

Religious Education Parent Handbook



Corpus Christi Parish
Chatham Township, NJ
2018 - 2019

Corpus Christi Parish
234 Southern Boulevard
Chatham, NJ 07928

973-635-0070
973-635-5518 (fax)
www.corpuschristi.org

REGISTRATION

- Families must be registered parishioners of Corpus Christi Parish.
- To join the parish, go to our website www.corpuschristi.org -**Parish Registration.**
- Religious Education Registration online **Religious Education PreK-8**
- Confirmation Preparation Registration online **Ministries – Confirmation Prep and Registration**
- A copy of your child’s baptismal certificate is needed for your child to attend Religious Education Classes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Corpus Christi provides a graded program. Students are expected to attend classes each year beginning with the First Grade through the Sophomore Year of High School. Grades 1 and 2 must be completed to receive the sacraments of Penance and First Holy Communion. Grades 3 – 8 must be completed to begin preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Our program provides weekly classes for Pre-School through Grade 5.
Grades 6 – 8 meet for 16 sessions – 8 each semester.
Grades 9 and 10 meet for 12 sessions – 6 each semester.
Check the Religious Education calendar on our website.

PreK – Kindergarten	Sunday ~ 9:00 am to the end of Mass
Grades 1 – 5	Sunday ~ 8:00 am – 8:55 am, 9:50 am – 10:40 am, 11:45 am – 12:45 am Monday ~ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Grades 6 – 8	Sunday ~ 8:00 am – 8:55 am (Grade 6) 11:45 am – 12:45 am, 5pm – 6 pm, 7pm – 8pm
Grades 9 – 10	Sunday ~ 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm

HOME SCHOOL PROGRAM

Corpus Christi also offers a Home School Program for those families who cannot attend regular scheduled classes. For more information contact

Brigette Hanley (Grades 1 – 5)

Brian Duemling (Grades 6 – 8)

Home schooling is generally NOT considered for Confirmation Preparation. However, in very special cases it might be considered.

Psomi (Grades 9 – 10)

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Instruction is provided for children with special learning needs, or developmental disabilities. Students are either integrated into their grade level, or instructed individually depending on the parents request.

CALENDAR

Classes for Grades 1 through 5 will begin on Sunday, **September 16 and Monday, September 17.**

Junior High School will begin on **Sunday, September 16** with orientation for **PARENTS ONLY** at 5:00pm in the Corpus Christi Gym, followed by classes commencing on **Sunday, September 23.**

High School will begin on **Sunday, September 16** with orientation for all in the Confirmation program, followed by classes commencing on **Sunday, September 23.**

Pre-School and Kindergarten classes begin on **Sunday, October 14.**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

First Penance/First Holy Communion

Typically, the 1st and 2nd grades are the two years of Religious Education that are necessary for the reception of First Penance and First Holy Communion. Preparing for these sacraments is part of scheduled classes. A calendar with a list of activities involving parents is distributed at the time of the parent meeting. The calendars are also accessible on our website.

First Penance is celebrated in December.

First Holy Communion is celebrated in early May.

Confirmation

Immediate preparation for Confirmation usually begins in the 9th grade. A meeting for parents and teens is held in September to explain the program for all teens in each of the two preparation years. The candidates are confirmed in the fall of their Junior Year.

MASS ATTENDANCE

A vital part of each student's spiritual life and growth as a Catholic is regular participation in the sacraments of the Church. All students are expected to attend Mass and participate in the liturgy each Sunday. Those who have received the Sacraments of First Penance and First Holy Communion are encouraged to receive these sacraments regularly.

Mass Schedule:

Saturday – 5:00 pm

Sunday – 7:30 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am and 12:15 pm

Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 4:15 pm – 4:45 pm or by appointment.

Sacrament of Penance

The children and youth in the Religious Education Program are given the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Penance during the season of Lent.

PROGRAM FEE

The tuition fee is \$125.00 per child, in the lower grades.

The fee for Confirmation Preparation is \$150.00, and this is paid at the beginning of each year during registration.

The fee for Religious Education covers salaries, books, materials and office supplies.

If you have difficulty paying the fee, please contact either

Monsignor Mahoney, 973-635-0070 X5 or jmahoney@corpuschristi.org or

Brigette Hanley, 973-635-0070 X715, or bhanley@corpuschristi.org or

Psomi, 973-635-0070 x 718, or psomi@corpuschristi.org.

No one has been or ever will be denied religious education because of inability to pay.

