



Religious Education Parent/Student Handbook 2019-2020

St. Benedict Catholic Church and School
165 Bethany Road
Holmdel, NJ 07733

St. Benedict Religious Education Program provides religious formation and sacramental preparation for children from first through eighth grade. This faith formation process is grounded on the traditional teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. All programs follow the guidelines and curriculum set by the Diocese of Trenton to meet the needs of the families.

Religious Education

Grades 1-6 offers two options for families:

1. ***Traditional Religious Education Program:*** Classes will meet on Wednesday's from September through May for students in grades 1-6. All students in grades 1-6 will come to class from 4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (*Grade 2 students please take note of Grade 2 Sacramental Preparation*)
2. ***Home study:*** This option is not permitted in grades 2 and 8. This is only an option if a medical or special circumstance arises. A meeting with the DFF is mandatory before this option is granted.
3. ***Summer Academy for grades, 1-6:*** This program is a one week intensive Religious Education experience for students from Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. This program includes attendance at 4 family days during the academic school year. Attendance at the family sessions is mandatory for students and at least one family member. If the family sessions are not attended the year will have to be completed.
4. ***Sunday Morning Class:*** This class is for students that need a smaller learning environment, please contact the office if your child needs this service.

Sacramental Preparation:

First Reconciliation and Eucharist

Grade 2 sacramental Preparation: Students preparing for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion that attend the Summer Academy and the traditional program will be asked to attend Sacramental Preparation during the year. Dates will be available on the website <https://parish.stbenedictholmdel.org/grade2sacramentalpreparation>

Confirmation Preparation Program:

Grades 7 & 8 – Two-Year Confirmation Preparation Program: Two Sunday evenings per month from 6:00-8:00 p.m. taking place on alternating Sundays from September through May. Also included in this preparation program will be opportunities to attend Mass retreats, service opportunities, reconciliation services and Confirmation practices. Class schedule and other dates are available on the website at <https://parish.stbenedictholmdel.org/confirmationprep>

1. Attendance Policy for Grades 1-6:

- ***Summer Academy:*** In order for the students to both learn and retain the faith, it is imperative that your child attend each day. Children are expected to be in attendance every day of the five day program and for the entire time allotted for each day. There will be no excused absences. A benefit to the Summer Academy is that your child's schedule will lighten up during the entire year. We do ask for a commitment to the Summer Academy as well as the formation days that will be set quarterly for your child.

In the case of an absence due to an illness, makeup work will be assigned. If the makeup work is not completed the catechist will consult with the Director of the program to evaluate the child's ability to continue with the Summer Academy.

With the amount of lessons that will be incorporated into each day, lateness and early dismissal will not be tolerated. If the commitment of the one week Summer Academy cannot be made then the traditional program may be a better choice for your child.

- ***Traditional Religious Education Program:*** Regular attendance is very important. In order for our students to learn, retain and live the faith, it is vital that your child attend each class. No more than three classes can be missed.

Children are encouraged to attend all sessions. Two absences will be allowed for the Grade 7/8 program.

Parents/guardians are required to call the Religious Education office when their child is absent. If there is a prolonged illness, a doctor's note is required. If a child exceeds the number of absences allowed the year may have to be repeated.

2. **Summer Academy formation sessions throughout the year:** All students enrolled in the Summer Academy will be required to attend at least four additional sessions throughout the year and two parent meetings. These sessions are mandatory and if they cannot be attended a student will have to repeat the year. This is part of the commitment of the Summer Academy.
3. **Dress code:** Students must dress appropriately when attending religious education classes. The following are not permitted: halter-tops, exposed midriffs, spaghetti-strap tank tops (unless worn with a sweater or jacket), offensive logos, writing/logos on posterior area, short shorts, etc. Skirts and shorts should be no shorter than mid-thigh. Since it is impossible to anticipate every particular, the administration reserves the right to judge the appropriateness of any student's style of dress. Any student who comes to classes dressed inappropriately will be sent to the Director of Faith Formation's office and a parent will be called to bring a change of clothes.
4. **Communication:** Communication with Religious Education families will mainly be through EMAIL. Other sources will be used as well, the Religious Education website (<http://www.stbenedictholmdel.org/>) flyers, the church bulletin and notes. Please look in the Religious Education corner in the church bulletin for any new information. **It is the responsibility of the student/parents to check these sources for the latest news in Religious Education.**
5. **Drop off and Pick up:**

Summer Academy:

- Parents are to drop off and pick up their children from the Gym/Church. When entering the church please instill in your child that this is a place of worship and we are in the presence of God. Be sure to teach your child to genuflect when entering and leaving the church.
- Please be timely with drop off/pick up.

- Students will only be released to the parent or another adult specifically designated by the parent. If you need alternate arrangements for medical/health reasons, please contact the Religious Education office and we would be glad to assist in discovering a workable arrangement.

Traditional Program: Drop off and pick up is from the classroom.

Confirmation Prep Program: Drop off and pick up will be from the gym / FAL / Church.

6. Lunch and Snack:

Summer Academy:

- We ask that, each day, you send your child in with a healthy snack and a lunch. We will only provide water.

Traditional and Grade 7/8: No food will be allowed during these sessions.

