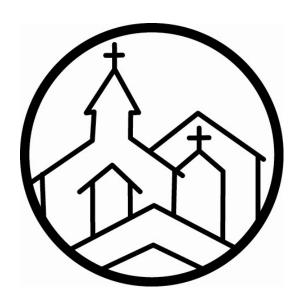
St. Benedict / St. Elizabeth Parish Religious Education/Christian Formation

HANDBOOK 2025 - 2026



www.beparish.com 410-634-2253

A Prayer for Family Commitment

God our Father,
you have called all Christian families
to be a sign of your love to the world.
Help us to be generous with the gifts of life and love
that you have showered on our family.
May we share them so that our homes become true signs
of unitive and fruitful love.

Let us never forget to thank you each day for all that sustains us and to look to Christ, who comes to us in the events of family life, in the sacraments of the Church, and in service to the poor.

In all of this, our family becomes a living expression of your Church, a hallowed home of life and love.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, may all of us
—spouses, parents, and children—
share, as members of his Body, in Jesus' mission
to build a civilization of love.

Father, we ask this in Jesus' name in union with the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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Dear Families,

Welcome to our 2025-2026 Catechetical year! This handbook was designed to provide families with important information regarding our Religious Education program. It includes an overview of the various sacramental programs, this year's schedule, a list of catechists/teachers, as well as other information regarding attendance and behavioral policies. Please review the booklet carefully and keep it handy for reference.

All Classes are held on Sunday morning from 9:40 to 10:45 am except for the 1st Sunday (Super Sunday) of the month which will be held from 10:00 – 10:45 am.

We are inspired to preach Jesus Christ especially in the Most Holy Eucharist. This is who we are in word and deed. We give our best because of what God does for us; we want this for you and your child/children. We presume that, as parents, you will teach your child/children to be faithful in your attendance at Holy Mass all year long and help them form a life of faith that will define their values for generations. "Class without Mass is pointless."

We are looking forward to a wonderful year ahead with your children!

Rev. Christopher Markellos

Kasey Perza

Pastor

Coordinator of Religious Education

PARISH PRAYER

Gathered together in charity and united by the Body of Christ, we pray for ourselves and all the members of our parish family.

Lord, give us hearts
that are faithful
and faith-filled.
Lord, give us the courage
to hold fast
to the teachings of the gospel,
the precepts of your Church
and the strength
to pass them on to our children.



Lord, you are the Good Shepherd. Seek out the stray lambs and carry them home on your shoulders.

This we humbly ask in the name of Jesus the Lord. Amen.

REGISTRATION

Every year, registration will begin with early registration taking place the last few Sundays of CCD classes and continuing through August. The parish policy regarding Religious Formation makes it mandatory that parents or guardians of any child to be registered must be an active, participating member of the faith community and have completed a Parish Registration Form prior to class registration. For registration into Pre-K, the child must be 4 years of age by August 31 and potty trained. For Kindergarten, the child must be 5 years of age by August 31. The same age requirement applies to each successive grade (i.e.: 6 for grade 1, 7 for grade 2, etc.). The faith forming of the young parish members lies strongly on their parents or guardians. Early registration is critical to assure the proper number of textbooks and materials are available for your child at the start of the year.

Class Registration Fee: \$60.00 first child, \$30/each additional child

Sacramental Preparation Registration Fee: First Reconciliation & First Eucharist \$50.00 Confirmation \$50.00

Thank you for your support and cooperation. Please make your checks payable to St. Benedict Parish. All fees are due upon registration and are non-refundable.

If you are experiencing extenuating circumstances regarding your finances, please contact the religious education office to make arrangements. Any information shared will be kept confidential. It is our priority to ensure that all children of the parish receive instruction in faith formation

Lateness, Absences, Inclement Weather, Extended Class days:

It is paramount that all students attend their scheduled classes with punctuality and with the least number of absences. If parents know ahead of time that their child will be absent, they should notify the **Catechist**, allowing enough time for work to be prepared ahead of time. Students cannot receive an "excused absence" until their work for that class is made up and turned in. Parents are asked to work with their child's Catechist to help the student complete his or her assigned work and keep it current. Prolonged absences need to be addressed personally. We have an absence policy of no more than **four unexcused** absences. If your child(ren) misses more than four classes, you will need to make an appointment to see Fr. Markellos. Please inform us of any difficulties you may have, such as injuries, two-home accommodation, or other special situations.

