade equivalents:**

90-100%	Excellent
80-89%	Very Good
70-79%	Average
69-Below	Unsatisfactory

### **Promotion to Next Grade**

All students meeting the requirements set for each grade level will be promoted at the close of the yearly program. **Non-promotion** will occur if a child, who is capable of meeting the full requirement, 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 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 sharpened pencil to class 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 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.

## **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 will comply with these regulations. Each catechist/staff member will have on hand disposable gloves 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.
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.
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 from St. Francis of Assisi, an additional letter of permission must be obtained from the pastor of your home parish.

**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 late fee. No late registrations will be accepted on the first day of classes. 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 CCD/REP. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. The Sacrament of Confirmation is administered every other year to our 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. There will be mandatory meetings noted on the calendar regarding important dates and events in preparation for the reception of the sacraments.

### **Homeschooling Policy**

St. Francis of Assisi adheres to the guidelines issued by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Parents who wish to homeschool their child should contact the director to discuss these guidelines and for assistance.

### **CYO**

Parents are advised that our CYO is open to all students who attend St. Francis of Assisi Religious Education for the entire school year. Activities are open to all children in 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **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.

**Grade 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, Gory Be, Grace before Meals, Angel of God

**Grade 2** is a sacrament grade with a focus on the Sacraments of Penance and 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

**Grade 3** focuses primarily on the life of the Church. 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

**Grade 4** explores Christian morality. In this year the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are studied and learned.

**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

**Grade 5** has its focus on an in-depth study of the sacraments and also the Creed, scripture, Church history, and the lives of the saints. It may also be a year of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation so the student may be required to memorize the material in the study guide, complete the required service project, and saint's project which are part of the preparation program.

**Prayers to be memorized:** The Rosary, Hail Holy Queen, The Angelus, The Memorare

**Grade 6** concentrates on the study of the bible. The Old Testament is studied throughout most of the year with some focus on how Jesus fulfills the Law in the New Testament. This is also a year for the preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. The student will be required to complete the items that are associated with Confirmation.

**Prayers to be memorized:** The Hail Mary, The Hail Holy Queen, The Rosary, The Memorare, The Angelus, The Magnificat, The Precepts of the Church

**Jr. High Program** incorporates grades 7 and 8. The lessons will be taught to instill a deeper understanding of Jesus Christ, morality, sacraments, the Church, the Trinity, Revelation, and the Kingdom of God. The activities in this class will encourage your child to explore, understand, and live their faith.