

Saint Philip Religious Education Office

7500 Saint Philip's Court, Falls Church, Virginia 22042 ■ RE@stphilipparish.com ■ 703-573-1899

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK *Please keep for future reference*

Si necesita una copia de este informativo en español, por favor solicítela en la Oficina de Educación Religiosa durante las horas de atención o por email, stphilip.ccd@gmail.com

Mission Statement of St. Philip RE Program

To create opportunities for the whole family to grow closer to Christ in the context of the parish.

Eligibility

Religious Education Classes are open for children in Kindergarten through 8th grade and those children missing Sacraments, whose families are registered members of St. Philip Parish. To become a registered member you have to live within the boundaries of the parish and visit the parish office to request a registration card. You can also obtain the form from our website. Once you are assigned a member number you can start the process to enroll your child in the RE program.

Registration Fee

Please refer to the registration form for fees. Students in of First Communion preparation and those in Confirmation preparation will have an additional charge to cover the cost of retreats, days or recollection, Confirmation robe, etc.

Documentation Needed

At the time of registration the parents of new students need to provide the RE Office with a copy of their child's Baptismal certificate. Returning students who have not done so will be asked to present it as well. Children in their last year of sacramental preparation will have to submit additional forms. These forms will be given at the corresponding meeting and will be available from our website.

Students Who Have Not Been Baptized

We will hold an informational meeting in the fall for parents whose children have not been baptized. Please consult the calendar for the current academic year for the date and time.

Class Schedule

Tuesday Session: 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

- Students in grades 5 – 12 and who have not attended RE for the last three (3) years consecutively;

Wednesday Session: 6:30 pm – 7:45 pm

- Students in Kindergarten through 8th grade, and who have attended RE for the last three (3) years consecutively;
- Students in Kindergarten through 4th grade, and who have not attended RE for the last three (3) years consecutively;

Mass Attendance

"The Sunday celebration of the Lord's Day and his Eucharist is at the heart of the Church's life. Sunday is the day on which the paschal mystery is celebrated in light of the apostolic tradition and it is to be observed as the foremost holy day of obligation in the universal Church." (Cf. CCC 2177)

Children and their parents must attend the Eucharist as required by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, sections 2180 and 2181:

2180 – “The precept of the Church specifies the law of the Lord more precisely: “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass.” 117 “The precept of participating in the Mass is satisfied by assistance at a Mass which is celebrated anywhere in a Catholic rite either on the holy day or on the evening of the preceding day.”

2181 – “The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, unless excused for a serious reason (for example, illness, the care of infants) or dispensed by their own pastor.” 119 “Those who deliberately fail in this obligation commit a grave sin.”

Our parish offers a varied Mass schedule so that our parishioners can fulfill their Sunday obligation. **Failing to come to Sunday Mass might hinder your child’s understanding of and ability to receive the sacraments for which they are preparing.**

Attire

Children should wear modest clothes. Please no shorts. Bermudas are allowed.

Attendance and Make-up Work

There are a limited number of religious education classes and your child is expected to attend every class unless he or she is ill. You are responsible for making sure that your child makes up all missed class work to be handed in at the next class attended, unless serious extenuating circumstances are brought to the attention of the Director of RE and approved by him/her.

Children are required to have a note from a parent for all absences and turned into their teacher prior to the absence or immediately upon the students return to class. This *Excuse from Class* form can be obtained from the teacher, RE office or website. **More than five unexcused absences** or too many excused absences may result in your child repeating a year of instruction.

Children in any of the sacramental preparation classes may not receive the sacrament if there is an attendance problem.

Safety Policy

To comply with diocesan requirements, St. Philip will implement a safety plan that involves: (a) a fire drill and lockdown exercise; (b) controlled access at drop-off and pick-up; and (c) pick up procedures in case of an emergency. These procedures are equivalent to the safety measures already in place in our parochial school, and in most county schools. Although our catechists have received training, we ask parents to instruct their student to listen to instructions given by our volunteers, do what they are told, and not be afraid. We take this opportunity to remind our families to pray for the RE program at St. Philip, and the safety of our students and volunteers.