In case of Inclement Weather, please check the parish website at www.beparish.com or call 410-634-2253 for a recording. Extra Sundays may have to be allocated during the catechetical year to make up for missing classes due to inclement weather.

Preparation for the Sacraments

Baptism, First Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation are vital to the mission of the Church. To aid parents in preparing their child/children for these sacraments in their faith journey, the parish exercises its responsibility by providing preparation classes and processes for children and adults. Families must be registered and participate in parish life.

BAPTISM - Arrangements must be made at least one month in advance. Parents must attend one preparation class and are encouraged to attend them prior to the birth of their child. Classes are scheduled for couples individually. Please call the Parish Office to inquire at 410-634-2253.

FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST EUCHARIST: These programs are designed to assist parents with preparing their child/children to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time. Children must have reached the age of 7 prior to the program year (August 31) to make their First Reconciliation and Eucharist and have attended <u>at least</u> the first grade of religious formation prior to enrollment. Six sessions (3 at the parish and 3 at home) for First Reconciliation are to begin in the Fall and six sessions (3 at the parish and 3 at home) for First Eucharist will commence in the Spring. Textbooks are provided for the students. First Reconciliation will be celebrated on Saturday, December 6, 2025. First Eucharist will be celebrated on Sunday, May 3, 2026. Families whose children attend Catholic schools, or are homeschooled, must also register at the parish for their children to receive these sacraments. Please call the parish office to register.

CONFIRMATION - Confirmation preparation is taught in our parish every year. Enrollment for the preparation for Confirmation is open to all students, 10th grade and beyond, who have actively taken part in the religious formation sessions for <u>at least two successive years</u> prior to the Sacramental year. The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated on **Saturday**, **May 23**, **2025**, **at 11:00 at St. Benedict's** with a light reception to follow in the hall.

St. Benedict / St. Elizabeth Parish's Confirmation preparation program is designed to help our young people come to a deeper understanding of how the Holy Spirit works in their lives and in the life of our Church. It also addresses how they can interact with the Spirit to lead a life that will draw them into a closer relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Families whose children attend Catholic schools or are Home schooled in the subject of Religion, must also register at the parish for the students to receive this sacrament.

SUPER SUNDAYS

This year we are proud to once again offer "Super Sundays"! These sessions are held on the first Sunday of every month with some exceptions; please refer to the calendar located in this handbook.

Come and enjoy fellowship with other families in our faith community and join in our parish breakfasts made possible by the Knights of Columbus.

The Super Sunday format for 2025-2026 will be:

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Breakfast & Conversation for all parishioners

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM Occasionally we will have Adult Formation in the hall and of course you are welcome to remain and enjoy conversation with other parishioners.

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM Religious Education Classes for all students in grades Pre-K - 10 and RCIA classes.

Super Sundays are:

September 21 (Catechetical Sunday)

October 5

November 2 March 1

December 7 April 12

January 4

February 1



RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Christian Formation Committee encourages all parents and students to fully comply with the Parish's Directives with respect and cooperation. The following directives apply to the school, the Parish Hall, Church, and properties.

- Food may be provided at the discretion of the catechists/teachers.
 Please inform your child's catechist of any allergies in addition to noting on registration forms. Birthday parties will not be celebrated in religious education classes.
- Classes will be held on Sunday's from 9:40 to 10:45 a.m. with the 1st Sunday of the month from 10:00 to 10:45 a.m. (please refer to calendar for exceptions). Pre-K and Kindergarten students are dismissed at 10:40 5 minutes early.
- 3. We ask for everyone to respect the learning environment and to not disturb the classes while in session. If you need to communicate with your child during class, please see the Religious Education Moderator in the Great Room.
- 4. You may also call or text in an emergency at 302-382-7304 (Kasey Perza).
- 5. Each child should have an Emergency Medical Form. These forms will be available at registration time. Thereafter, forms will be on hand in case of emergency.
- Pre-K and Kindergarten sign out sheets parents can come back after the dismissal announcement and sign out their children. Pre-K and Kindergarten will both be in the Kindergarten classroom.
- 7. Bathroom privileges To maintain order and keep track of the children, the Room Moderator will see that children using the facilities are not gone from the classroom for long periods of time. We ask that all children use the restroom *before* classes to minimize disruptions.

