

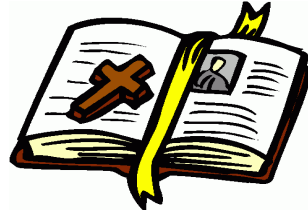
# ST. PATRICK P.R.E.P. FAMILY HANDBOOK



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# FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES IN JESUS CHRIST



“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ.” (Catechesei Tradendae #5)

This handbook contains certain policies and procedures for St. Patrick P.R.E.P. Program. The program may change any of its policies and procedures as needed and apply them as circumstances dictate.

In the event of such a change, parents will be given prompt notification and provided with an addendum as necessary.

If you have questions about a particular policy or procedure, please contact the program director.

Students and parents must accept and abide by the policies and procedures contained in this handbook in order for the student to attend the program.

## MISSION STATEMENT

“St. Patrick Church, in the process of strengthening its Catholic Community, seeks to make the Gospel of Jesus Christ better known and loved through prayer, stewardship and good works.

# **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## **ADMISSION:**

On behalf of the St. Patrick PREP faculty, we welcome you and your child(ren) to our parish religious education program. This program is opened to all parish registered members with children in grades kindergarten through 7<sup>th</sup> who attend public or non-parochial schools.

## **APPOINTMENTS:**

Our P.R.E.P. Program is held every week with the exception of major holidays and major parish events. While the Program recognizes the difficulty in scheduling various appointments, the scheduling of doctor and other appointments should not be made during program hours except for cases of emergency, in which case the parent agrees to complete any missed work and lessons at home.

Late arrivals or early dismissals due to medical appointments are strongly discouraged, and early dismissals due to extracurricular or sports related activities are not permitted. Children must be in class **a minimum of 60 minutes in order for it to count.**

## **ARRIVAL PROCEDURES:**

Please note, for the safety of our students and staff, and to comply with the Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, parents are not permitted to enter the school building during arrival time on Sunday and arrival and dismissal on Monday unless on official business with the program, in which case the program director should be contacted ahead of time. Doors will open 10 minutes prior to the start of class and remain open for 10 minutes after the start of class.

**Sunday Students:** are to enter the doors off Chestnut Alley and go directly to their classrooms. Doors open at 9:55 a.m. and close at 10:10 a.m.

For dismissal doors will open at 11:20 p.m. Parents sign out their student and wait in the hallway. Your child will be called and you may exit the building via the St. Joseph door and walk through the courtyard or exit the front doors and cross safely at the light on the corner of Meredith & Cypress Streets.

**Monday Students:** are to enter the doors off Chestnut Alley and go directly to their classrooms. Doors open at 4:35 p.m. and close at 4:55 p.m. For dismissal someone will start to gather names around 6:05 p.m. Please be sure the student's last name is displayed on the dashboard.

Late arrivals or early dismissals due to medical appointments are strongly discouraged, and early dismissals due to extracurricular or sports related activities are not permitted before 11:15AM on Sundays and 6:00 PM on Mondays. Please include to your catechist in emails and send a written note.

Children must be in class **a minimum of 60 minutes in order for it to count.**

## **CUSTODY POLICY:**

The Program will not become involved in adjudicating the rights of parents in relation to the custody of their children. Therefore, if a parent is separated, divorced, or unmarried, it is the **responsibility of both** biological parents to provide the program director with the latest, most up-to-date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. The Program will request these documents at the time of registration. If either Custodial Order or Custody Agreement changes during the course of the year, it remains the **responsibility of both** biological parents to provide the revised document to the program director immediately. This is also true in the event that such an agreement is issued after the time of enrollment. **In the absence of such documentation the program will and must assume that parents share legal custody.**

Our program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and other program related information regarding the child.

If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the **responsibility of the custodial parent** to provide the program director with **an official and the latest copy of the court order.**

If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the **responsibility of the custodial parent to provide** the program director with **an official copy** of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

In situations with shared legal custody, the parish program expects the cooperation of both parents, especially in regards to sacramental preparation and celebrations.

## **DAYS AND TIMES OF CLASSES:**

Sunday 10:05 to 11:35 AM  
Kindergarten, Levels 1, 2 and 7

Monday 4:45 to 6:15 PM  
Levels 1 through 6

All students may arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the program. For the safety reasons, the school doors will be locked 10 minutes after the start time of class. If your child will be staying after school and arriving late, please notify the office by 2:00 p.m.