COMMUNICATION

Parents will be kept informed of activities and events by way of mailings, emails, memos from the Religious Education Office, the Youth Ministry Office, the Parish Bulletin and the Parish website. Communication between parents and catechists and between parents and the Director/Coordinators is encouraged.

CHILD ABUSE

Consistent with diocesan policy and local legal codes, parish catechetical staff has a moral and legal duty to comply with the law to ensure the welfare of a child. As mandated by the US Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops, all employees and volunteers working with children must complete a criminal background check and attend the Virtus seminar, Protecting God's Children. All staff members and catechists are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have read and understand the ethical and personal conduct policy for the Diocese of Paterson.

CURRICULUM

PRE-SCHOOL (3 and 4 year olds)

I Am Special provides learning experiences based on the young child's level of understanding and ability to participate. Through the media of stories, songs, finger plays, dramatizations, lesson-related prayers, and sensory activities, children can realize God's love for them.

GRADES Kdgn. – Grade 5

The series "WE BELIEVE" is our text for Kindergarten through Grade 5. This program was developed by nationally recognized experts in catechesis, curriculum, and child development. The revised edition includes a new component – PROJECT DISCIPLE. Its objective: the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ. This series allows the student to learn the fundamentals of our faith and offers the parent the opportunity to review their religious instruction as they work together with their child.

GRADES 6 – 8

The Middle School Program is designed to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for Church teaching so as to help young adolescents know, live in, love and befriend the Blessed Trinity.

We do this by making connections between what we believe, how we live and how we pray. Each class is taught by a dedicated parishioner volunteering his or her time to the program.

The 3 year curriculum is broken down into three main sections: God, Revelation, and Faith in the 6th grade; Jesus the Christ and Prayer in the 7th grade; The Holy Spirit and Catholic Social Teaching in the 8th grade.

We draw inspiration from Scripture, incorporate service learning projects, emphasize active participation in the Sacraments especially the Eucharist, and integrate fun, through skits, movies, music, and mini retreats run by the high school program.

The St. Mary's Press *Catholic Connections* series is used along with Michael Pennock's Catholic Social Teaching books for the Middle School Program.

GRADES 9 – 10

All 9th and 10th graders will be involved in the Confirmation Preparation Program (CPP). These two groups will be known as Year 1 and Year 2, respectively. Each year will consist of 12 meetings for religious education, 10 hours of service to the church and/or the community, and one retreat. Parents are asked to be involved in some capacity – as catechists, office volunteers, chaperones during service events, retreat meals.

After two years of Confirmation Preparation, teens will love, know, and live the Catholic faith, commencing at the celebration the Sacrament of Confirmation at the beginning of their high school junior year.

Confirmation Prep Mandatory Orientation

Years 1 & 2 7 pm Sunday, **September 16, 2018**

NCEA IFG: ACRE

Parish religious education programs and Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Paterson administer the National Catholic Education Association's IFG:

ACRE Assessment. (Information for Growth: Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education) to all 5th grade, 8th grade and 10th grade students. Besides testing each student's basic religious knowledge, the NCEA IFG: ACRE Assessment will give a deeper insight into their prevailing religious beliefs, attitudes, practices and perceptions.

Administered by: DRE/Coordinators

ATTENDANCE

Children are expected to attend ALL regular scheduled classes.

For Grades 1 – 5, three or more absences will be considered a hindrance to effectively covering the curriculum and will result in a meeting with parents.

For Grades 6, 7 & 8 three or more absences will result in a meeting with parents. We would appreciate your attention to regular on-time attendance.

Inform the Director/Coordinator if your child has an illness or other circumstance that will prevent attendance for an extended period of time.

Grades PreK – Grade 5

PERFECT ATTENDANCE certificates are awarded to those who have attended all classes during the year.

FAITHFUL ATTENDANCE certificates are awarded to those who miss only 1 – 3 classes.

SPECIAL REQUESTS

Special requests for placement in a particular class etc. will be honored only in extreme cases.

HOMEWORK

Grades 1 – 5

When a student is absent they must make up the lesson by printing and completing the missed content. Students and parents can visit

<https://religion.sadlierconnect.com/wbpd> to print and complete the following 2 documents:

1. The Study Guide for the missed chapter
2. The Printable Activity for the missed chapter

Parents are asked to work with the child in completing the chapter. The homework is to be returned to the catechist the following week in order to receive credit for the missed class.