(a) Fire Drill and Lockdown Exercise

These will happen during the class. The date for the fire drill is in the RE calendar. The catechists will talk to the students about the lockdown procedures and proceed to do an exercise.

(b) Controlled Access

Monitored Areas

To better control access to the building we ask parents and guardians to abstain from using the doors to Hayden Hall (former cafeteria), or the school doors to access the building at drop-off and pick-up and

during RE. The main doors will be the church doors. To assist us in monitoring the area of the building where RE is taking place we have Hall Guardians. These are parent volunteers that roam the school hallways and alert the RE office of anything suspicious. If you would like to volunteer in this capacity, please refer to the Volunteer section below.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Students in kindergarten – 12th grade

We want your assistance in assuring that the students remain under the supervision of an adult. To facilitate continual supervision, minors are not permitted to be dropped off unattended outside the building, or to leave the building unattended in order to be picked up.

Students have to be signed in at drop off and signed out at dismissal by a parent or guardian. The sign-in/sign-out process will take place within the child's classroom. At the start of the school year, parents must fill out a form indicating who has permission to sign-in and sign-out their child (uncles, aunts, grandparents, etc). This form will be available from our website, your child's teacher, or the RE office. Please instruct your child to remain with the teacher in the classroom after the class until the designated adult arrives. At sign-out, the designated adult may be required to show a photo ID.

We appreciate your compliance with our procedures for drop off and pick up. These procedures are in place for the safety of your children and failure to comply with them will result in your student's dismissal from the in-class program.

Exception for Drivers

Parents will determine if their child can drive himself/herself to and from St. Philip premises. At the beginning of the school year, parents will have to sign a form stating whether the child will drive himself.

In the event of an absence, parents of a student with permission to drive must email the RE office at RE@stphilipsparish.com. Parents may be called if the RE office has not been notified of a student absence. A written note is required (even if an email has been sent) upon returning to the RE. The student is to bring that note to the RE office and it should contain the following information:

1. Student name
2. Reason for absence
3. Date/dates of absence
4. Signature of parent/guardian

Failure to notify the RE office will result in an unverified absence and the student is considered truant.

(c) Pick-Up in Case of an Emergency

If it is not safe to enter the building, children can be picked up from the parking lot in front of the rectory. If cars are not allowed to enter the parish parking lot, children can be picked up from the eastside parking lot (lot closer to Holly Hill Drive) at Falls Church High School. In the event an incident occurs while the students are in the church, students will be picked up from the basketball court on the field. In all three scenarios parents and guardians will be asked to sign out the student. The person picking up has to be on the list of authorized persons to pick up.

Homework

Children in all grade levels will be expected to do either follow-up activities or preparation for the next class (i.e., homework). Please help your child follow through with any assignments given and discuss what they are learning.

RE classes are meant to be the complement to the parents' work of teaching their children in the faith. Please support this, by reviewing your child's work every week, helping with homework, and participating in your child's sacramental preparation.

While strictly speaking, not actually "homework" another great home resource available through the Parish is FORMED (<https://formed.org/>). The Parish subscription to FORMED gives you free access to inspiring movies and video-based studies, audio talks and e-books from the Church's most compelling speakers and authors. Please contact the RE office for questions and to have the parish code.

Student Discipline

All students are expected to behave respectfully toward their teachers and other students. All students are expected to treat the school building and classroom equipment with care.

Our teachers are volunteers who offer their time and talent to teach RE. Children come to RE to learn the teachings of the Catholic Church and Christian Faith. Both children and teachers must expect this time to be a time to learn and come to a deeper understanding of their faith in a positive and nurturing setting. In light of this, *if a child is being disruptive or unruly and continues to be so after a warning, he or she will be taken out of the classroom and a parent will be called to pick them up. Should a second incident occur that is disruptive to the teacher and other children, the child will be dismissed from the in-class program without refund of the tuition fee and put in the home-based catechetical program.*

Use of Cell Phones/Electronic Devices

Cell phones or other electronic devices are not to be used by the students and should be turned off during the RE class or other RE related activities. Cell phones and electronic devices will be collected by the catechists at the beginning of the RE session or activity and returned at dismissal. Unauthorized use of a cell phone or another electronic device will result in immediate confiscation of the apparatus and a \$25.00 fine to be paid by the parent.

