

CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION (CYO)

According to Diocesan Regulations all students participating in the CYO program must be enrolled and participating in the Catholic school or in PREP.

PREP students must be registered during the year in which they wish to participate in CYO. They must attend two blocks and three (3) Intergenerational Gatherings during the year, or they will not be permitted to participate in CYO the following school year.

Failure to attend classes will result in the students not being eligible to participate in the games.

ADULT EDUCATION

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA): RCIA is a process for adults and children to become members of the Roman Catholic Church, while completing the Catholic Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). It is a process that gives all who partake a chance to discover more about themselves and our faith. For more information contact the Religious Education Office of Sacred Heart Church.

Intergenerational Gatherings offer another means by which the adults of the parish are able to participate in faith formation. These Gatherings, open to the whole parish, offer education, faith sharing, and a sense of community fellowship.

Scripture Study is a group that meets Friday evenings to study and discuss Scripture. Please call Peg Duell (610-826-8009) for more information.

Institute for Lay Ministry is a three-year program designed to provide education and formation in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council for lay persons desiring to live their baptismal call through ministry and service to the people of God. Visit www.LiveYourFaith.org/ilm for more information.

SACRED HEART CHURCH

Parish Religious Education Program

Handbook



DIRECTORY

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	610-289-8900 ext. 222

Faithfully grounded in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the doctrines and traditions of the Catholic Church, Sacred Heart Parish Religious Education Program is devoted to the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and behavioral growth of learners of all ages within a value-centered environment .

PREP Mission Statement

Whole Community Catechesis

Catechesis is a lifelong matter, therefore religious education, is not exclusively for our children, but should focus on the whole community of faith. This is called Whole Community Catechesis, and it seeks to establish the essential link between catechesis and the Sunday Assembly for Mass, the liturgical year, and the whole life of the church.

Living Today's Gospel

In order to make God's Word connect more intimately with our lives, weekly reflection questions are included in each weeks bulletin for prayer and discussion in our families and in every meeting we have at our parish during the week. We will call it "Living Today's Gospel." It's a way to experience ongoing conversion, learning and growing in our relationship with God and others.

Intergenerational Gatherings

Intergenerational Gatherings are programs designed to prepare the whole community to celebrate the liturgy in a meaningful way - all generations - families with or without children in the home - single parent families and extended families - everyone in our sacrament preparation programs, Family Program, School families, and those in our youth ministry programs.

PREP

The PREP program follows a level system based on the religious education blocks the students have completed.

PREP Blocks:

Kindergarten A & B	Level V A & B
Level I A & B	Level VI A & B
Level II A & B	Old Testament
Level III A & B	New Testament
Penance	Junior High
Eucharist	Confirmation

Participation at Sunday Eucharist

PREP (Parish Religious Education Program) can be understood only in the broader context of the Church as a whole. Children who participate in PREP must also be present when the Church gathers for Eucharist on Sunday.

Rite of Penance

Children are encouraged to go to Confession with their parents and guardians as frequently as possible. Parish / Family Penance Services will be scheduled several times during the year for the students. Parents and Guardians will be informed of these dates in the bulletin and notices will be sent home with the children.

Responsibilities of Students

In addition to attending classes regularly, students are expected to participate fully, complete all assignments and conduct themselves in a Christian manner and exhibit that same Christian manner towards fellow students and catechists.

Assessments

Each student is expected to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the content presented during a block. At the beginning of the blocks each student will be given a set of questions and prayers on which they will be assessed on at the end of the block. If a student does not attain an 80% on the assessment they will be asked to retake it. This may be done in an oral or written format, whatever is best for the child. If the child does not attain an 80% upon the second review it will be determined whether the child will move on to the next level.

Conduct

If a child is disrupting the classroom, the catechist will meet with the child after class to discuss his/her behavior. If the CRE deems it necessary the parents will be asked to come in for a conference, and at that time the coordinator may suggest other alternatives for religious education.

Suspected Child Abuse

Suspected child abuse must be reported by the Catechist to the CRE. The CRE will then discuss the situation with the Pastor, and then the proper authorities will be notified.

All Catechists, aides and volunteers working with children are required to have a background check completed, and are required to attend the Diocesan Training Program “Protecting God’s Children”. Any type of harassment, either sexual, physical (bullying) or psychological by students or any representative of Sacred Heart Parish must be reported to the CRE or the Pastor.

Emergency Procedures

A child who becomes ill during class time will either remain in the building in which they attend class or be taken to the Annex. An aide will notify the CRE and the parents will then be called.

