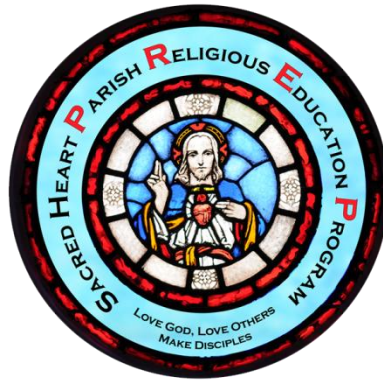


Sacred Heart Church
Children's Ministry
P.R.E.P. Division: Levels 1-6
Policies and Procedures
For Ministry Leaders, Parents, and Students



Religious Education Office

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint ministry members, parents, and students with our Parish Religious Education Program policies, which govern our program, according to the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, Office of Catechetical Formation.

HANDBOOK ADDENDUM

The PREP Coordinator reserves the right to amend the handbook at any time. Revisions may be issued throughout the P.R.E.P. calendar year and will be effective as soon as the revision is posted to the official handbook on the website. Please visit our website on a regular basis to keep up with the latest activities and information. **PREP Ministry Leaders have individual practices and procedures in their classrooms that may not be covered in this handbook.** In all cases, the interpretation of the handbook remains with the administrator.

PARISH PROPERTY

Sacred Heart Parish is a beautiful facility and should be treated with the utmost care and respect.

HIGHLIGHTS

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE HOURS

The Parish Office is open Monday-Friday from 9:30am-5:00pm. If we are not available, please leave a message on our answering machine 610-948-5915, ext. 5 or email religioused@sacredheartroyersford.org.

REGISTRATION

Registration for new families and returning families will occur in the spring. Information will be posted on the website and sent home prior to the start of Registration. Registration must be done on scheduled days or by appointment. All children must re-register for the coming year.

All forms will be available on the Religious Education, P.R.E.P. website.

Please note “New Policy”:

- No child will be permitted to receive their First Penance, Communion or Confirmation without attendance at Mass each Sunday. Continued participation in the religious education program for the 2016-2017 academic year will be dependent upon your commitment to Sunday Mass.
- No child will be permitted to receive their Sacraments if their parents/guardians do not attend the October 8, 2016, Sacramental Forum.

Time 8:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Babysitting is available

TUITION

Tuition is due at Registration. Tuition changes will be noted in the Registration Information packet which is distributed before the start of Registration. A late fee will be applied to all registrations received after designated due date. Payment Plan options are available. A financial concern will not prevent a child (ren)'s registration in the program. If there is difficulty meeting the cost please contact the Religious Education Office or Father DiMaria.

RETURN CHECK FEE

A Returned Check Fee of \$20.00 will be assessed by the Sacred Heart Business Manager on all returned checks.

TRANSFERRING FROM THE PROGRAM

A transcript of the student's file may be requested in writing to the Religious Education Office. Please include the following: new parish address, phone number, fax number, and contact person. The Religious Education Office will complete the request within 30 business days.

CHILD CUSTODY

The P.R.E.P. Program will comply with legal documents that specify a child's custody. A copy of the custody section of the appropriate documents must be provided to the Religious Education Office for file and reference. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide the Religious Education Office with these documents.

CLASSROOM PARTIES AND INVITATIONS

There will be **No** class parties conducted by the Catechists, Assistants or Parents. The only parties permitted are those designated by the Religious Education Office.

Also, we ask that **no food** be distributed in the classrooms except for the snacks provided by the Religious Education Office. Gifts of candy and food items may be distributed at PICK-UP and sent home in a sealed bag.

Party invitations may be distributed in the P.R.E.P. classrooms **ONLY** if every child receives one. Otherwise please mail them directly to your guests' homes.

P.R.E.P. CALENDAR

The P.R.E.P. Calendar is based on the required hours of religious education instruction mandated by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The calendar is posted on the Sacred Heart Church website. Please refer to the cover page for the web address.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the case of inclement weather, an **email** from Constant Contact will be released from the Religious Education Office. **Please use your own judgment.** If you doubt the advisability of driving in inclement weather, please do not come in.

Please be advised: we no longer follow the local school district's decision regarding school closings.

