

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
PARENT HANDBOOK 2017-2018

Kindergarten, Grades 1-8,

Reconciliation and First Communion Grades 1 & 2

Confirmation Candidates Grades 7-8

Parish of Saint Francis de Sales Religious Education
129-16 Rockaway Beach Blvd.
Belle Harbor, New York 11694
Telephone: 718-634-6911
www.sfdsparish.org

August 15, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

On behalf of our Pastor, Reverend William Sweeney and Reverend James Cunningham, our Moderator and the Catechetical Staff we welcome both you and your child(ren) to a brand new and exciting year in the Religious Education Program. We are pleased to offer two options for religious education, namely: Onsite Wednesday Classes for Grades K to 8 and Online Catholic Homeschooling for Grades 1, 3,4,5, 6. We are proud to be one of the pioneering parishes in the Diocese of Brooklyn to offer Online Catholic Homeschooling provided by My Catholic Faith Delivered.

Our catechetical team is prepared for a strong and dynamic formation year but we need your help, parents/guardians! We are called to the witnessing and sharing of the Church's official teachings and her rich traditions rooted in the beliefs of our Faith as handed down to us from our founder, our Lord, and our God, Jesus Christ. As we embark upon a new year in our religious education, program we will gather together on Catechetical Sunday, September 17th 2017 at 10:30 A.M. for Holy Mass. At this time we will celebrate commitment of our catechists to sharing the faith in the new school year. We look to deepening our Catholic Faith as we celebrate our faith with deeper love and commitment. On behalf of the Religious Education Team we wish you and your child(ren) every spiritual blessing and prayer. .

Sincerely yours in Jesus and Mary,

Anne Marie Greene
Anne Marie Greene
Director of Religious Education.

Fr. Bill Sweeney
Rev. William Sweeney
Pastor

Fr. James Cunningham
Rev. James Cunningham
Moderator

<p>St. Francis de Sales Religious Education Program Courses, Policies and Procedures</p>
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Grades K-8

The Diocesan Curriculum *The Seed is The Word of God* is followed in all grades. Our textbooks correlate with the standards in the curriculum.

Every class will have a minimum of two *Family Life* Lessons as mandated by the diocese.

Children will also attend a minimum of one Child Lures Session.

We offer an online curriculum through My Catholic Faith Delivered. It has content in each lesson, as well as an assessment that must be completed in order to move to the next chapter. All chapters MUST be completed by the end of May and a certificate of completion handed into the office in order for promotion to the next grade. Failure to complete will result in failure to promote.

Two Year First Communion Preparation Program

Students in Grade 1 and 2 are prepared for the Sacraments Penance and Holy Eucharist and those in Grades 6 through 8 are prepared for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Two Year Confirmation Preparation Program

Grades 6-8 students are presented with a summary of the Catholic Faith and Catholic Doctrine in an age appropriate way. They are prepared to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

Fees

One child \$100 Two children \$150 Three or more \$200

Fees are due at time of registration unless other arrangements are made through the Religious Education Office. We do not accept debit or credit cards.

The registration fee for home taught children would be the same as those children who attend class.

There is a \$125 fee for Confirmation candidates. It covers the retreat, facilitator fee, food, Confirmation robe, program and flowers.

There is a \$125.00 fee for First Reconciliation, First Communion and RCIC candidates. This fee covers banners, retreat, food, activities, program and flowers.

Inclement Weather

We follow the inclement weather directives of New York City.

Listen to 1010 WINS (AM)

You might also receive an email from the Religion Education office.

Parental Involvement

As stated in the documents of Vatican II, "...As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must, therefore, be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their education" (Cf. VAT. II Declaration on Christian Education, n. 3: (1965).

In Sadlier **We Believe** Series as well as the Benziger **Family Life** Series offer ideas and activities to connect faith and family and reinforce learning at home.

