

St. Robert Bellarmine Religious Education

Parent Handbook

2016 - 2017 School Year

A NOTE TO PARENTS

Dear Parents/Guardians:

When you baptized your child in the church, you made a promise before God and the church community that you would be your child's first teacher in the faith. The church community prayed for you that you would also be their best teacher. We truly appreciate that you have invited us to assist you in this most important responsibility. Our program is designed to provide an orderly, progressive method of imparting the basic precepts of our Catholic Faith. It is impossible for us to do that in 1 ¼ hour of classroom work. Much more is required. The only way a child can truly acquire a full appreciation of the great gift that is our faith, is by experiencing it at home. The way you live out your own faith commitment will have the most profound effect on your child's faith development.

We respectfully ask that you:

- **most importantly: worship at Sunday Mass with your child.**
- participate weekly in your child's homework.
- pray for your child's spiritual as well as physical growth.
- give **priority** to your child's Religious Education Program.
- see that your child arrives on time and is prepared for class.
- encourage your child's participation in the planned special liturgies.
- show respect and cooperate with your child's teachers who have **volunteered their time** to help **you** to teach your child the Catholic faith.
- follow the safety rules for dropping off and picking up your child.
- volunteer to assist in our program, so that your child will see your faith in action.

Please read the rest of this handbook for important information about your child's Religious Education Program. Please keep it handy along with the school calendar for reference during the school year. For your convenience, a copy of this handbook is posted to our website.

May God Bless You,

Lisa Clarke

Director of Religious Education

Office Hours

Office hours are 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday (**Mondays, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**) Please call the office (732-642-7429 Ext.122 or 134) to schedule any necessary appointments. Voicemail is available for your convenience to leave a message. You may also contact the Religious Education Office by email: LClarke@strobert.com or FNielsen@strobert.com

Registration/Enrollment

Registration forms and registration instructions for the upcoming year, 2016-17 will be sent via email to currently enrolled students in **May 2016**. Blank forms will be available on our website (www.strobert.com). This information will also be posted to the website. It is imperative that registrations are submitted in a timely fashion. **Late registrations will be subject to a \$50 late fee**. Your children are placed in classes on a first-come, first-served basis. We do not take specific requests for teachers or for students to be placed with other students in class. **Students are to be re-enrolled every year. It is not automatic.**

- **Students transferring into our program are required to provide a Letter of Transfer from their previous program along with a copy of their Baptismal Certificate and any other sacramental records.**
- **Because Faith Formation is a practice which builds from year to year, a student who has missed a grade level in formation will be required to make up that year before being permitted to register in the next grade level.**

Communications

The primary mode of communication will be via e-mail.

Please be sure to notify the Religious Education Office of any changes to your contact information

ESPECIALLY e-mail! We will also post notices on our website and will make use of push notifications via the St. Robert Bellarmine App (Please download it at your earliest convenience.).

Class Cancellations

Unless you are contacted by e-mail, push notification or via our website: www.strobert.com all **regularly scheduled** religious education classes will be held. If a class is missed, the student will be required to make up the classroom time missed. (Please see **Attendance/Absences** p.5). Please refer to the school calendar which is posted to the website.

Course of Study

The texts chosen provide the children with a catechesis based on "Sacred Scripture, Tradition, Liturgy, and the Magisterium: the teaching authority of the Church.

Parental Involvement

It can't be said too often that education, especially Religious Education, is most effective when the parent is involved. Therefore, we offer some specific ways in which parents can fulfill their obligation as the "primary and principal educators" of their children.

- **Worship with your children as a family at Mass on weekends. Participate fully in the life of our Parish Community.**
- **Children should be on time for class and attend weekly (with textbook and pen/pencil).**
- **Make certain that homework (or any work that has been missed) is completed, signed by a parent and returned to the teacher by the next class.**
- Follow the Religious Education news in the Parish Sunday Bulletin. Information regarding the program is communicated through the bulletin, at Mass during Pulpit Announcements, via email and push notifications through the SRB App.
- Review/discuss with your children the lessons learned in class.
- Read the Rules and Regulations and reinforce them with your child.
- Introduce yourself to your child's teacher when you pick him/her up in the Parish Hall after class. Parents deserve to meet the person who is talking to their child about God.
- Work with the Teacher and the Director of Religious Education in matters of discipline.

Volunteering

As a condition of participation in our program, **ALL** parents are required to volunteer during the Religious Education year. This is an opportunity to model for our children our own discipleship and full and active participation in the life of our Parish. Failure to volunteer, however, will result in the delayed processing of your registration which may impact getting your preferred class day and time. At the time of registration, you will be notified of the link to use to register for a volunteer assignment. You must then confirm on the volunteer form the volunteer assignment you have registered for so it can be verified.

