

CHRIST OUR LIGHT
ELEMENTARY FAITH
FORMATION

Family Handbook

2023 – 2024

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, REVIEWING EACH WEEK'S LESSON AND MONITORING THE LESSON TEST
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 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

Grades 1 - 6 use the “Christ In Us” series by Sadlier Publishing. This is a spiral curriculum meaning that each grade level lesson teaches the same material as appropriate to the age of the student and has chapters designed to coincide with the liturgical year.

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 4:00p.m. Saturday liturgy on the first Saturday of the month. .

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

Elementary Faith Formation students attend class 1 day or evening per week. Grades 1-6 are in class for 1 hour 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 or emailing 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. Monday and Tuesday afternoon classes meet from 4:30 – 5:30pm.

CLASS LOCATIONS & TIMES

All classes meet in Resurrection Catholic School

- Grades 1 – 6 meet on Monday afternoons from 4:30 – 5:30p.m.
- Grades 1 – 6 meet on Tuesday afternoons from 4:30 – 5:30p.m.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

* 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 rides from the front steps of the school where parents/guardian wait to meet them.

CANCELED CLASSES/ELECTRONIC NOTICES

The Elementary Faith Formation yearly calendar follows that of the Cherry Hill public schools. If Cherry Hill schools are canceled due to snow or another emergency, Elementary Faith Formation classes are canceled as well.

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.

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 their 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 OF CLASS, IN THE STUDENT FOLDER. WEEKLY HOMEWORK IS ASSIGNED IN THE "CHRIST IN US" PORTAL TO REINFORCE CLASS LESSONS.

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLETING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME AND SUBMITTING THE HOMEWORK/LESSON TESTS THROUGH THE "CHRIST IN US" STUDENT PORTAL.

PARENTS ARE EXPECTED TO REVIEW EACH WEEK'S LESSON AND OVERSEE THEIR STUDENT'S HOMEWORK IN THE PORTAL.

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 be notified if a catechist has a specific concern about a student’s performance.

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.

PREPARATION FOR 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 2 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 emailed to all families in late April for the coming academic year. A notice advertising registration is also placed in the parish bulletin. Families may register electronically online and pay with a credit card or download, print, and complete the forms and mail to the EFF Office with the appropriate fee. Completed forms and fees are due by June 1.

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

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