E-MAIL LIST

Our program sends out frequent reminders via e-mail through Constant Contact. Please contact the Religious Education Office if you change your e-mail address or need to be added to this list.

STUDENT INFORMATION

Each student is required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to have a personal file on record in the Religious Education Office. Please contact the Religious Education Office with any changes to address, phone, medical concerns, and educational needs.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please note: no electronic games, cell phones, beeping devices, or electronic devices are allowed during P.R.E.P. time. If a student needs to place a call, please send them to the P.R.E.P. OFFICE to use the phone. P.R.E.P. Ministry Members **are permitted** to have cell phones but please refrain from texting and answering calls unless it is an emergency during P.R.E.P. time.

NONMARKING SHOES FOR THE GYM

The only shoes permitted in the gym are sneakers. Group 1 students will have a recess time in the gym. Gym shoes are required.

CHAPEL VISITS (CATECHISTS- INFORMATION)

If you wish to visit the chapel, please notify the Religious Education Office at least one week in advance.

RETREATS AND FIELD TRIPS

During Retreats and Field Trips all P.R.E.P. policies are in effect. Students are under the direction of P.R.E.P. Ministry Members with the assistance from parental volunteers. To volunteer for all field trips, a Criminal Record, Child Abuse clearance and a Fingerprint check must be on file with the Parish Clearance Facilitator.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

Our goal is to provide a safe, secure and loving environment for all children. At no time should a child be left unattended in a classroom. If you notice a child is left unattended, please see one of the religious educators on duty. Once the P.R.E.P. Session begins the school is locked. If you need to enter the school, please ring or knock on the school entrance doors. A Hall Monitor will be available to help you. Please be ready to show identification. (Current Pa. Driver's License)

MINISTRY MEMBERS

All P.R.E.P. Ministry Members **MUST** wear name tags at all times when P.R.E.P. is in session.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia requires all volunteers who work with children to complete the Safe Environment course and provide copies of required clearances on both the State and Federal level. Please contact Patti Fauls in the Religious Education Office for more information.

MINISTRY TEACHER COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Ministry Teachers **may ask** for an e-mail address from the Religious Education Office to communicate with the parent/guardians of a student in their class. All e-mails sent to the parents/guardians must include the Religious Education Office.

If a P.R.E.P. Ministry Teacher wants to establish an email class list, they must have the permission of the parents/guardians. **No emails are permitted to be sent out, until the Religious Education Office has approved it. No child's name can appear in an email address. No child can receive an email from anyone involved in P.R.E.P.**

COMPUTER AND INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

All computer and internet rules apply while on the parish campus, regardless if the computer is property of the parish or Ministry Member. All internet sites must be reviewed by the Religious Education Office prior to viewing during P.R.E.P. class time.

DROP OFF PROCEDURES and PICK UP PROCEDURES

Safety is #1

P.R.E.P. BEGINS AT 9:00 a.m. for all students and ends at 12:15 p.m.

GROUP 1: Children enter through the school doors located in the Church parking lot and go directly to their assigned classroom.

Class begins at 9:00 a.m. – Attendance taken by Catechist

Dismissal is at 10:30 a.m. – From the classroom.

Optional: Parent Pick-up for Mass is at 11:00 a.m. – Release to Parent for 11:15 a.m. Mass, is recorded by Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer will be located at end of the school hallway, by the Library doors. Parents are asked to arrive for Mass pick up, by using the Library doors located through the Café, up the first set of steps with a quick left turn into the school hallway.

Children **not** attending Mass with their family will attend Mass and be supervised by a Pew moderator.

All children who attended Mass with a Pew Moderator will be taken back to the P.R.E.P office for dismissal.

P.R.E.P. BEGINS AT 9:00 a.m. for all students and ends at 12:15 p.m.

GROUP 2:

Class begins at 10:30 a.m. – Attendance taken by Catechist

Dismissal is at 12:15 p.m. – From the classroom.

Bathroom and snack will be provided.

CARPOOL

If your child is participating in a carpool, a note must be kept on file with the Religious Education Office. See the Religious Education Coordinator for a Driving Form.

