

ST. JAMES REP PROGRAM - GENERAL INFORMATION

The philosophy of the St. James Parish Religious Education Program is to aid the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each student in preparing that child to become a mature and contributing member of the Christian community and society at large. The program will aid parents/guardians in their role as the primary educators of their child by providing directives and opportunities for their child to increase his/her knowledge of God, the Church, self, and society.

The program further assists the parents/guardians by cooperating with them in preparation for their child's reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance), First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Similarly, the program aids the parents/guardians in increasing their child's understanding of, appreciation for, and participation in the Church's celebration of these sacraments and in fulfilling the Church's mission of service to society.

The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in Him. In catechesis, "Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God, is taught - everything else is taught with reference to Him and it is Christ alone who teaches - anyone else teaches to the extent that he or she is Christ's spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips. Every catechist should be able to apply to themselves the mysterious words of Jesus: 'My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me.'" CCC 427

These Guidelines have been developed to provide the family with important requirements for the Religious Education Program as well as information regarding the policies and procedures. All parents/guardians are being asked to return the attached Acknowledgement indicating they have read these Guidelines.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The family of each student in the Religious Education Program must be registered members of St. James Parish. All new students at the time of their registration are required to provide a photocopy of their Baptismal certificate. Proof of First Penance and First Eucharist must be provided if they received these sacraments at a parish other than at St. James Parish. Any student presented for admission without sufficient documented catechetical history shall be evaluated and placed accordingly in a class.

A \$125.00 fee for one student and \$100.00 for each additional student in a family is charged in order to defer the cost of books and materials used for instructional purposes. Other fees for sacramental preparation (First Eucharist and Confirmation) will be charged separately.

TIME AND PLACE

Classes are held on Sunday mornings from **9:15am to 10:30am** in **St. James Elementary School for grades K thru 7** and in **Red Bank Catholic High School for grade 8**. The **8th grade Confirmation class time is 9:00am to 10:30am**. All students are expected to be on time and ready to begin class promptly. All students must respect the property and items in the classroom in which they meet.

*Please refer to the REP calendar for holidays and school closings.
See the bottom of the last page regarding inclement weather.*

DROP OFF AND PICKING UP STUDENTS

For the safety of all students and parishioners using the parking lot, please park your vehicle or drop off your child(ren) between the orange cones placed behind St. James Elementary School and follow the directions of our volunteer parking lot directors. Dismissal will take place from the back of the buildings into the parking lot. At dismissal children will proceed by class in double file beginning with the lower floors. Grades K-1 will be dismissed at 10:20 a.m., and grades 2-3 at 10:25. All other grades will not be released before 10:30 am. **If persons other than the parent/guardian are to pick up a child before the end of class, a signed note from the parent naming that person must be submitted to the REP office prior to the day of class in order for us to release the child to that individual.** Additional parking is available in the municipal lot behind the St. James lot. No one is permitted to pull up to the back door of either building. Visitors are required to report to the Coordinator's Office.

Please note: doors will be locked after 9:30 a.m. for the safety of the children. You will need to call the office (732-747-6006) to be admitted after this time.

ATTENDANCE

Classes will begin promptly and attendance is recorded each day classes are scheduled. Four (4) absences during the year will be considered grounds for retaining a student at the same grade level. **Children in sacramental preparation grades 2 and 8 are expected to attend every class**, with a maximum of two absences for documented emergency reasons. Parents are asked to contact the REP office at 732 747-6006 concerning absences, and an absent note must be submitted to the catechetist upon the student's return. (see INSTRUCTION section concerning assignment make-up)

SUPPLIES

Each child will receive a religion textbook for his/her appropriate grade. Grades 2 and 8 will also receive Sacramental textbooks in preparation for their respective sacraments. Book replacements will be made only after a replacement fee of \$15 has been paid. **Each child is required to bring his/her textbook to class each week, as well as a pen or pencil.**

INSTRUCTION

The Religious Education Program at St. James Parish consists of 28 class meetings, not counting Orientation, from September through April. The classes follow in the textbook the approved Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Religion Curriculum for the Diocese of Trenton. Each class begins and ends with a prayer. All assignments or projects are to be completed fully and on time. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to take an active interest in their child's work and to see that assignments/projects are completed in a timely manner. **All lessons missed because of absence must be made up and submitted to the Religious Education Office upon the students return to class. In addition each missed lesson must be accompanied by a paragraph by the student expressing what he or she has learned from the lesson.**

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

Prayer is communicating with God. Therefore, an essential element of the program is teaching our students the need for prayer and how to pray. It is also important for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid their child in learning common prayers of the Church so that the child will be able to participate in the prayers of the Catholic community. We encourage the parents/guardians of our students to provide an opportunity for the students to pray together as a family in the home as well as in the larger faith community, which is the Catholic Church.