## **DISMISSAL:**

Sunday dismissal: Parents are asked to enter the back door of the school by Chestnut Alley and form a line in the school on the first floor. Print your child's name on the sign out sheet. Use the front steps to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway. Students will be dismissed after prayers. Exit the building via the front door of the building (corner of Cypress & Meredith) or the side door by the St. Joseph Room.

Monday dismissal: Students will leave through the back doors of the school building as the family car approaches the dismissal. All Monday car drivers are required to have the family name posted on the passenger side of the windshield. This action allows for a quick steady dismissal.

Parent "walk-ups" to the dismissal are to come to the St. Joseph door at the breezeway.

Unauthorized adults (which includes parents and guardians) are not permitted to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the school building for the safety of our students and staff except at Sunday dismissal. Adherence to the dismissal procedures will help to allow all students to exit the building in a safe, orderly, and timely manner.

## **ENROLLMENT:**

Families of students enrolled in PREP are required to be registered with St. Patrick Parish or have letter from the pastor of the parish they attend stating they are in good standings. Registration of new and returning students is held in early spring. Registration forms can be obtained on the church site [www.stpatrickkennettsquare.org](http://www.stpatrickkennettsquare.org). Inquiry concerning registration of new students may be directed to the Religious Education Office (610-444-2214). All entering students must be 5 by August 31<sup>st</sup> of that year to enter kindergarten and 6 to enter first grade.

**Applicants whose children have not been baptized at St. Patrick are asked to provide a copy of their child's baptismal certificate.**

Families will re-register for PREP classes each spring. In this way we are able to update our records. Once in the program you will be reminded of spring registration. Registration on line or paper form can be found on the church website. Registration is handled on a first come first placed. On line registration and payment will close on July 19th but you will be able to register by printing the forms and returning them to the office with payment. There is a \$25.00 late fee for any returning family registering after July 19th.

The faith formation provided in our programs involves incremental learning. That is each year builds upon the learning of the previous year. Therefore, it is essential that students remain enrolled in the program consistently from year-to-year. Any student who voluntarily leaves the program for a period of time will be required to make-up the missed year/years upon reenrollment into the program. For example, a student who leaves the program after completing level 3 and re-enrolls when they are in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The family is required to make arrangements with the DRE to complete the levels needed.

### **PROGRAM FEES:**

Program fees are a necessary part of the Program and help ensure that the Program can provide students and their families with the most current and best catechetical resources for their formation needs.

The PREP Program fee is due in full at the time of registration. However, being sensitive to the needs of our families, a deferred payment plan is available upon request. Anyone who cannot pay the fee in full at the time of registration or who has difficulty making payment due to hardship should contact the program director to discuss other possible arrangements.

In the event that a student voluntarily leaves the PREP during the program year, or is dismissed from the program for any reason including, but not limited to poor attendance, a disciplinary incident, or the possession of drugs, drug paraphernalia, or a weapon on parish property, **no refund of tuition** or material fees will be made to the family.

In addition, there will be certain material fees associated with sacramental preparation that are in addition to the PREP Program fee. These material fees cover incidentals associated with sacramental preparation, including, but not limited to, sacramental enrichments packets, retreat experiences, guest speakers, certificates, etc. These fees have separate due dates which will be provided to families of sacramental candidates under separate cover.

### **SNACK FREE ZONE:**

In response to the many PREP students with food allergies, the Program is making every reasonable accommodation to lessen the possibility of exposure to food allergies by designating all classrooms as **Snack Free Zones**. This policy is to be followed before, during and after PREP time. The program has a **NO FOOD POLICY** only water is permitted in the classroom.

If there is an occasion for a special celebration, which includes special foods or snacks, the event shall be held in a communal PREP setting, such as the St. Joseph Room. A parent or guardian of a student with a food allergy must be present at such gatherings or provide a snack for his/her child(ren).

On Donut Sundays students are asked to **enjoy donuts after class** as to prevent cross contamination with students in your class that have food allergies.