Fire and other Emergencies: The students will be evacuated in an orderly fashion to a safe location on the property of Sacred Heart Parish. If such an emergency occurs parents will be notified by the proper authorities. No student is to be removed from the area without the notification of the CRE. In the event of a natural or other disaster the Catechist will be warned, if possible, and the children will be moved to the area that has been designated as safe by the Emergency plan, whether it be on or off site location. Children will only be dismissed to persons who have been authorized by the custodial parent on the registration form. A fire drill will be conducted once per year.

Responsibilities of Parents

Religious Education can be effective only to the extent that parents regularly participate at Eucharist, nurture prayer life in the home, are involved in parish activities, and strive to live daily by gospel values.

To ensure the safety of our children, age appropriate Diocesan mandated Child Protection Catechesis has been incorporated into the curriculum during the first year for new students and again when the child is in 3rd & 6th grade. Please contact me if you may have concerns as to whether or not this material is appropriate for your child. The purpose of this program is to help children improve self-reliance, raise self-esteem and master personal safety skills – all while reassuring them that most people are kind, safe and committed to their well-being. Students learn to identify specific signs and behaviors often used by predators.

Sacramental Requirements

Catechesis is required for the reception of the sacraments. Participation in the other requirements will enhance the child's awareness of and participation in the sacrament.

First Penance:

1. Proof of Baptism
2. Completion of Blocks I-A, I-B, II-A, II-B, Penance, and their respective assessments
3. Age appropriate participation in the Sunday Liturgy
4. First Penance Retreat

First Communion:

1. Completion of First Penance
2. Eucharist Block and its respective assessments
3. Seder Supper or First Communion Retreat
4. Teaching Mass
5. Age appropriate participation in the Sunday Liturgy

Confirmation:

1. Completion of previous sacraments
2. Blocks IV A & B; V-A & B; VI A & B, Junior High Blocks as necessary to continue religious education until the sacrament (Revelation, The Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Church, Morality; Sacraments, Kingdom of God), Confirmation; and their respective assessments
3. Age appropriate participation in the Sunday Liturgy
4. Student interview
5. Completion of Confirmation Packet
6. Confirmation Retreat

Reception of The Sacraments

The Sacrament of First Penance will be celebrated during Advent, and First Eucharist will be celebrated in the Spring in the same year. This is in keeping with the schedules of St. John Neumann Regional School, as well as the parishes of St. Nicholas and Assumption BVM.

Confirmation will be celebrated upon completion of the requirements as scheduled by the Bishop.

Block Scheduling allows the students and families to attend religious education classes at times that are more convenient. Block scheduling allows students the opportunity to receive sacraments when they are ready.

Please note:

The Diocese of Allentown requires children to have at least 2 years of religious education before the reception of any of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation).

A child who enters our program at an older age will be interviewed to determine the appropriate Level that they should be attending. If it is determined that the child should be enrolled in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) modified for Children, the CRE will determine the appropriate blocks that the child needs to attend. The Pastor, the Coordinator of RCIA, the CRE and the parents or guardians will determine when the child will be receiving the Sacraments of Initiation according to Diocesan guidelines.

Block Schedules

Confirmation Block: Every 2 years, usually beginning in August of the year of the sacrament.

Walking Students

Students who have the permission of their parents to walk home after class should give a note, signed by their parents, to their catechist at the beginning of each block.

Attendance

If a child misses more than 2 classes in a block the child may be required to repeat that block or will need to be home schooled for that block if the child cannot demonstrate the requirements. If possible, we request that the parent or guardian phone, or e-mail the Religious Education Office before the start of class, and report the reason for absence. If you get the answering machine, please leave a message.

Cancellation of Class

In the event that classes would be cancelled because of weather please consult the wall of the Sacred Heart Church PREP facebook page. You can also learn of cancellations on TV channels 13 and 69 (4 on Blue Ridge Cable) and on radio WAEB-B104 or clear channel WZZO. ***Please do not call the Rectory.*** Parents and guardians should use common sense in regard to transporting their children. Rural road conditions may be very different from those in Palmerton. If weather conditions are too bad where you are located please call to tell us your child will not be attending class that day. If classes are cancelled due to weather a make-up class may be scheduled.

Summer PREP Procedures will be handed out the first day of class.