We also stress the importance of the Bible in the life of the followers of Jesus. The Bible, as well as the Tradition of the Church, is a source of knowledge of the Lord. We ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid our catechists by encouraging in their child a love and respect for the Bible.

MONTHLY CELEBRATION OF THE MASS

Grades 2-7 will attend mass as a class once a month. You will receive a mass schedule at the beginning of the year.

THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

The Mass, the Eucharistic celebration, is the source and summit of our Catholic faith. Parents are to attend Mass with their children in order to reinforce and put into practice the faith and formal instruction presented in the classroom. **Religious education classes are not meant to be a substitute for attendance at Mass.** Please refer to the St. James Parish bulletin to determine when we celebrate the Eucharist for your convenience in fulfilling this obligation. We encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide an opportunity for their child to frequent the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) once they have received this sacrament for the first time.

CODE OF CONDUCT

In the building students are expected to:

- Walk in an orderly manner through the halls and on the stairs. Running is strictly forbidden.
- Only use authorized portions of the building.
- Respect the property of the classroom.
- Arrive to class on time.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of any electronic device during class is prohibited. This policy will be strictly enforced. We ask that parents/guardians make sure that these items are left at home. If your child must carry a cell phone, make sure it is turned off before entering the building.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN WORKSHOPS

In order to aid parents or guardians as the primary teachers of the child, there will be mandatory parent meetings for those parents who have children registered in Grade 2 (Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance) and First Holy Communion) and Grade 8 (Sacrament of Confirmation). The schedule for these workshops can be found in the REP Calendar.

These workshops are designed for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to increase their knowledge of the individual sacrament and to give information on how to assist their child in preparing for the sacraments. Important information regarding the theology of the sacrament, as well as guidelines and necessary forms, will be given only during these workshops. At least one parent or guardian must attend each workshop given prior to the child's reception of each sacrament.

FIRST RECONCILIATION (PENANCE) and FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with diocesan directives, the reception of First Penance precedes First Eucharist. The reception of these two sacraments occurs in the second grade. **It is expected that children attend all classes in this important sacramental year.** A maximum of two absences are allowed for emergencies only, with documentation.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Trenton that, in order for a child to receive these sacraments, the child must be enrolled in a religious education program for one year prior to entering the sacramental preparation class. All students must have successfully completed the first-grade level in an approved religious education program in order to be admitted to the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance) and First Holy Eucharist. The celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation takes place in the winter and First Eucharist takes place in the spring of the second grade. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and catechists will take care that the students are properly instructed in the celebration of these sacraments.

Letters and forms will be provided concerning the procedures and policies for the celebration of these sacraments. It is important to return these forms on time. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the preparation of these sacraments.

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS

In preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, **students must attend all classes**, attend the **Confirmation Welcoming Rite, Rite of Enrollment, Confirmation Retreat and Penance Service**. They **must complete 25 hours of Mass attendance complete a one day service project followed by a one page essay expressing their experience, and submit administrative forms**. All forms and fees required for the celebration of this sacrament must be returned on time and fully completed. The confirmandi are to choose a saint's name and a sponsor for Confirmation, according to canon law and diocesan directives concerning the celebration of this sacrament. This information will be provided at the parent/guardian workshop. The date for Confirmation is provided by the bishop of the diocese and is celebrated in the Spring of the 8th grade. Details concerning the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be provided as the date approaches. A maximum of two absences are allowed for emergencies only, with documentation.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

In the event of severe weather, look for an email from the Religious Education office. Please keep your phone and email information updated.

GENERAL INFORMATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE

As parents / guardians of the following student (s) we acknowledge that the St. James Religious Education Program has certain expectations from us as it relates to the religious education of our child(ren).

We understand the information described in the REP Guidelines and have discussed them with our child(ren).

THE GUIDELINES CAN BE FOUND ON THE ST. JAMES WEBSITE:

www.stjames-redbank.com –click on Religious Education Link

Date: _____

Child(ren): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature - _____