

Saint Benedict Church

Parish Religious Education Program

Catechetical Policy for Levels 4th through 8th

2023-2024

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Our Mission: “In Jesus we Live, Learn and Love”

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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 **Parish Religious Education Program** for children aims to assist parents, who are primary educators of their children, in fostering the 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 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

Our **Parish Religious Education Program** is open to all children in Grades 4th through 8th, who are registered with St. Benedict. Grades 1, 2 and 3 should register at our CGS sessions. To complete registration for the first time, the parent must present a copy of his/her child/children's Baptismal Certificate. It is also required that all pertinent health information of any unusual condition be brought to the attention of the Director.

REGISTRATION

Registration for all **new students** is held during the spring and summer. New students will need a copy of their baptism certificate. Forms are available online but not registering online and you may obtain it also at www.stbenedictprepcgs@gmail.com. Please returned it with a copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate and the Registration Fee. Note that **we don't register by e-mail or online**; the form needs to be printed and sent to the PREP office.

Families of students who **currently attend** our Parish Religious Education Program will receive a Registration Update Form in the early spring by email. This form should be returned **before** the closing of our PREP, usually at the end of April. It will give us sufficient time to find enough teachers, order books, and make class rosters.

FINANCIAL

A PREP 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.

SESSIONS

Classes are scheduled Thursday evenings from **6:00 PM to 7:30 PM** and we encourage **Mass at 5:30 PM is strongly recommended** with the CGS children.

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 be able to participate in Mass every Sunday.**

A child acquires a sense of belonging to St. Benedict’s Parish as a Roman Catholic community of faith by coming to Sunday Mass, participating in parish activities, and attending PREP. Although, PREP attendance doesn’t replace Mass on Sunday or Saturday 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. Our expectation is that everyone gathers with a spirit of welcome, caring and cooperation.

The catechist oversees the session and is 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 with the student to achieve a code of conduct conducive to a good learning situation.

PUNCTUALITY

To cover 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 parent and dealt with on an individual basis.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Arrival: Please have your children here on time. **Classes start promptly at 6:00 PM** inside of the church with our open prayer as a group. **We encourage Mass attendance at 5:30 PM.** Families should use our church front door for always entering the building. Our educational wing doors will be locked at 6:15 PM. After this time, arrivals will be limited to the bell tower door for students only. Parents, without clearances filed in our office, will not be allowed to enter the building while students will be in session. Children will be allowed into the building starting at 6:00 PM and directed to wait inside of the church until their teacher arrives.

Dismissal time: grades 4th through 8th will walk toward the gathering space of our church and meet their families there or outside at the parking lot. Please note that we will not allow any child to exit from the educational wing door, unless in company of one of our PREP teachers.

ATTENDANCE

All children of the Parish who do not attend La Salle are invited to participate in our PREP from 4th 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 610-856-5146)* 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. **We don't offer home school and absence for "sports reason" will determine the relocation of the child to another parish in a different day and time.** Please contact the DRE for the address of PREP programs offered from another Catholic Churches in our surrounding area.

HANDHELD DEVICES

NO handheld devices are permitted in the building during PREP 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, iPod, or iPhone, etc.

This is to ensure the integrity of the program, as well as the privacy of all students.

PRAYERS

Each student will receive a prayer book after their First Penance to ensure prayer continuity. Parents are the child's first and most consistent teacher. Therefore, the best way to ensure that children learn the required prayers is for the parent 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 will be provided and book bags. *Sixth, seventh and eighth graders are to bring their Bibles to each class.* We are thankful to The Knights of Columbus for donating Bibles for Teens every year in Level 6.

RELIGIOUS CURRICULUM

4th LEVEL – God Guides Us (Loyola Press)

5th LEVEL – We Worship (Loyola Press)

6th LEVEL – God Calls a People (Loyola Press)

7th LEVEL – Decision Point (Dynamic Catholic)

8th LEVEL – YOUCAT (Ignatius Press)

SACRAMENTS

First Penance and First Holy Communion – will be determined by the catechist's observation of the child in the atrium at CGS sessions. We don't follow a specific grade but rather the maturity of the child in their religious experience. It will happen while the child attend CGS Level II during those three years.

The Sacrament of Confirmation will be received in the 8th Level for all students every year in the Fall after them receiving the proper formation in Level 7 the year before.

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 Public Schools cancels or has an early dismissal, there will be no PREP classes that evening.
- 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 at PREP. 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

Saint Benedict's PREP Office reserves the right to amend this Handbook for just cause. Revisions were last made on March 1, 2023.

*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 Saint Benedict's Parish Religious Education Program.