- 8. The catechists work very hard to prepare their lessons each week and are eager to share our Catholic faith with your children. To help us make this a fruitful faith experience, we ask that you review the following:
 - a) Children should come to class **on time**, as it allows maximum learning without interruption.
 - b) Children should be prepared and ready to learn. Every child is valued for the individual gifts they bring to class. Their input is important to the growth of their classmates and teachers. Good behavior is always expected as it fosters a positive teaching and learning environment for all. If your child brings home a textbook, it is expected that they return with that textbook the following week.
- 9. Although the occurrences are few, in the event that a child's behavior interferes with the overall learning environment, we will use the following procedures to handle the situation:
 - a) When a child becomes disruptive in class, the catechist/catechist's assistant will take him or her aside from the rest of the group and inform the child that such behavior is not helpful to them or their classmates.
 - b) If a second disruption occurs, the child will receive a reminder, and be given another chance to correct the behavior.
 - c) Should a child become disruptive for a third time, the child will be removed from the class. The CRE will address the problem with the child, and a note will be sent home to be signed by the parent/guardian. Notes should be returned by the next class.
 - d) We strive to make this faith learning experience as positive and rewarding as possible for all those participating. We thank you for your commitment and support in these efforts. Together, we can share in giving the gift of faith and spiritual growth to our children.

10. Most importantly --- WEEKLY MASS:

It is the parents' right and role to pass their faith on to their children. A serious commitment to faith formation is expected from all parents and children. Therefore, it is expected that all children enrolled in our Religious Education program and their families attend Mass <u>every</u> week. It is impossible to expect a religious education program to succeed if the central act of worship is ignored. Attendance at class and Mass is very important. Religion Education Classes are NOT a substitute for Mass.

Be on Time! Parents, please make sure your children arrive promptly to class. Tardiness is a distraction to both students and catechists and robs students of valuable instruction time.

Attendance: The Catholic Diocese of Wilmington requires each parish to offer a minimum of thirty (30) hours of religious instruction. Regular class attendance and promptness are signs that parents and students recognize the importance of religious education. Children are required to attend all classes in their entirety. Excessive tardiness and absenteeism clearly reflect an "I DON'T CARE" attitude that should be avoided. Our experience has been that if your child does not attend on a regular basis, they will find it difficult to understand the subject matter and to keep up with the class. We encourage you to bring your child to class every week. If your child must miss a class, please obtain the makeup work from the teacher the following week. The child will be marked excused when the class work is turned in completed. No child will be allowed to miss more than 4 classes and be promoted to the next grade, unless all make-up work has been satisfactorily completed and a meeting with Father Markellos has been had.



Creating a Safe Environment

Our parish participates in the diocesan program For the Sake of God's Children creating a safe environment. As a faith-filled people, we value and honor every individual as created in the image and likeness of God. In the works and ministries of this parish, we are committed to providing a safe environment for children, young people, and their families. Honesty, trust, and mutual respect frame an environment where healthy and responsible relationships prevail, boundaries are clear, and behavioral standards are mutually embraced. We are committed to providing for the safety and protection of God's children through a selfless sharing of our gifts and talents. For details about the program, visit the Diocese of Wilmington's website at www.cdow.org

The Keeping Our Promises curriculum will be taught by parishioners/parents/health professionals, Jason and Karin Weaver. It will be taught to the groups as follows:

Pre-K, Kindergarten and First Grade	(Date TBA)
Second and Third Grades	(Date TBA)
Fourth and Fifth Grades	(Date TBA)
Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Grades	(Date TBA)

A letter will be sent home to all parents regarding the KOP curriculum with the dates. Catechists as well as parents are encouraged to attend the classes. Activities may be sent home for parents to do with their children.

All catechists, moderators, and anyone in constant reoccurring contact with your child/children have cleared a background check and have signed a volunteer covenant regarding appropriate behavior and expression when working with children and youth. We thank them for their participation and adherence to these necessary guidelines.

A parish Safe Environment Auditor is in place to periodically review our practices and paperwork. It is important that our staff receive this important support from outside itself.

STUDENTS' PASSING GRADE POLICY

Per Diocesan Policy 5112.1, any child or youth member registered in the parish should make every effort to participate in all religious education classes. Our catechesis will consist of 29 sessions, one hour and five minutes long.

Diocesan regulations allow the individual parish to determine the acceptable number of absences a student may have from their classes for a successful promotion from the current grade to the next. For our parish, that number is **four absences**.

