

Sacred Heart Parish West Reading, PA

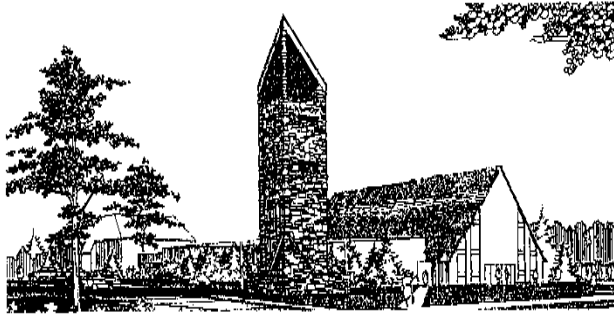
Religious Education Program Catechetical Policy

2024-2025

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DRE: Valerie Christo

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Our Mission:

“In Jesus’ Heart We Live, Learn and Love”

701 Franklin St.

West Reading PA 19611

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GOAL

The goal of our Parish Religious Education Program is to strengthen one's faith and love of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord, by way of a greater knowledge, appreciation, and acceptance of the Gospel message, as taught through the sacred and living tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. Our Religious Education Program for children aims to assist parents, who are primary educators of their children, in fostering their children's growth in faith.

FAITH

"Faith is a gift of God which calls people to conversion". The faithful Christian is one who accepts Jesus' values and attitudes toward life as his attitudes, and Jesus' teachings as his norms in life. As a faithful catholic, he accepts the Catholic Church as his home and as his teacher. Faith involves knowledge, but knowledge is not faith. The more we know what God did for us, the more we love him and act upon our faith. Faith is a gift that needs to be nourished in order to grow and accompany us through our lifetime until one day when we will fulfill our belief in eternity. Growth in faith is a dynamic process, which goes on throughout life. It does not reach fulfillment in a year or eight years or twelve years, but it is a life-long process.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We believe that Religious Education involves more than knowledge. Quality of Religious Education is a balance of information, formation, and transformation. Through it, we can shape and change attitudes and behaviors to reflect the mind and mission of Jesus Christ. In our classes, we strive to inform our students about our faith; in our homes we do our best to form our students minds and hearts to share the gospel message of being responsible for our brothers and sisters less fortunate than us; in our Church we celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, as well as Adoration, Prayer Service, Stations of the Cross, Rosaries, etc.....all geared toward the transformation of our children's mind and soul.

ADMISSION POLICY

The Religious Education Program is open to all children in Grade's 1st through 8th, who are registered with Sacred Heart Parish. To complete registration, the parent must present a copy of his/her child/children's Baptismal Certificate. It is also required that all pertinent health information or any unusual condition be brought to the attention of the Director.

REGISTRATION

Registration for **new students** is held during the Spring and Summer. Forms are available by e-mail or may be obtained at the Religious Education Office and should be returned with a copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate and the Registration Fee.

Families of students who **currently attend** our Religious Education Program will receive a Registration Update Form in the early Spring, by e-mail. This form should be returned **before** the close of our Religious Education Program at the end of April. It will give us sufficient time to find enough teachers, order books, and make class rosters. We do not register by e-mail. The form needs to be printed and sent to our office.

FINANCIAL

A Religious Education fee will be assessed to each student annually and is *payable upon registration*. Please note that a discount fee is given for families that register early, within the time frame allowed for the early registration. **If there is a serious financial difficulty, please contact the Religious Education Office or Monsignor DeSantis.**

SESSIONS

Classes are scheduled Tuesday evenings from 6:15 PM to 7:30 PM for children in 1st to 8th grade.

SUNDAY MASS

Sunday Mass is our central act of worship, our “peak experience” as a community of faith that nourishes us and gives us the strength to love and serve one another for the rest of the week. **It is, therefore, our privilege to participate in Mass every Sunday.**

A child acquires a sense of belonging to Sacred Heart Parish as a Roman Catholic community of faith by coming to Sunday Mass, participating in parish activities, and attending the Religious Education Program. Attendance of Religious Education classes does not replace Mass on Sunday (or Saturday at 5:00 PM).

Youth who come to Church with their peers, by their presence and behavior, can be a wonderful example to young children and an inspiration to their parents and other adults.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Dress needs to be modest, neat, and in good taste. All extremes in attire should be avoided and good judgment should prevail. If students come to class from the sports field, please make sure that your child will change their muddy shoes before they enter the building.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We will follow the example of Jesus when we gather together. Our expectation is that everyone gathers together with a spirit of welcome, caring and cooperation.

The catechists oversee the session, and they are responsible for maintaining an orderly environment favorable to learning; and each student is responsible for fostering a good learning environment by their own behavior.