LATE ARRIVALS OR EARLY DISMISSAL

Our time with your child is valuable and limited. **We allow for a total of 2 infractions in each Session.** Late arrivals or early dismissals are to be used only when it is absolutely necessary. We ask you please keep extracurricular activities scheduled after their P.R.E.P. time.

Late Arrivals:

1. Parent/guardian must provide a written note at the time of the incident. For the child's personal files.
2. Note is to be addressed to Patti Fauls, Religious Education Coordinator.

Early dismissals requirements:

1. A written note is needed. The name of the person picking up the child must be contained in the note.
2. Photo Identification of the named person in the note is needed. (driver's license)
3. Please use the school doors, located in the parking lot, for pick up.
4. Please ring the doorbell.
5. Once your Photo ID is verified, the Hall Monitor will ask the parent/guardian to sign the Early Dismissal Book.
6. Classwork not completed during class time, must be finished before the next class. The child will be tested on their missed work, upon their return.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

We are required by the Catholic Archdioceses of Philadelphia to hold **fire drills**. The fire drill will be announced to all P.R.E.P. Ministry Members in advance. P.R.E.P. Ministry Members need to locate Fire Procedure Signs that are located in your classroom for specific instructions. All P.R.E.P. Ministry Members and students should follow these regulations:

1. Rise in silence when the alarm sounds.
2. Catechist must take the Attendance Book.
3. Close all windows and doors.
4. Walk to the assigned safety area, briskly, in silence, single file at all times.
5. Stand and face the building.
6. Catechists must take attendance.
7. Return to the building when the signal is given.

Tornado Warning

In case of a Tornado Warning. The procedures are:

1. Rise in silence after notification.
2. Walk to inside corner of the room or main hallway.
3. Kneel, face wall, and put hands over head.
4. Return to the classroom when signal is given.

Earthquake Warning

In case of an Earthquake Warning. The procedures are:

1. Drop, cover head immediately.
2. Crawl under desk or nearest table.
3. Listen for further instructions.

Safety Lockdown

In case of a Safety Lockdown. The procedures are:

1. Stay in the classroom and sit away from the door.
2. All doors are locked and will remain locked until an all clear announcement is made.
3. If possible a code will be used, “**I have lost my keys, and the office is now locked.**”

HEALTH PROCEDURES

REPORTING AN ABSENCE FOR STUDENTS AND MINISTRY MEMBERS:

Please call or send an email to the Religious Education Office **by 12:00 pm or noon** to report the *excused* absences of a P.R.E.P. Ministry Member and/or student.

For student only: Parents, if you **call** to report an *excused absence* a written note is **REQUIRED** stating the reason for the absence. If you are **e-mailing** to report the student absent, please state the reason for the absence in your initial e-mail and **NO written note is required.**

If you know of any planned absences in advance please call or e-mail the Religious Education Office as soon as possible.

For P.R.E.P. Ministry Teachers, if you are absent please contact **BOTH** the Religious Education Office and P.R.E.P. Ministry Teachers in your classroom with your lesson plan for that class.

ABSENCES

Regular P.R.E.P. attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her religious education time. However, if your child is not feeling well we respectfully ask that he or she remain at home. Please do not send your child to P.R.E.P. if they have experienced the following conditions in the past 24 hours: bad cold, sore throat, sinus infections, eye infections, unusual skin eruptions, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever within the previous 24 hours, or suspected communicable disease. You child must be fever free of symptoms and/or fever without the cold or fever reducing remedies, for 24 hours before returning to P.R.E.P..

If your child has accumulated 3 unexcused absences in a Session, the Religious Education Office will contact the parent/or guardian regarding the unexcused absence. An unexcused absence is an absence that has occurred and was not reported by the parent/guardian by phone or email AND no written note is on file. Class work missed must be completed and the child will be tested on the missed material. This is extremely necessary if the child is in a Sacrament year.

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION

The parent/or guardian is responsible for providing all needed information to the Religious Education Office regarding medical conditions that Ministry Members need to know in order to protect and care for your child during P.R.E.P. classes.