Religious Education Fees

Active members of Sacred Heart Parish:

All blocks \$50/child per block

Inactive members of Sacred Heart Parish:

All blocks \$100/child per block

Non-parishioners

All blocks \$150/child per block

Active Membership is determined by 3 things:

- ◆ being **registered** in the parish for one year
- ◆ faithful attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation;
- ◆ the **weekly** use of the envelope system in support of the parish. Envelopes are to be placed in the collection basket at Sunday Masses.

Please make registration checks payable to Sacred Heart Church. Registration fees for catechists and aides are waived. Individuals having difficulty paying this fee should contact the CRE to make other arrangements.

PREP PROCEDURES

Arrival and Dismissal

Class time on Sundays is from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. Please do not send children any earlier than 9:25 a.m. Students attending class in SJNRS building should arrive and leave through the glass door in the alley. If you do bring your child to class and the catechist is not there, please stay with your child until the catechist arrives. Please be prompt in picking up your child. As a safety measure, please pick up your child at his/her classroom at 10:45 a.m. Children will be released only to those authorized on the registration form.

**ANY CHILD REMAINING AT 10:55 A.M. WILL BE
TAKEN TO THE 11:00 A.M. MASS.**

Summer 2010 Blocks:

Block I - 2nd week of July: Mon-Fri, 9:30 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.

Block II - 3rd week of July: Mon-Fri, 9:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Fall 2010 Block:

Sunday Mornings, 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. beginning the Sunday after Labor Day & ending the 2nd Sunday in December

Spring 2011 Block:

Sunday Mornings, 9:30 – 10:45 a.m. beginning the last Sunday in January & ending the first Sunday of May

Communion Block :

Same as Spring Block schedule

Kindergarten Level: *Call to Faith*. Liturgically based faith formation using the parables and hands-on methods of teaching. The students follow the same schedule as the other PREP students.

Levels I, II, III, IV, V & VI: This program follows a more traditional approach to catechesis. The *Call to Faith* series, published by Harcourt Religious Publishers, is used for faith formation in these levels. Level VI emphasizes the Old and New testaments.

Levels VII & VIII: This program uses Harcourt's *Call to Faith* series for Young Adolescent Catechesis that offers a thematic approach and engages our junior high students in discussion topics about Revelation, the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Church, Morality; Sacraments, and Kingdom of God. Junior High aged students are strongly encouraged to continue after they have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation: At this time we prepare our students for the Sacraments using the *Celebrating Our Faith* series by Harcourt Religious Publishers.

All texts used conform to the Diocese of Allentown Religious Education Guidelines which are available for viewing in the Religious Education Office.

Home Schooling is available to all families. Pope Benedict makes it clear that the family bears the primary responsibility for educating children, *“It is very obvious that in educating and forming people in the faith the family has its own fundamental role and primary responsibility. Parents, in fact, are those through whom the child at the start of life has the first and crucial experience of love, of a love which is actually not only human but also a reflection of God’s love for him. Therefore, the Christian family, the small “domestic Church,” and the larger family of the Church must take care to develop the closest collaboration, especially with regard to the education of Children.”* The students will also use *Call to Faith* by Harcourt Religious Publishers. Parents will meet for a 2 hour informational sessions for each block with the Coordinator of Religious Education. The beauty of the new program is that all of the students are covering the same unit topic at the same time. So a parent who is home-schooling 3 students at different levels will only have to attend one session per block. Assessments will be held at the end of each block. Age appropriate participation in the Sunday Liturgy is necessary for the reception of the sacraments.

Special Circumstances

Special Education: Parents of students with any type of learning or physical disability should note this on the student’s registration form.

Learning Disabilities: Every effort will be made to work with the parents and student so that the child may participate in the classroom. Other provisions will be made for those students who are not able to handle the classroom experience, either by home-schooling or by the parents acting as aides in the classroom.

Custody Issues

Please include on the registration form any custody issues that involve your child. If at anytime during the year custody arrangements change please notify the CRE. This information will help us ensure your child’s safety.

PREP REGISTRATION

All young people attending Kindergarten through 8th grade in Non-Parochial schools should be registered with Sacred Heart Parish’s Religious Education Programs. Students attending St. John Neumann Regional School are invited to attend if they so wish.

Registration forms are available through the Religious Education Office or on the parish web site at www.shcpalmerton.org. Registration and payment is to be made by July 1st for the Summer block, September 1st for the Fall block, & January 1st for the Spring block. **If your child is new to the PREP program and has not been baptized at Sacred Heart, please include a copy of your child’s Baptismal and Birth Certificates with registration.**