## STUDENT ABSENCE:

Regular and consistent attendance in the PREP program is essential in helping students master knowledge of their faith. Attendance is one of several key factors considered when determining student eligibility for promotion.

Poor attendance can negatively impact a student's ability to attain proficient mastery of their faith. The following policies have been adopted to ensure that students succeed in mastering knowledge of their faith and the core content for their grade level.

- Catechists will provide parents with the chapters, material and assignment(s) to be covered for each date. Information pertaining to the particular text assignment can be found at:  
Go to [loyolapress.com](http://loyolapress.com)  
Click Faith Formation  
Click Christ Our Life  
Click Families and scroll to the particular grade level.  
Click AT-HOME EDITION – here you will find an actual dialogue that can be useful when talking with your children about the content of the chapter.
- Students **absent from 4 or more classes during the program year**, and whose progress reports indicate that they have partial proficiency or need assistance to attain mastery will be required to complete additional study and /or take special assessments in order to ensure that they have successfully mastered the required material to be considered for promotion at the end of the program year. \*\*\***Confirmation Candidates** are allowed **2 absences** during their year of preparation. Those students that attend **Camp Caritas are not permitted to miss any classes**.
- Students who attain 6 absences will need to attend make-up classes in accordance with the DRE's schedule or may be dismissed from the program and required to reenroll in the following year's program and repeat their current level.
- Students with a medical condition will need to provide medical documentations.

- An extended absence due to illness is defined as an absence that spans two or more consecutive weeks. Parents will need to **provide a doctor's note** and should be in regular contact with the program director during an extended absence so that, we may work in partnership to ensure that missed assignments and class work are completed during the extended absence and to keep the student's formation and instruction up to date. Parents are responsible for completing missed assignments and class work with their children or make arrangements to meet with DRE to complete work before being promoted to the next level.

### **SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM:**

Every year our Program is required by the Archdiocese to teach the age-appropriate Safe Environment Lessons. The date will be noted on the yearly calendar. Parents may view the lessons on the Archdiocese website. If parents have any questions or concerns, they may be addressed to the Program Director.

### **SNOW EMERGENCIES AND PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS:**

**Sunday classes** –If PREP is cancelled for inclement weather, you will be notified by 9:00AM via Flocknote.

**Monday classes** – If the Kennett School District cancels the school day or dismisses early because of road conditions, the PREP program will be automatically cancelled-no notification will be sent.

The catechist will provide an assignment. The assignment will be due the following class. Any assignments not turned in will result in an absence.

### **VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING:**

All of our Program volunteers have Up to Date Clearances and Background Checks. No visitors are allowed on the second floor of the building while PREP is in session unless they have an appointment.



## FORMATION AND ACADEMIC LIFE

### ASSESSMENTS:

The Program's goal is to help students not only come to know their faith and teachings of Christ Jesus and his Church, but to also enable them to live their faith as a disciple of Christ Jesus. To help achieve this goal catechists will administer various formative assessments to students over the course of the year. Assessments will be administered at the discretion of the catechists, and may be formal (such as a quiz or a chapter /unit review) or informal (such as a classroom debate, review games, class/group discussion, etc.) In the event of a formal assessment, (final), catechists will provide a minimum of one week's advanced notice to students. All catechists are expected to administer a minimum of four assessments for each marking period. Levels 1-6 will be given a final at the end of the PREP year. These tests stay in the office for one year. If a parent wishes to review the final after your child has taken it an appointment will be required. Modified assessments may be provided to those students with documented learning challenges.

As a tool, the assessment will provide feedback to students, parents, and catechists, on the topics and concepts that require further review and study. Help will be provided to students when indicated and parental involvement may be required to ensure successful outcomes.

### CALENDARS:

Parents are provided with a yearly calendar at the beginning of the program. This calendar will be posted in the Religious Education Center bulletin board and can also be found on the parish website under the **YOUTH Tab-PREP** page and is subject to change during the course of the year. **Level 2** First Penance & Eucharist and **Level 7** Confirmation timelines are posted on the website as well.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Students must come to class ready to participate in the planned activities. Participation also means that students come to class prepared for class. Students should have proper materials for class which include their textbook, writing implement, folder and bible for levels 5 through 7. Students that report to class without a textbook may be required to rent one for the session.