Progress Report

Your child's teacher will issue a progress report twice during the year. The purpose of the progress report is to inform parents of their child's attendance, academic progress and discipline in class and in liturgical activities. In some cases where a child is having difficulties due to attendance or other situations, the teacher may require that the progress report be signed by the parent and returned to the teacher.

Picture Policy

Please refer to the Media Release for Minors form available in the registration form.

Student Supplies

Students will be provided with a textbook and handouts. The textbook is included in the RE fee. There is a replacement fee for lost books.

Every week your child will need the following items that **you** provide:

- Tote bag or backpack
- Pencils or pens
- 2nd – 12th graders need a composition book for notes
- Any other items as required by a specific catechist (such as a Catholic Bible, etc.)

Volunteers

The Religious Education office relies on volunteers to help us in our task of providing our children with a sound religious formation. If you feel called to this ministry, please contact one of our priests, the RE office or the parish office. Our volunteers have to be compliant with diocesan requirements, Catholic in good standing, and living according to the laws of the Catholic Church. Our needs: Catechists, Catechist Aide, Hall Guardian, Field Trip Drivers.

Snow Days or Cancellations

We follow FCPS for cancellations due to weather. To sign up for notifications from FCPS please visit their website.

Communication with Parents

The RE office relies on the contact information parents provide at the time of registration. It is the responsibility of the parents to supply a current email address, cell phone number and cell phone provider, and update them as needed.

Student Custody and Guardianship

At the time of registration in the RE program or at any other time where a change in custody status/arrangements occurs, it is the responsibility of the parent(s) to provide the RE office with a true and correct copy of the legal document for any student for which there is a legal custody agreement or for any student not residing with his/her parent.

RE office communication with the appropriate guardian is essential. Accordingly:

- (a) Custodial parents should identify in writing other adults who may have access to information regarding their child.
- (b) Likewise, custodial parents should keep in mind that non-custodial parents may receive information (when requested) regarding the child unless specific documentation to the contrary is provided in the legal custody agreement.

Home-Based Catechesis

As stated by the *National Directory for Catechesis*, “parents have the right and the duty to choose the kind of educational environment that they determine best suits their children’s needs” (p. 259). We recognize the parents’ commitment of time and energy providing assistance and support to these families.

Syllabus: Parents will be provided with a copy of the part of the syllabus that pertains to their child’s grade. This syllabus is prepared by the Arlington Diocese and used by our catechists.

Textbook: Parents can purchase the textbook the RE program uses for the corresponding grade from the RE office, or can obtain another book from the Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series prepared by the Diocese

Mass: Children and their parents must attend the Sunday Mass as required by the Catechism of the Catholic Church, sections 2180 and 2181, stated above.

Special Reconciliation Sessions: These opportunities for the wonderful sacrament of reconciliation are available for all children of the parish. Please check the calendar for the appropriate session for your child. Apart from these dates, families can make use of the normal parish hours for reconciliation.

Parents Meetings: Parents of children in sacramental preparation must attend the meetings scheduled in our calendar. You are welcome to attend the Back-to-school-Night if you wish to meet the teacher for your child’s grade.

Audio-visual Material/Books: You are welcome to borrow books and movies from the Religious Education office for nine (9) days, from Wednesday to Monday, between 6:30 pm and 8 pm). Please

know that there will be a \$25.00 fee towards lost audio-visual items; for lost books, the fee will depend on the catalogue price. Since we have a reduced number of items, we ask that you please do not exceed the lending time (one week).

Guidance/Assistance: Should you have questions about catechizing your child, please do not hesitate to contact the DRE or one of our parish priests.

Important

All families must sign and return the Religious Education Handbook Agreement form by the second class.

Appendices

Allergy Related

Available from the parish school website (St. Philip Early Childhood Center) and the Nurse's Corner
<https://stphilipecc.org/34>

- Medication Authorization Form
- Allergy/Anaphylaxis Plan
- VA Asthma Plan

RE Forms and Documentation

Available from the parish website and the RE office

- RE Emergency Form (Bilingual)
- Driver Form
- RE Handbook Agreement
- Excuse from Class