

CHRIST OUR LIGHT
ELEMENTARY FAITH
FORMATION

Family Handbook

2016 – 2017

MISSION STATEMENT

Acknowledging that children learn about God primarily within the family, the mission of the Elementary Faith Formation program of The Catholic Community of Christ Our Light is to be in partnership with parents / guardians in the faith formation of students in grades Pre-K through Six. Through these combined efforts we hope to realize the development of responsible, respectful persons who celebrate and share God's love.

ROLE OF PARENTS / GUARDIANS

A CHILD'S FIRST AND MOST IMPORTANT TEACHER

1. TO PARTICIPATE IN WEEKLY MASS WITH THEIR CHILD / CHILDREN
2. TO TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THEIR CHILD'S HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS. PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED ON ALL HOMEWORK.
3. To be models of faith through Christian example
4. To encourage children to deepen their relationship with God
5. To be models of stewardship and social justice.

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS

1. To be active participants in the sacramental life of the church.
2. TO ENCOURAGE FAMILIES TO CELEBRATE THE LORD'S LOVE THROUGH THE ATTENDANCE AT WEEKLY MASS
3. To assist parents / guardians to teach curriculum, as set by the Diocese of Camden and the National Directory for Catechesis, by providing basic truths of Roman Catholicism, thereby enabling each child to claim these as his / her own.
4. To foster awareness within our students of the interdependence of all human beings, by being models of stewardship; by participating in and encouraging students to participate in social justice efforts.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

1. TO CELEBRATE GOD'S LOVE WITH THEIR FAMILIES BY ATTENDING MASS EVERY WEEK
2. To cooperate with their parents / guardians and catechists by reviewing weekly lessons and completing all homework assignments
3. To recognize the need for social justice in our world and to actively strive to assist those in need.

THE CATECHETICAL PROGRAM

- Pre-K students use “Who Am I? Image of God” series by Ignatius Press. Preschoolers learn that they are created in God’s image and learn to respect the dignity of every person.

- Grades 1 - 6 use the “We Believe” series by Sadlier Publishing. Each grade level has chapters designed to coincide with the liturgical year as well as other areas of catechesis appropriate to that age and grade.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Christ Our Light’s EFF program is inclusive and offers Faith Formation to students with special needs. Every attempt is made to include the special student, accompanied by a companion catechist, in a typical classroom setting. Parents/guardians should contact the EFF Office to discuss their child’s specific needs. COL parish offers an Inclusion Mass at the 4:30p.m. Saturday liturgy on the first Saturday of the month. .

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

Elementary Faith Formation students attend class 1 day or evening per week. Class time for Pre-K is 1 hour per week. Grades 1-6 are in class for 1 hour and 15 minutes per week. Consistent student attendance is deemed essential, in light of the restricted amount of class time.

Parents / guardians are responsible for reporting their child’s absence on class day by calling the Elementary Faith Formation Office.

Families are contacted when a student has missed the maximum of 4 classes. **STUDENTS ARE ALWAYS RESPONSIBLE FOR MISSED HOMEWORK.** A student with more than 4 absences may be required to repeat the grade level.

PUNCTUALITY

Families should make every effort to see that students report to class on time. Sunday Pre-K begins promptly at 9:00 a.m., Monday and Tuesday afternoon meet at 4:30 p.m., and Wednesday evening classes begin at 7:15 p.m.

CLASS LOCATIONS & TIMES

All classes meet in Resurrection Catholic School

- Pre-K meets Sunday mornings from 9:00-10:00 a.m.
- Grades 1 – 6 meet on Monday afternoons from 4:30 – 5:45p.m.
- Grades 1 – 4 meet on Tuesday afternoons from 4:30 – 5:45.m.
- Grades 5 – 6 meet on Wednesday evenings from 7:15 – 8:30 p.m.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

- * Sunday: Pre-K students are escorted by parents/guardians to their classrooms and picked up after class from their classrooms.
- * Monday and Tuesday: students arrive at Resurrection Catholic School no earlier than 4:15 p.m. and go directly to their classrooms. Children are dismissed to their ride from their classrooms or by carpool from the All Purpose Room of the school.
- * Wednesday: Grades 5-6 arrive at Resurrection Catholic School and go directly to their classrooms by 7:15 p.m. Students are dismissed through the front doors of the school to the parking lot.

CANCELED CLASSES/ELECTRONIC NOTICES

The Elementary Faith Formation yearly calendar follows that of the Cherry Hill public schools. If school has been canceled due to snow or another emergency, Elementary Faith Formation classes are canceled as well. Families are contacted through the Honeywell Instant Alert system. Families update contact information annually.