Lost textbooks will need to be replaced. Parents assume full responsibility for all costs associated with the replacement textbook including any taxes, shipping and handling fees. There is a charge for a lost text (\$30.00) or bible (\$35.00)

Homework is a necessary and required part of a student's participation in the Program. Parents should expect homework to be assigned on a weekly basis. Homework may consist of worksheets, completing assignments in the textbook, study and memorization, projects, web

## **CURRICULUM:**

The Scope and Sequence will direct the learning objectives and the sequence that core concepts are presented to the students. Therefore, it is important for parents to note that in order to meet the objective outlined in the Scope and Sequence for a particular grade level, a catechist may not be teaching the chapters sequentially.

## **HOMEWORK:**

activities, or any other means deemed appropriate by the catechist to reinforce and review the material presented during class. Homework should be reviewed by the parents for quality and completeness. Students should be practicing prayers regularly.

## **DISCIPLINE:**

This Program has NO TOLERANCE for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic Faith and morals, or the Gospel, including but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional or psychological intimidation, bullying, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures and harassment. Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and should not be tolerated in any form from students or their family members. Such behaviors may result in dismissal from the Program.

If any of these behaviors occur during our Program time, the student will be removed from the classroom and their parent will be contacted to come immediately.

If any adult behavior is incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the parish it should be grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to immediate dismissal of the participant, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate. (e.g., a parent threatens a staff member)

The Program reserves the right to supersede the forgoing course of action depending on the particular circumstances of any given situation.

## **HOME BASED CATECHESIS**

Parents whose children are **home-schooled for academic subjects** and not attending public school, who choose to prepare their children through a home instruction program must contact the DRE at least 60 days prior to the start of the fall program. At that time, parents will be provided with the grade level curriculum and will keep regular appointment dates with either the DRE or an appointed catechist to determine the child's progress in preparation. It remains the responsibility of the pastor to determine that adequate preparation has been received by the student. Due to the importance of the sacraments of Reconciliation, First

Eucharist and Confirmation, **Religious homeschooling will not be permitted in levels two and seven. Students will need to work with a catechist of that level.**

## **LEARNING CHALLENGES & HEALTH CONCERNS:**

Please help us help your child by alerting the DRE of any special learning challenges your child may have. Your child participates in an academic situation while attending PREP. Please help us to assist your child in the best way possible. Please let the catechist and the office know in writing any accommodations that your child receives while in day school. We want to support each student in the way that is best for him or her.

*“We are all created in the image and likeness of God and every baptized person has the right to receive catechesis, regardless of their abilities. (The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that the goal of catechesis is to foster communion with Jesus Christ (CCC 426), and the General Directory of Catechesis further emphasizes that effective catechesis must meet the diverse circumstances of each individual, including their intellectual, psychological, and developmental needs (GDC, 170).) In our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP), we are dedicated to providing a welcoming inclusive environment for children of all abilities, including those with developmental, intellectual, sensory, physical, or behavioral disabilities. We are willing to working with families to understand each child’s specific needs and providing reasonable accommodations that best support the child in an inclusive environment to the best of our ability. By being attentive to the needs of children with disabilities, we aim to foster growth in their faith journey and affirm that all of us are valued members of the body of Christ.” Parents are encouraged to serve as aids for their child to accommodate their child’s need and help serve the catechists during class.*

If your child has any medical conditions of which we should be aware (bee-sting allergies, red-dye 40, etc.) as with learning challenges, please let us know.

The program has a **NO FOOD POLICY** only water is permitted in the classroom. The **ONLY** exceptions that will be made is for medical necessity such as to accommodate a diabetic child or child with low blood glucose. A **doctor’s note will be required** and must be on file prior to the start of the program. On Donut Sundays please enjoy your treat after class.

### **Parents of students that have life threatening allergies in Levels K-3:**

A parent of that child is required to volunteer in your child’s classroom weekly to help prevent any cross-contamination and to administer any medication if needed. Please keep in mind we do not have a nurse on staff.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Progress Reports are issued two times a year after the close of each semester. The progress report is an instrument designed to provide feedback on a student’s mastery of the required material for their grade level as well as the student’s conduct, effort and attendance in the program.