Based on the total number of sessions, the Christian Formation Committee agreed to implement the following guidelines for a student to pass onto the next level:

- 1. The student will be a Perfect Attendee when he or she attends all sessions.
- 2. The student will be promoted to the next grade level when he or she satisfies the content requirements.
- 3. Students are expected to attend classes when scheduled. However, should the student incur **two** absences without communication with the catechist or CRE, the parents/guardians of the child will be contacted.
- 4. An excused absence is defined as a missed class where the work was made up by meeting with the Catechist or worked on at home and returned to the Catechist in a timely manner.
- 5. In the event four or more sessions are missed, a parental consultation with the pastor will be required to ascertain if the student has the requisite knowledge to continue on at that grade level or to be promoted to the next grade level at the end of the year.
- 6. Missed sessions will need to be made up to ensure completeness in faith formation.



Parents are responsible for notifying catechists/CRE of a child's foreseeable absence due to illness or otherwise. If a child misses class, the parents must notify the catechist/CRE in order to make appropriate arrangements for home study. Textbooks are allowed to go home for makeup work only and MUST be returned to the class when the child next attends. The student will not be fully prepared to comprehend and/or participate in the next higher level of Religious Formation if all the above measures have not been followed. Please remember that the true catechist for your child's faith learning is always you, the parent or guardian. The Catechist is here to enhance what you

are already doing to provide for your child's/children's faith formation.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Classes will begin on September 21, 2025, and will end (provided there are no make-up days) on April 26, 2026. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to have their child or children to class on time. We thank you in advance for making this a priority.

Children should <u>not</u> enter the classroom area before the catechist has arrived. At no time should a child be left by a parent unattended inside the classroom area. Students will enter through the Parish Hall Doors. Students will enter and exit the school in a proper manner – for the safety of everyone, please, no running! We also ask that no food or drink should be brought into the classrooms or Great Room without the permission of the catechist or CRE.

To ensure a safe environment, parents of students in 5th grade and below should come into the <u>hall</u> to pick up their children. All students in 5th grade and below will not be allowed to exit the parish facilities without an older sibling or a known adult. The driveway door is not to be used for exiting by the students. All students must exit through the 4th Street doors of the parish hall.

The CRE or a Religious Education Moderator will be located at the desk outside the classrooms. They will be a support to the catechists and students. They will monitor traffic within the Great Room during class time. Control of the traffic flow is necessary to help maintain minimal noise and ensure a proper environment for catechesis.

It is suggested that parents have their child/children use the facilities prior to entering the classrooms. However, if necessary, students will be allowed to sign in and out to use the facilities.



Parents/Guardians of Pre- K and Kindergarten students will be asked to sign the "sign in/out" form located outside the doors of the classroom. The Catechist will escort students to the door of the classroom. This form helps us ensure that no small child is left unattended. This is being done for the safety of the children and to control unnecessary wandering within the school area.

Pre-K and Kindergarten are dismissed at 10:40am.

CATECHIST TRAINING

All volunteer Catechists work hard for the children. They are required by the Diocese to have three (3) hours of formation each year. We will have in-person sessions, or the catechist can choose to do webinars, seminars, etc. on their own at home. Our catechists' selflessness, talent and time-giving make them the core of our parish program. Please take a moment during the upcoming year to affirm and support them in their efforts.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum teaches the doctrines and traditions of our Catholic Faith in a systematic manner; it includes Holy Days, Seasons in the Liturgical Year, Saints (past and contemporary) and the Blessed Virgin Mary. The catechetical process for our parish utilizes the following:

Pre-K: Pre-K class uses the Ignatius Press *Image of God* series and the Baltimore Catechism.

Kindergarten: Kindergarten uses the Baltimore Catechism. Your child will be encouraged to talk to you about their work from class each week.

First through Eighth Grade: These grades will experience catechesis with their Catechists using the Ignatius Press, *Faith and Life Series and/or the Baltimore Catechism*. This beautiful series offers comprehensive resources for students, families, and Catechists in a parish-based catechetical program through textbooks, workbooks, the Family Guide books and on-line resources.

Their web site is http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/faithandlife/scope.htm We encourage all parents to explore and make use of the activities and information on this web site. The curriculum emphasizes the truths of Catholic teaching and teaches our children and their families how to pray and worship together especially through the Liturgy and the Sacraments.

Ninth through Tenth Grades:

Ninth Grade uses the Ascension Press "You" materials teaching from St. John Paul II's "Theology of the Body" writings. A parent guide is available for all parents. Half of our school year will be dedicated to the "You" program and the other half to the Overview of Scripture from the Teen Timeline (by Jeff Cavens) as requested by the Diocese of Wilmington.