HOME STUDY

Students may be home schooled following correspondence with the Director and discussing the reason for the request to home school. Families follow regular student registration procedures and all registration fees apply. Families and students attend a Home Study policy review meeting prior to the start of the school year and an event to “wrap up” the year in early May.

CLASS SECTION ASSIGNMENTS

Careful consideration is given to placing students in class. If for some reason a transfer is desired, a conference between the student, parent / guardian, and Director will determine whether or not a change in class is called for.

TRANSPORTATION

Families are responsible for the transportation of their child / children to and from Faith Formation classes.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Early dismissal is discouraged. The following procedures must be followed in the rare event that a student needs to leave class early:

- **Parents / guardians must submit a note requesting early dismissal to the child's catechist.**
- *Make arrangements to meet your child in the Faith Formation Office at the designated time. For security reasons, Parents NEVER go directly to a classroom.*
- **No student will be permitted to leave the building for early dismissal unless accompanied by a parent / guardian.**
- **Families should not expect students to be dismissed early for sports or other extra curricular activities**

HOMEWORK

STUDENTS RECEIVE A HOMEWORK SCHEDULE FOR THE ENTIRE FAITH FORMATION YEAR ON THE FIRST DAY / EVENING OF CLASS. WEEKLY HOMEWORK IS ASSIGNED TO REINFORCE CLASS LESSONS. STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLETING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME AND A PARENT / GUARDIAN MUST SIGN ALL HOMEWORK FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 1 – 6. YOUR SIGNATURE ASSURES US THAT YOU HAVE REVIEWED THE LESSON AND ARE TAKING AN ACTIVE ROLE IN YOUR CHILD'S FAITH FORMATION. STUDENTS WHO CONSISTENTLY SUBMIT INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK JEOPARDIZE PROMOTION TO THE NEXT GRADE LEVEL.

DISCIPLINE

Good manners and Christian values are the expected behavior/attitude of the Elementary Faith Formation program. We are fortunate to have caring people who volunteer to share their faith with the young people of our parish. Without their willingness to give of themselves, weekly catechesis would be impossible. It is expected that all students behave in a respectful manner to their teacher, one another, and the classrooms of Resurrection Catholic School. Please note the following disciplinary policies:

- **All disciplinary situations will be considered on an individual basis.**
- **Students who disregard proper classroom decorum will be sent to the E.F.F. Office.**
- **Parents / guardians are notified and a conference is requested when a student continuously disrupts the classroom, is disrespectful, or does not submit completed homework.**
- **As a result a parent / guardian may have to accompany their child to class.**
- **Any student who persists in being disruptive, disrespectful, and uncooperative will regretfully be dismissed from our parish Faith Formation program.**

STUDENT PROGRESS

The Camden Diocesan policy of student progress states that “a student must satisfactorily complete the required subject matter for each year.” A student’s progress and cooperation will be evaluated by their catechist. Parents will receive reports of student progress at mid-year and year’s end. Parents will be notified if a catechist has a specific concern about a student’s performance. *STUDENTS IN GRADES 5 & 6 WHO DO NOT PASS THE MID YEAR AND FINAL TESTS ARE IN JEOPARDY OF REPEATING THAT GRADE LEVEL.*

TESTING

Students in grades 5 – 6 are tested mid-year and again at the end of the Faith Formation year. These tests come directly from the student textbooks.

DRESS CODE

It is expected that all students will be appropriately attired while attending Faith Formation classes.

NOTE: Boys may not wear hats of any kind inside Resurrection Catholic School or St. Peter Celestine Church.

CELLPHONES

Bringing cell phones to EFF class is discouraged. Cell phone usage is not permitted at any time during class. Students who call or text during Elementary Faith Formation will have their phone taken for the remainder of class time. This is considered a discipline issue. A parent/guardian may collect their child's phone the next day.

MEDICATION

The Faith Formation staff and faculty cannot administer, nor be responsible for, a student's medication.

Living in the Light: SACRAMENTS

The Office of Elementary Faith Formation is responsible for assisting parish families who are preparing children to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time. In compliance with Diocesan recommendation COL brings children and parents/guardians together for special sacrament preparation events. Students who begin faith formation class for the first time in grade 3 or older must complete one full year of faith formation prior to preparing for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Children who began Faith Formation classes in 1st grade are eligible to prepare for 1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist in second grade.

REGISTRATION

Re-registration forms are sent to all families in April for the coming academic year. A notice advertising registration is also placed in the parish bulletin. Completed forms and fees are due by May 15th.

STUDENTS NEW TO THE PROGRAM MUST PRESENT A COPY OF THEIR BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE; IF TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER PROGRAM, THEY MUST ALSO PRESENT A LETTER OF ATTENDANCE FROM THAT PARISH.

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