MEDICATION

P.R.E.P. Ministry Members and Religious Education Coordinator cannot dispense medications such as, and not limited to, epi-pens and asthma inhalers, without a written note from the parent/or guardian stating the need for the medication and permission to dispense it to the child. **Students may not self-dispense medications, unless directed by their physician. This includes, and is not limited to, cough drops and throat drops. They may not carry medications on their person or in bags during P.R.E.P. time. We will provide the Catechist with a container to keep them in.**

EMERGENCY FIRST AID AND INJURY

Minor first aid will be administered to your child at P.R.E.P... First Aid supplies will be kept in the Religious Education Office to use for minor injuries such as cuts and scrapes. If any First Aid is applied or a child is injured in any way, a P.R.E.P. Ministry Teacher will complete an **INCIDENT FORM** that will be signed and dated by the parent/or guardian at pick up and a verbal explanation to the parent of the event.

MEDICAL PROCEDURES FOR SERIOUS INJURY

Serious injuries involving broken bones, convulsions, seizures, food allergy situation, fainting, unconsciousness, or other bodily injury should be treated as the following:

1. Notify Religious Education Coordinator on Duty.
2. Call 911 if needed first. If medical personal arrives and parent/or guardian cannot be contacted a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital.
3. Call parent/or guardian from the Emergency Information Binders located in the Resource Room.
4. Keep calm and keep the children calm. Other children will be escorted by P.R.E.P. Ministry Staff to a different classroom for the duration of the time.
5. The Religious Education Coordinator will follow up with the parent as needed.

FOOD ALLERGIES

We are a NUT FREE Environment. A snack and water will be provided during the P.R.E.P. class time. If your child has a dietary issue regarding these two snacks, please contact the Religious Education Office. Arrangements will be made for you to provide a snack for them each week, with the child's name printed clearly on it. This snack should NOT require refrigeration or preparation. **If your child, has no food issues, but does not like or want the provided snacks, they are not required to have them. HOWEVER they are not permitted to bring in their own snacks. The Safety of all our students is our priority. We have to be cautious with all our student's needs.**

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Sacred Heart Children's P.R.E.P. Ministry, consider it a privilege to work with parents and guardians to provide faith formation for your children. Parents are the primary teachers. Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others.

We work hand in hand with parents and guardians in conveying the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith. Faith formation includes instruction in the precepts of the Church. These precepts include participation at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, fast and abstinence on days appointed, service to the Catholic Church's mission, sacramental opportunities, which include Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Together let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person he or she is capable of becoming.

SACRAMENTAL P.R.E.P. - ARATIONS

Please stay in close communication with the Religious Education Office and P.R.E.P. Calendar for upcoming Sacramental P.R.E.P. for parents/guardians and students.

- No child will be permitted to receive their First Communion or Confirmation without attendance at Mass each Sunday. Continued participation in the Religious Education program for the 2016-2017 academic year will be dependent upon your commitment to Sunday Mass.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The Children's Ministry P.R.E.P. Division will complete periodic activities for Community Service together for local, national, and world charities.

CURRICULUM

Sacred Heart Children's Ministry fosters a hands-on-minds-on approach to learning faith formation. This includes visual, auditory, tactile teaching strategies to promote greater student involvement and motivation in learning faith formation. This includes individual, small and large group activities during instruction.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia recognizes the **Pflaum Publishing** Groups Scope and Sequence for faith formation instruction. Please visit <http://pflaumweeklies.com> for more information on the Weekly Gospel Faith Formation and Sacrament Program for Levels 1-6.

In Levels 2 & 6, will also be using the Pflaum Sacramental Preparation lessons as part of their curriculum for the year.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

We accept all of God's children into our program. We ask that parents provide all needed Educational Information on your Registration Form. If you would like to schedule a meeting with the P.R.E.P. Ministry Staff to discuss your child's needs for success in our program, please contact the Religious Education Office.

EXAMINATIONS

The Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia requires that a Mid-term and Final Exam be administered during the P.R.E.P. year.

The Mid-term will be for **Levels 2 - 6**.

The Final Exam will be for **Levels 2 - 6**.

HOMEWORK

Levels 1-6 Homework will be at the discretion of the P.R.E.P. Ministry Teachers.

SUPPLIES

Text Book: Pflaum Weeklies for 4 sessions. (32 for the year)

Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation program are included for Levels 2 & 6.