Tenth grade religious education will be using The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth in addition to appropriate teaching videos by Bishop Robert Barron and others.

All students, third grade and up, are encouraged to participate in the Parish Advent and Lenten Reconciliation Services.

Dates for our parish reconciliation services for Advent and Lent are to be announced. Pleased watch out for dates in the parish bulletin.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Pre-K thru 10 CLASS SCHEDULE

1st Sunday Breakfast - Class starts at 10:00am All other Sundays 9:40 - 10:45

September	21 28	Breakfast, Open House, Class (10:00 start time) Class
October	5 12 19 26	Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Class Class
November	9 16 23 30	Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Class Class No Class – Thanksgiving weekend
December	7 14 21 <mark>28</mark>	Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Class No Class – Christmas break
January	4 11 18 25	Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Class Class
February	1 8 15 22	Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Class Class

March	1 8 15 22 29	Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Class Class Class Class
April	5 12 19 26	No Class – Easter Sunday Breakfast & Class (10:00 start time) Class Last Class
May	3	First Communions at 8:30 and 11:15 Masses. May crowning after 8:30 & 11:15 Masses.

Keep in mind that some variations or additions may take place due to unforeseeable circumstances.

Always read your bulletin for changes or further notices. Thank you.

1st Reconciliation Parent & Student Gatherings

6:15pm - 7:30 in the Hall

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Tuesday, December 2, 2025



Celebration of the Sacrament on Saturday, December 6, 2025

At 10:30 am at St. Benedict Church for parents and students.

1st Eucharist Parent & Student Gatherings

6:15pm – 7:30pm in the Hall

Thursday, March 19, 2026

Thursday, April 9, 2026

Thursday, April 23, 2026

Saturday, May 2, 2026 (practice and confessions - St. Benedict church at 9am for 8:30 Mass, and 10:30am practice/confessions St. Elizabeth for 11:15 Mass)

Celebration of the Sacrament on <u>Sunday May 3, 2026,</u> at 8:30am Mass (St. Benedict) and 11:15 am Mass (St. Elizabeth), with May crownings to follow.

Confirmation Preparation



The Confirmation classes will be held in conjunction with 10th grade religious education on Sunday mornings generally every other week, starting right after class and running for an extra half hour until 11:15. A schedule will be distributed in class with these important dates. The first Confirmation class will be Sunday October 15. This year we are happy to be able to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation here at St. Benedict's on Saturday, May 31, 2025, at a 10:15 Mass which will be held at St. Benedict in Ridgely for the occasion. Reception to follow in the hall. More details will be forthcoming.

Confirmation Parent/Candidate Meeting – Tuesday, October 21, 6 pm, in the parish hall

Confirmation Sponsor/Candidate Meeting – Thursday November 20, 6 pm in the hall

Confirmation Rehearsal – Friday, May 22, 2026, at 7:00pm at St. Benedict Church

Confirmation – The Celebration of the Sacrament with the Bishop, Saturday, May 23, 2026, at St. Benedict church at 11:00.

Keep in mind that some variations or additions may take place due to unforeseeable circumstances

Directory of Catechists

Pastor Fr. Christopher Markellos 410-634-2253

Coordinator for Kasey Perza 410-634-2253

Religious Education kperza@beparish.com

KOP curriculum:

Jason Weaver <u>jasonaldenweaver@yahoo.com</u>
Karin Weaver <u>mrskarinweaver@yahoo.com</u>

PK/K Anne Marie Duld

Kelly Beauchemin

Ballroomlessons101@yahoo.com

1 Emily Davis <u>emilyrgorin@gmail.com</u>
Zach Davis zach.davis24@gmail.com

2 Suzanne Jopp suzannejopp@yahoo.com

3 Kathleen Jewell <u>tampakath65@gmail.com</u> Susan Thomas

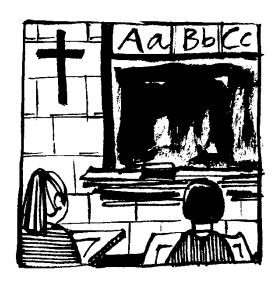
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Please contact Kasey Perza in the Religious Education Office if you would like to join us in this ministry on a consistent or as needed basis. kperza@beparish.com

All Adults (18 and over) must have a signed Volunteer Covenant on file and a record of their cleared background check.