Respect and courtesy are required from all students. In case of misbehavior or use of inappropriate or abusive language by any student, the director, catechist, and parents will counsel the student to achieve a code of conduct conducive to a good learning situation.

PUNCTUALITY

To cover the required material, the catechist needs to begin and end all sessions on time. **Students are expected to come on time and parents are expected to pick them up on time.** Excessive tardiness will be brought to the attention of the parents and dealt with on an individual basis.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Please have your children here on time. Classes start promptly at 6:15 PM. Our doors will be locked at 6:25 PM. Arrivals and dismissals will be limited to the door at the rear of the school. The back door will be locked at all times, with an adult volunteer manning the door until 6:25 PM. Parents, without clearances filed in our office, will not be allowed to enter the building. Children will be allowed into the building starting at 6:00 PM and directed to wait outside of their classrooms until their teacher arrives. Students are not allowed inside of the classroom without an adult present. The doors of all the classrooms will be locked at all times.

At dismissal time, 7:30 PM, parents will line up at the back door, at the rear of the school, and a volunteer will ask the parents for their child's name, and your child/children will be called to exit the building. It is especially important that if you are carpooling, all children involved know who will be picking them up.

ATTENDANCE

All children of the Parish who do not attend Sacred Heart School are invited to participate in our Religious Education Program from 1st through 8th Grade. Regular attendance is important at each level since new material is introduced during each class. If a child is ill or unable to attend class, *an e-mail, or phone call (to the Director 610-374-5430)* stating the reason for the absence is appreciated. If the child's illness causes excessive absences, please notify the Director so that alternative lessons may be implemented.

HANDHELD DEVICES

NO handheld devices are permitted in the building during the Religious Education session, and if the student brings these devices with them, teachers will collect them at the beginning of class. This includes cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, or iPhones, etc.....

This is to ensure the integrity of the program, as well as the privacy of all students. Students and parents may always use our office phone 610-374-5430.

PRAYERS

Each student will receive a prayer sheet at the beginning of the year to ensure prayer continuity. Parents are the child's first and most consistent teachers. Therefore, the best way to ensure that children learn the required prayers is for the parents to pray with them daily. This will help with the memorization of prayers as well as cultivate a prayer life within the child and the family.

HOMEWORK

Children are expected to spend a reasonable amount of time reviewing the material covered in class. Parents are asked to ensure that the children complete all tasks required of them.

TEXTBOOKS

Each student should come to class prepared with their textbooks. Pencils and bookbags will be provided. *Sixth, seventh and eighth graders are to bring their Bibles to each class.*

RELIGIOUS CURRICULUM

1ST LEVEL – God is Good (Salvation)

2nd LEVEL – Blessed (Reconciliation/Eucharist)

3rd LEVEL – We Believe (The Catholic Faith)

4th LEVEL – God Guides Us (Ten Commandments and Beatitudes)

5th LEVEL – We Worship (The Seven Sacraments are Presented)

6th LEVEL – God Calls a People (Old and New Testament)

7th LEVEL – Decision Point (Dynamic Catholic)

8th LEVEL – Decision Point (Dynamic Catholic)

SACRAMENTS

First Penance – 2nd Level

First Holy Communion – 2nd Level

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be received in the 8th Level for all students.

Please see the Director for Diocesan Policy.

REPORT CARDS

Report Cards will be issued twice a year, during the month of December, and at the end of the school year. The end of the year Report Card may be kept by the parents and can be used as a reference should the need arise.

CANCELLATION/EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Occasionally it becomes necessary to cancel classes due to the weather. In case of inclement weather, the following policy will be in effect:

- If Sacred Heart School cancels or has an early dismissal, there will be no Religious Education classes that evening. If there is snow in the evening and Wyomissing School District cancels their sports, then we will cancel classes.
- Check your e-mail (we may email the lesson of the day for you to do with your children that evening.)

VOLUNTEERS

Parents are invited and encouraged to assist in the Religious Education Program. Volunteers are welcome in the roles of teachers, teacher aides, substitute teachers, hall monitors, and for special projects. All volunteers must have completed our List of Clearances to be eligible. Please call the Religious Education Office if you wish to help in any way.

HANDBOOK REVISIONS

The Sacred Heart Religious Education Office reserves the right to amend this Handbook for just cause. Revisions were last made on February 28, 2024.

*This program voluntarily complies with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Non-custodial parents will be given access to unofficial copies of student records, and catechists will be available to discuss the student's progress **unless** a court order providing otherwise is filed with the Director.*

Welcome to Sacred Heart's Religious Education Program!