Students in Levels 1- 4 will be provided a backpack, classroom and art supplies and workbooks.

Levels 5 & 6 will be provided a backpack, classroom and art supplies and workbooks.

RESOURCE ROOM

The Resource Room is a working and supply room for all P.R.E.P. Ministry Teachers. It is located in the school. The Resource Room is stocked with construction paper, markers, scissors, glue, bibles, craft needs, stickers, paint, and other educational enhancers such as musical cd's, games, manipulatives, and other items. Please take only what you need for your classroom and return any extras. If you notice a stocked item is getting low, please notify the Religious Education Coordinator on duty. If the item you need is not in the Resource Room and you need to purchase supplies, please submit the receipt to the Religious Education Office with your name and session. P.R.E.P. Ministry Members may be reimbursed up to \$15.00 for Session I from September to November and 15.00 for Session 2, January to March.

PHOTOCOPY REQUESTS

If a Ministry Teacher needs copies made for P.R.E.P. Please email them to the Religious Education Office by Monday each week. We understand last minute copies may be needed but we ask for your cooperation in advance. No copies can be made the day of class.

CLERGY AND RELIGIOUS INVITATION

Ministry Teachers need to contact Father DiMaria or Sister Marganne directly to arrange for a classroom visit. Please let the Religious Education Coordinators know of the up-coming visit.

CODE OF CONDUCT

We believe that God has commanded us to respect our parents, teachers, leaders, and others by listening and closing following instructions or directions given by any designated authority. Just as God commanded us to love one another as He loves us, students, parents/guardians, Ministry Members will treat those in P.R.E.P. with kindness and respect encouraging one another to do good deeds. We want to create a Catholic community that nurtures Reverence, Respect, and Responsibility.

BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

All P.R.E.P. students will...

- Be polite
- Be prepared for P.R.E.P.
- Be kind
- Be cooperative
- Be respectful
- Be prayerful

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Since a student's behavior impacts on the learning environment, whether negative or positive, students are encouraged to make good choices and take responsibility for their actions. Ministry Members will work to reinforce positive behavior just as they expect student to accept consequences for negative behavior.

1. Each P.R.E.P. Ministry Teacher will establish rules of expected student behavior.
2. Each P.R.E.P. Ministry Teacher will establish Level appropriate guidelines for accountability.
3. **Rules of Discipline:**
 - a. **First incident: The student will be removed from class and the parent or guardian will be immediately be notified by the program coordinator. The program coordinator will schedule a conference with the parents/guardian, student and catechist to discuss the matter.**
 - b. **Second incident: The student will be removed from class. The parents/guardians will be immediately notified by the program coordinator and required to pick up their child. The student will be suspended from the program for a period of one week. Prior to returning to the program, the coordinator will schedule a conference with the parents/guardians, student and catechist to discuss the matter.**
 - c. **Third incident: The student will be removed from class and dismissed from the program. The parents/guardians will be immediately notified by the coordinator and required to pick up their child. Following a conference with the program coordinator, parents, student, and catechist, the parents will be provided with the option of having their child repeat his or her current grade level the following PREP year or opting to complete the current year's material by home-schooling their child. In either case, no tuition refunds or material fee reimbursements will be made.**
 - d. **Sacred heart Parish reserves the right to supersede the forgoing course of action depending on the particular circumstances of any given situation.**

4. At no point should a P.R.E.P. Ministry Member place a child in the hallway as a consequence of their behavior.
5. If chronic discipline problems occur parents/guardians can expect a phone call to home, cell, or work number to resolve the chronic discipline problem from the Religious Education Coordinator.
6. The Religious Education Coordinator reserves the right to search student's desks, tote bags, and any other area at any time without notice. Failure to comply with this request will result in the parent/guardian being called.
7. When anyone is informed of a reasonable lead to believe an unauthorized or dangerous item may be at P.R.E.P., he or she should notify the Religious Education Coordinator IMMEDIATELY.

BULLYING/HARRASSMENT – ZERO TOLLERANCE

Each person is made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, each person deserves respect. Respect and dignity are based on the Ten Commandments. We will tolerate no bullying on or off the church property when students are under our supervision.