Children Preparing for Sacraments

Children preparing for the sacraments of Penance, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation are required to attend Religious Education classes for two years: Grades One and Two for Penance and Holy Eucharist and Grades Six through Eight for confirmation. This is to ensure that the Diocesan guidelines are met. "These guidelines are intended to assist catechists in fulfilling the mission of the Church to educate her children in the fullness of the Catholic Faith: to believe what the Creed teaches; To participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church; To live a life of love for God and neighbor; and to pray to the Father through Jesus, His Son, in the Holy Spirit."

Special Needs Children

We will work with you, your child, and their Catechist to meet your child's special needs for sacramental preparation for Grades K-8 students. If your child has an active IEP with the DOE, please inform the office and/or catechist so we can assist them in providing the best environment for them and others in their faith journey.

Volunteers

Our program cannot be run without your help. We need catechists, assistant catechists, and substitute catechists. We will be glad to work with your schedule so that you can evangelize.

Catechists are responsible for teaching the class, and the assistants help the catechist with lessons, attendance, projects, etc. Substitute catechists fill in for the catechists and may specify the grade they would like to substitute for.

All volunteers must complete mandatory diocesan paperwork including a background check and attend a VIRTUS Seminar.

All Volunteers under the age of 18 must take the Diocesan course: www.shieldthevulnerable.org.

All new catechists are required to attend an orientation session.

All Catechists are required to attend at least one training workshop. Additional training sessions are offered during the year.

Sunday Mass

Mass attendance is vital to our religious formation and the development of a Catholic community. Children learn by repetition, consistency and good example. When Sunday Mass is part of children's regular routine, they learn to maintain the habit of weekly Mass attendance. Seeing the importance their parents place Sunday Mass attendance teaches them obedience and discipline.

Our Sunday Mass times are as follows:

Saturday Vigil Mass: 5:30 pm

Sunday: 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 10:30 am, 12:00 pm and 5:30 pm

Prayers

The Diocese has set up guidelines for the memorization of devotional and liturgical prayers. Keep in mind that the family is where the learning of prayer first takes place. We ask that parents take the responsibility of making prayer an integral part of family living. Your child will also be saying prayers in class each week and an assistant will be listening to them and reporting their progress to the catechist. Please help your child learn the required prayers each year.

Advent/Lent Confessions

We attempt to schedule confessions during Advent and Lent. Confession is recommended every three months. Confessions are heard at St. Francis Church at 4:00pm every Saturday.

Attendance

For the safety of our children, parents are asked to use entrance to Msgr. Reddy Hall as the way to enter the Religious Education program. The Director/Supervisor will meet your child at the door and make sure they get to their class. There is no need for the parent to enter the Hall with them, unless you need to speak with the catechist.

Children will be dismissed as follows: Grades K-2 through the Academy doors, and grades 3-5 through the gym door. Grades 6-8 will be dismissed through the Msgr. Reddy Hall doors.

Any student who is late must report to the Office before going to class.

We ask that you make every effort to have your children in class each week and on time. Our classes build on each other and carry a central focus throughout the year. Religious Education class's attendance should take precedence over all extracurricular activities, including sports. Students are required to attend at least 80% (miss no more than 5 classes) of the scheduled classes to be recommended for the reception of the sacraments. Those who miss more than 5 classes could be asked to repeat the class.

If your child has five consecutive absences, we will notify you to discuss whether your child will remain in the program. A parent/guardian is requested to call the Religious Education Office (718-945-6911) to report that a student will not be able to attend class. A child who is absent is responsible for all classwork, tests, projects, etc. that he/she has missed.

If early dismissal is necessary, notify the catechist when bringing your child to class and let the office know. Parents may **NOT** go to the classroom to pick up their child. An assistant will bring your child to you in the Religious Ed office. An Early Release Form must be completed.

Students must be picked up on time. Volunteers run our program and they need to leave immediately after class.

Books and Supplies

Students will be issued books a pencil and crayons where needed. The children are to bring those supplies with them every week. We will distribute their envelopes on the first day of class. The current price of the book will be charged to replace a lost book.