7. Code of Behavior

In order to educate all of the children to come to know God and their faith more fully, some rules or codes of conduct must be observed by each individual, regardless of age.

- 1st violation: Student will receive a verbal warning
- 2nd violation: Catechist will fill out an incident report which will be filed in office of DRE.
- 3rd violation: Student will be sent to office of the Director at which time the parent/guardian will be contacted.

In order for a student to return to the classroom setting after the third violation or for a violation of a serious nature, the parent, student and Director must meet and address the problem. The conditions for the student's return will be set at that time.

8. Classroom Behavior and Responsibilities:

- Be on time for class and be prepared.
- Obey the rules set forth by the catechist and other staff persons.
- Show respect toward the catechist and classmates.
- If you are having difficulty in your class, discuss the problem with your parents, catechists, and / or office staff.
- Students are not allowed to use cell phones during class time. Each student is permitted to have a cell phone but it must be silenced and put away as soon as class begins. If there is a violation to this rule, the catechist will take the phone and hold it in front of the room until the end of class. If this behavior continues the parent/guardian will be contacted and the student will no longer be permitted to have a cell phone in their possession during class.

9. Grade 6 -8:

- Students will be required to take a test before entering the Confirmation preparation program in grades 7 and 8. Students who attend the summer program will take the test in the Fall of the 6th grade, date to be announced.
- Grade 7 students will complete a capstone project.
- Grade 8 students will be interviewed by the Pastor and Associate prior to Confirmation.
- Community service: Grade 6 will be responsible for a total of 5 hours. Grade 7/8 will be responsible for a total of 20 hours of service.

10. Registration

- Every child must be re-registered each year.
- A Baptismal certificate is required the first time a child is registered in the program.
- Registration cannot be accepted without this information.

Registration information for the upcoming school year will be offered in the spring. At this time, open registration begins for all families.

11. Religious Education Curriculum

The Religious Education Program follows the Religion Curriculum established by the Diocese of Trenton. We use the textbook series *Alive in Christ* for grades 1-6, published by Our Sunday Visitor. *Alive in Christ* has an interactive website that can help you with your child's religious education. The link to the website is <http://aliveinchrist.osv.com/family>. In addition to learning Church doctrine we also are called to introduce and teach about the sacramental and prayer life. Students in grades 3-6 will be invited to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation twice during the year. They will also have time to spend with Our Lord before the Most Blessed Sacrament in Adoration. Students will also pray the Stations of the Cross during the Lenten season. In addition we have included a curriculum on formal prayers. The following is a curriculum of formal prayers that students will be practicing and will be encouraged to pray on a consistent basis in class and at home.

Grade 1:

Sign of the Cross
Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory Be

Grade 2:

Glory Be
Act of Contrition

Grade 3: Apostles Creed

Grade 4:

Prayer to St. Michael

Grade 5:

Nicene Creed

Grade 6:

Rosary
Stations of the Cross

The Diocesan Family Life Curriculum: The family life program helps foster personal growth, Catholic moral development, and a respect for life. Centering on five themes of God's gifts – family, self, life, love and community – the program at each grade level helps families to see, internalize and act upon values for Catholic family living.

12. **Mass attendance:** Catholics are required to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses.

13. Safe Environment Policy

All of the volunteers and paid staff in our parish who have consistent contact with children must comply with the Safe Environment Policy set by the Diocese of Trenton. This policy requires all volunteers and paid staff to undergo fingerprint checks through Morpho Trak, as well as attend a program called Virtus. **Virtus** is intended to raise awareness about sexual abuse in hopes of detecting and /or preventing the abuse of any child in any program in our diocese. This policy is to protect the children of our parish.

St. Benedict

The Founder of Monasticism (Born 480 - Died 547)

Benedict was born of Roman nobility and was the twin brother of St. Scholastica. Benedict studied in Rome, but was dismayed by the laziness and poor discipline of his fellow students. Because of this, he fled to the mountains near the town of Subiaco and lived there in cave as a hermit for three years. It is believed that he was fed by a raven during his hermitage.

Because of his virtues and beliefs, he was requested to lead an abbey. He later founded the monastery Monte Cassino where he wrote the rules of the Order. The discipline of the rules was harsh and it has been told that an attempt was made on his life by poison that was added to the drink in his cup. However, he blessed the cup and the poison was harmless.

Benedict returned to the cave that he had lived in, but continued to gain followers who believed in his abilities to read consciences and to prophesy. He eventually established 12 monasteries and during a time in history there were over 40,000 monasteries that were guided by his Rule. The basis of the Rule is to “Pray and Work”.

Feast Day of St. Benedict: July 11th

Faith Formation Office

Pastor: Reverend Garry Koch

Parochial Vicar: Reverend John Michael Patilla

Director of Faith Formation: Melissa Dayton

mdayton@stbenedictnj.org

Administrative Assistant: Carol Cesario

cesario@stbenedictnj.org

Regular Office Hours:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. –
3:00 p.m.

Wednesday's when class is scheduled, 12:00-6:30
p.m.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday by Appointment.

Phone: 732-264-4712 (x24)

Fax: 732-264-9080

Website: <http://www.stbenedictholmdel.org/RE>