Our Program

The scope and sequence of this series provides a complete and accurate Vatican II Theology distributed across the grades K-8. It is spiraled so that each year the young person's catechetical program is both deepened and expanded. Each year of the program provides young people with:

- a growing experience of and a reverence for the Sacred Scriptures.
- a faithful presentation of the Church's teachings.
- encouragement to make a lived response to the faith presented.
- a meaningful participation in the communal, sacramental, and liturgical life of the Church, especially the Mass.
- more and more profound prayer experiences.
- an appreciation both for the lives of the saints and of Catholics today who are valiantly trying to transform our world.
- a stimulation of their religious imaginations so they learn to think more critically, and are better prepared to proclaim and live their faith.
- a religious literacy that will support an enthusiasm for growing up Catholic in today's world.

All students will be required to complete unit assessments and demonstrate their knowledge of the required prayers per grade level in order to advance to the next grade level.

HOME SCHOOLING PROGRAM

THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS/GUIDELINES APPLY FOR THOSE SEEKING HOME SCHOOLING FOR THEIR CHILDREN:

1. Must submit a request to Home School to the Director of Religious Education at the time of Registration.
2. The program itself will involve the following:
 - a) Parents and students must attend the Orientation for Home Schooled students in addition to three (3) other mandatory meetings (Advent, Lent and Year-end).
 - b) Students must complete and submit chapter work sheets and activities weekly.
 - c) Demonstrate knowledge of the required prayers per grade level.
 - d) Completion of Unit Assessments at the end of each unit. All work must be completed and turned in at the final Home School meeting. **Failure to submit all completed work by the final Home School meeting will impact the ability to register for the next grade level.**
3. Please note that for the home schooled student to advance to the next grade level, the above requirements must be met.
4. There will be no home schooling approval for sacramental preparation years. 1st and 2nd Grade for First Holy Communion and 7th and 8th Grade for Confirmation.
5. **The Home School Program is subject to the same tuition payment as the Traditional Class Program.**

Attendance/Absences

Attendance at all Religious Ed. scheduled classes is required in order for the student to move on to the next grade level. If a student misses a class for any reason, the student will make up the classroom time missed by completing a summary of the chapter covered or an online chapter assessment. **If the makeup work is not completed and handed in, the student will be required to take a final assessment before being allowed to register for the next grade level.**

Classroom attendance will be taken. Any student who has been absent 3 times or more, will be required to repeat grade level chapter work over the Summer.

Children are expected to arrive to class on time and will not be dismissed early from class except for emergencies. All students arriving late or leaving early are to sign in/out with the Religious Ed Office. No student will be released directly from the classroom. Late arrival and early dismissal is very disruptive. It is suggested that every child come to class each week prepared to fulfill their class time obligation. **Excessive late arrival/early dismissal is counted toward attendance and will impact their overall attendance record.**

Please Note: If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please email the Religious Office. If it is possible, we may suggest that you bring your child to an alternate class in order to avoid an absence. This is not a permanent move, but a way to work with you during those times when conflicts with Religious Education occur and to avoid an excessive absence situation.

Sacraments

Sacrament of First Penance

Our students will receive the sacrament of **First Penance** in the 2nd grade. This year, this celebration will take place in February, date **TBD**

Students in grades 3 through 8 will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance during the Religious Education year.

Sacrament of First Eucharist

2nd graders will receive the Sacrament of **First Eucharist** on **Saturday, May 6, 2017.** Before a child receives the Sacraments of First Penance and First Eucharist, **he/she must have at least one year of previous religious instruction.** Further information on the times for 1st Penance & 1st Eucharist will follow.

Parents are required to attend a mandatory Parent Meeting scheduled in October. Please see the Religious Ed. Calendar.

Sacrament of Confirmation—Received during 8th grade

Confirmation at St. Roberts is not just a question of attending a number of Religion classes, it is definitely a community affair involving the whole Parish on many different levels. Our Religious Education Program is gradual and continuous through the eighth grade. Therefore, it is necessary for a child to attend formal classes every year. **A child cannot drop out after First Communion and return later for Confirmation without making up grade levels missed.**

Parents are required to attend a mandatory Parent Meeting scheduled in September. Please see the Religious Ed. Calendar.

Requirements for 8th Grade Confirmation:

- attend Religious Education Classes each week
- weekly Mass attendance is a **requirement** to receive the sacrament of Confirmation
- attend the **Covenant Mass (Saturday, November 19, 2016 at 4:30 PM)** with their families.
- attend the **Confirmation Retreat (Saturday, February 25, 2017. The Retreat is a full day.)**
- Perform a minimum of five (5) hours of community service

Confirmation this year is scheduled for Thursday, May 11, 2017. The Confirmation will be held in two sessions; 2PM and 4PM.

Rules and Regulations

1. We ask your cooperation in maintaining a safe parking lot!

On ARRIVAL: You **MUST** park your car in a designated parking space only and walk your children to the building through the Parish Hall entrance. **At DISMISSAL:** You **MUST** park your car in a designated parking space and walk to the building to pick-up your children. **All students** are dismissed to the Parish Hall. **No student** is permitted to leave the building without a parent. ***Your child's safety is our first priority!***

2. **For their safety, children are NOT to enter their classrooms before the teacher. Doors are not opened to students until 5 minutes prior to class. Only teachers and their children are in the building beforehand. Children will be dismissed as a group, with their teacher to the Parish Hall.**

3. Children are responsible for bringing their books to class each week. If a child loses his/her book, a second book will be provided and parents will be billed accordingly. **Please place the student's name in the book.**

4. Children are expected to respect our classrooms and Church property. Children are asked to be careful of displays, projects, teacher materials, and the like. .