** Please note: this does not apply to 2nd grade, they must attend a makeup session in person**

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please see the parish website www.corpuschristi.org, for further information. For more information, please contact Brigitte Hanley: bhanley@corpuschristi.org; 973-635-0070 x715

Grades 6 – 8

If your son or daughter misses a class, please go to corpuschristi.org and click on "Middle School Rel. Ed." on the left column. Then click on "Homework."

There you will have instructions for completing homework assignments. You only need to complete a homework assignment if you missed a class.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please see the parish website www.corpuschristi.org, for further information. For more information, please contact Brian Duemling: bduemling@corpuschristi.org; 973-635-0070 x740

GRADES 9 – 10: Confirmation Preparation Program

It is recommended that teens participate in the Sunday night religious education without absences. However, there will be two passes given during the year, at the teens/parents discretion. Directions on the use of the passes will be explained at the Orientation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please see the parish website www.corpuschristi.org, for further information. For more information, please contact Psomi: psomi@corpuschristi.org; 973-635-0070 x718

BECOMING A CATECHIST

We are always in need of parishioners who are eager to share our faith with the children and youth of our parish. With almost 1000 students in need of instruction, we are seeking adults willing to commit to our program. We have had as many as 100 catechists who attend to the teaching of our children and

youth on a weekly basis. We realize that without the commitment and sacrifice on the part of our catechists, the Religious Education Program could not thrive. If you should feel called to this ministry please know that you will receive all the support you need.

VOLUNTEERS

Parent volunteer participation is welcomed and needed in various areas of the religious education program. Please seriously consider helping in one of the following areas: Catechist Assistants, Substitutes or Office Assistants.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Inclement Weather: In case of bad weather you will receive an email from your child's catechist if class is cancelled. The information will also be found on the parish telephone voice mail and on the parish website.

MONDAY: Classes are cancelled if the schools are closed or have an early dismissal due to inclement weather.

Safety and Security

After extensive consultation, we have put into place various "best practices" to increase the safety and security within our building, especially for our children. These apply to both the building itself and various protocols that we will observe.

During the times for religious education classes, only students, catechists, and staff will be allowed in the classroom area. (During the first several weeks, this protocol will be relaxed for the youngest of children so that parents may bring their child to the specific classroom if necessary.) While religious education classes are in session, there will be a staff person monitoring the entrance into the classroom wing on the first floor. This person can handle any special situations and needs which arise.

Arrival Procedure

ALL students will use the first-floor double doors to access their classrooms, whether their classroom is on the first or second floor. Those going to the second floor will use the stairs at the end of the first-floor classroom corridor.

Students should arrive at least 5 minutes before the start of class.

Dismissal Procedure (Grades 1 - 5)

On Sundays children either attend mass after class OR return home.

Sunday – 8:00 am, and 11:45 am

- Mass – Children meet parents in the lobby by the trophy case.
- Home – Children meet parents outside.

Sunday – 9:50 am

- Mass – Children gather in the lobby by the trophy case and wait for parents.
- Home – Due to the large amount of children at this session the children will gather outside in the area enclosed by orange cones. For safety reasons parents are asked to PARK and walk to the protected area and then walk your child to your car.

Monday ~ 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

At dismissal the children will gather in the area enclosed by the orange cones.

Use one of the two following procedures:

1. Park, walk to the protected area and walk your child back to the car.
2. Drive to the pick-up spot (located by the Pre-school playground) and your child will be able to get directly into your car.

GRADES 6 -10

Junior High and High School students are picked up directly at the back parking lot.

EXPECTATIONS

For Parents

- ~ Ensure that your child attend classes regularly and on time.
- ~ Communicate any special need or circumstances that may affect your child in the classroom.

- ~ Be an active part of your child's learning and be involved with the program as much as possible.
- ~ Review weekly the material covered in class.
- ~ Remind your child to return homework the following week.
- ~ Make every effort for you and your child to attend weekly Mass.

For Students:

- ~ Be on time and prepared for class.
- ~ Show respect for all Catechists, students and program personnel.
- ~ Be courteous and considerate of others.
- ~ Use language and actions appropriate of Christian behavior.
- ~ Be cooperative and participate in all class sessions and activities.
- ~ Complete homework if you are absent and return the work the following week.

For Catechists:

- ~ Provide a loving, Catholic atmosphere within the learning environment so that the children will be able to grow in their faith.
- ~ Prepare and teach designated curriculum.
- ~ Be a Christian role model.
- ~ Communicate regularly with and involve parents in the faith development of their children.
 - ~ Discuss any concerns or problems you may be experiencing with the Director/Coordinator.