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

In conjunction with the recommendation of the Office for Religious Education of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, two years of catechesis are required for the initial reception of the sacraments of **Penance and Eucharist**. These sacraments are usually received in the second level of PREP.

Candidates for **all sacraments** are expected to be participating weekly in Sunday Mass with their families and have an appreciation and understanding of the Sacraments, appropriate for their age. They are also required to have satisfactory attendance at classes and to participate in service hours, parent & child presentation, parish retreats and rehearsals.

**Candidates for Confirmation** are the seventh level students who have completed four full years of catechesis subsequent to their reception of First Eucharist.

Candidates that attend Camp Caritas are required to attend the additional classes to complete their instructional time. Failure to complete all requirements **may result in the candidate to be receive the sacrament at a later date.**

Candidates for Confirmation must choose a sponsor. The Godparent who initially assumed this responsibility in Baptism is the ideal choice. The sponsor must be at least sixteen years of age, (and not a parent), have received Confirmation and be an actively practicing Catholic. A Letter of Eligibility from the pastor of the sponsor's parish is required. In conformity with the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law parents may not be sponsors. If, for emergency reason, a Proxy Sponsor must be chosen; the same requirements hold for the person. Written notification of the proxy must be submitted to the Religious Education Office.

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

Because Our Lord's life is an example of total self-discipline, the Religious Education Program strives to teach discipline as well as doctrines of our faith. We ask that the student adhere to the following:

- Respectful attitude and speech to teachers and fellow students
- Reverent attention to and participation in prayer services
- Students may only enter the classroom when the catechist/aide are present.
- Appropriate dress
  - Girls – no tank tops, cutoffs, short shorts, pajama pants
  - Boys – no hats or pajama pants
  - All – no rollerblade sneakers, no cleats, flip-flops, slides, or slipper like shoes.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **CELL PHONES**

We realize that devices such as cell phones have become a necessary tool in keeping communications open with children. However, it is the policy of the Program that cell phones may not be used during catechetical sessions. Phones may be kept in their school bags only. If this rule is not kept, the phone will be confiscated by the catechist and can be picked up after class is over.

### **PARENT COMMUNICATION:**

Communication between parents, catechist, and Religious Education Office is extremely important if objectives of the program are to be met. Avenues of communication used to inform parents of major happenings may take one of the following forms:

- Parent meetings
- Weekly Flocknotes (PREP and Parish)
- Notice in the church bulletin
- Notice home with student
- Email to the parent

### **UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION:**

The contact information that you provide at the time of registration will be used as the primary means of contacting you. Updating changes to this information, especially changes to email addresses, is your sole responsibility. In order to receive necessary and vital information pertaining to your child's participation in our program it is imperative that you notify the program director as to changes in address, phone numbers or email.

### **COMMUNICATION FOLDERS**

All parents should send their child with a two-pocket folder at the beginning of the program year. This folder will serve as the Communication Folder for weekly assignment and other important papers. Parents should check this folder after each weekly session to view fliers, bulletins, assignments etc. that may be sent home. Parents are also to use this folder to send any communiques to their child's catechist or program staff. Weekly Flocknotes will be sent as well. Be sure you are on the list to receive the weekly reminders.

Students need either a string bag or small tote bag to hold their book, folder, and other needed supplies. Please do not send your child with their school pack back. We are not responsible for lost items brought from home.

## REGISTRATION

Registration for the upcoming year **OPENS IN MARCH** (to the best of our ability) and will be communicated through the Parish Bulletin and Flocknotes. Parents will be able to register and pay online through Parish Giving or use a paper form found on the parish website. Checks may be made payable to St. Patrick Church. Parish Giving will send a “Welcome Letter” to the families that have registered with them in the past and provide your user information.

**REGISTRATION WILL CLOSE MID-JULY.** Please routinely check the reminders communicated through the Parish Bulletin and Flocknotes. Any returning family who registers after the closing date will be charged a \$30.00 late fee. In addition, any returning family who registers after the book order has been placed will also be charged a book fee.

### **Level 7 Camp Caritas registration opens in January**

All registration and payments are handled through **Bishop Shanahan High School.**

For more information call 610-518-1300

All follow up classes will be communicated through emails and Flocknotes.