5. Hallway Monitors are present to ensure that all children safely reach their class. Classes will begin and end on time. Parents of older students are discouraged from walking the children into their classrooms after the first few weeks of class.

6. **No parents are allowed in the building during class time without prior approval. For the safety of all our children, anyone entering the building MUST sign in at the education office.**

7. During the school year, by state law, smoking is prohibited anywhere on Church or school property.

Building Security

The security of our building during class time is a major concern. To that end, the Parish Hall doors from the back parking lot will only be open 15 minutes prior to arrival; **5 minutes after the beginning of classes after which they will be locked.** The doors will then be reopened 10 minutes prior to the beginning of dismissal.

That means....

Classes that begin at 4:15: Parish Hall doors will open at 4:00PM and remain open until 4:20. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 5:10 in preparation for dismissal which begins at 5:20(K and 1st) 5:25 (3rd and 4th) and 5:30(5th and 6th).

Classes that begin at 5:45: Parish Hall doors will be open at 5:30 and remain open until 5:50. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 6:40 in preparation for dismissal which begins at 6:50 (K and 1st) 6:55 (3rd and 4th) and 7PM (5th and 6th).

Classes that begin at 7:15: Parish Hall doors will be open at 7:00 and will remain open until 7:20. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 8:20 in preparation for dismissal at 8:30PM.

Classes that begin at 4:30: Parish Hall doors will open at 4:15PM and remain open until 4:35. They will then be locked. They will be reopened at 5:50 in preparation for dismissal at 6:00PM.

For any late arrivals, parents are required to escort their children into the building from the front parking lot and sign them in at the Religious Education.

In the event of an early dismissal. Parents are required to come into the Religious Ed. Office and sign their child out. As the Parish Hall doors will be locked, they should park in the front parking lot and enter the building through the front doors of the Parish Center. We will call down to the classroom and have the child dismissed to the R E office. The classroom wing will be closed to parents while classes are in session.

Hall monitors will be stationed where appropriate.

A reminder to all parents: No child will be permitted to leave this building without an adult escort. This is for your child's safety!

Discipline

Most of the children in our program are interested in learning about their faith. At times, some children are unable to control their behavior, and disrupt the class. All students and parents are required to sign a Code of Conduct, acknowledging the responsibility to behave appropriately. Any child disrupting the class will be removed from the class, and the parent/guardian will be called in to pick up the child from the Religious Education Office.

All students are expected to come to class willing and eager to learn. Chronic disciplinary problems will require a meeting with the teacher, child, parent and Director of Religious Education. If the disciplinary problem cannot be resolved through this meeting and the student cannot control his/her behavior, the student will be removed from the classroom until such time that the student has demonstrated a willingness to control his/her behavior in the classroom.

Food/Liquids In Classroom

Unless there is written medical notification, There is to be NO food or beverage in the classrooms!

Cell Phone Policy

The use of cell phones is NOT permitted during class time.

All cell phones are to be turned off and placed face down on the desk at the beginning of class. They are to remain that way until class is dismissed.

Any student using their cell phone during class will have it confiscated and will be returned only to a parent.

When entering the building, students are asked to turn off: cell phones, iPods, etc. and remove hats.

Prayers for Each Grade Level

The children will be expected to memorize specific prayers* and have a good knowledge of other prayers** at each grade level. **Please pray with** and encourage your child to say these prayers frequently in order to foster the memorization process. All the prayers are found toward the back of your child's textbook.

Kindergarten

- Sign of the Cross*
- Our Father* (begin introduction)

First Grade

- Sign of the Cross*
- Our Father*
- Hail Mary*
- Glory Be to the Father*
- Grace Before Meals*

Second Grade

- Same as Grade 1, plus
- Great Commandment*
- Act of Contrition*
- Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

Third Grade

- Same as Grades 1 and 2, plus
- Apostle's Creed**
- Seven Sacraments*

Fourth Grade

- Same as Grades 1, 2 and 3, plus
- 10 Commandments*
- Corporal Works of Mercy**
- Spiritual Works of Mercy**

Fifth Grade

- Same as Grades 1, 2, 3 and 4, plus
- Beatitudes**
- Rosary**
- Hail Holy Queen**

Sixth Grade

- Same as Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, plus
- Stations of the Cross**
- Nicene Creed*
- A Vocation Prayer**
- Precepts of the Church**

Seventh Grade

- Review of all Prayers on Each Grade Level

Eighth Grade

- Review of all Prayers on Each Grade Level

Please note that in addition to learning these prayers at home, these prayers will also be said prior to the beginning of each Religious Education class as well as at the end of each class.

No Standing / Parking at Any Time