DISCIPLINE SOLUTIONS

All students are expected to follow the instructions listed under expectations for students in this handbook. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue.

1. The first incident may cause the catechist to remind the student of his/her expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior.
2. The second incident, the child will be sent to the office for a discussion with the director/coordinator about appropriate behavior. The child would then be allowed to return to class.

3. If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be sent to the office, where he/she will remain until dismissal. The child's parent will be contacted.
4. If a child's behavior is continuously inappropriate it may be necessary to remove him/her from the classroom environment, so the other students can continue their lessons. In this case the parent would have to discuss the possibility of Home Study so that the child may continue to learn and grow in one's faith.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

ELEMENTARY

Christmas Pageant

Children in Kindergarten through Grade 5 are invited to participate in a Parish Christmas Pageant.

Date: Saturday, December 8, 2018

Teaching Touching Safety

The Teaching Touching Safety Program is from the creators of *Protecting God's Children*, the program which is required of all parish volunteers who regularly work with children.

The Teaching Touching Safety Program is designed to give children the tools they need to protect themselves from those who may intend to do them harm.

Grade 1/2 – March 17/18, 2019

Grade 4/5 - March 24/25, 2019

Global Awareness

The children and youth are encouraged to participate in projects of service through their religious education classes.

Grades Pre-K – Grade 5

During Lent money is collected and sent to the Holy Childhood Association which provides food, clothing, medicine and school supplies for children in developing countries.

Also during Lent the children are asked to donate “Food for the Poor”.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Back Pack Program

As part of the Religious Education program for middle school, all students are asked to participate in the service learning aspect of the program. We have committed to providing food for preschoolers in Paterson, NJ twice per year. The back-pack program is designed to supply additional food preschool students can take home at the end of each month. Breakfast and lunch is provided at the school, but dinners and weekend food for this low-income population are dependent on the families. Each class is designated a particular food item to collect in the fall, and again in the winter. On Sunday December 9, 2018 from 1:00-3:00pm, students will organize and pack the food into bags to be distributed to the students. If any parents are interested in helping with this program, please contact Brian Duemling. Help will include delivering the food packages to the school itself.

Retreats

Each grade level has a retreat during the year. Please arrive in the gym at 6pm. The retreat concludes at 8pm. Parents are asked to participate by either helping set up, clean up, help during the event, or bring snacks, desserts or bottled water. Please check for emails about the retreats in the weeks leading up the following dates:

6 th grade – October 28, 2018	GRATITUDE
7 th grade – January 27, 2019	KINDNESS
8 th grade – March 3, 2019	COURAGE

Special Sessions

Inspirational Guest Speakers are invited to give a presentation on relevant faith topics in planned Special Sessions during the year to youth and their parents. Grades 6-10

HIGH SCHOOL

Religious Education

“24 Hours” is the name of the area of religious education for high school teens preparing for Confirmation. The idea is that we are all given 24 hours

in a day, God calls us to live those 24 hours the best we can. In 24 hours (of sessions, 12 each year of preparation) teens will learn the ways of Jesus, who sets for all of us, an example of how to live as God wants us to.

Service

All teens are expected to do 10 hours of service during each of their years of preparation. Youth Ministry sponsors several community options, such as Bridges, soup kitchen & food bank service, and Habitat for Humanity, and parish sponsored events such as pancake breakfast, Senior Dinner Dance, Lumenaria, ushering the 12:15 mass, and more.

Various options for service come up during the course of the school year. All of this will be explained in detail during the Orientation.

Retreats

Each teen will make one retreat in their first year of preparation, and another in their second year, for a total of 2 retreats during their preparation. These retreats must be attended by all teens.

Special Sessions

Inspirational Guest Speakers are invited to give a presentation on relevant faith topics in planned Special Sessions during the year to youth and their parents.

Public/Private school and Catholic school distinctions

Teens attending public or private (non-Catholic) high school must register and comply with all the direction of the Confirmation Preparation Program, including religious education, service, and retreats.

Those teens attending Catholic high school need only to register online and attend the orientation and the Special Sessions. Service, retreats, and theology will be covered at their respective school. There is no fee for Catholic high school teens.

Post-Confirmation

After completing Confirmation, there are many opportunities for leadership, such as retreat team, God Squad, and many service leadership possibilities. Teens who wish to participate in Youth Ministry leadership can be in touch with the youth minister.

Also, more information can be found on the Parish Website and through the Youth Ministry Office.