

# St. Francis of Assisi Parish



## Religious Education Handbook

“Learning to live, love and pray  
in the school of the Holy Family”

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*Address:*

*50 Lodi Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601*

*Office Number:*

*201-488-2614*

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**ALL COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
WILL BE SENT VIA:**

- **WHATSAPP.** Please join our chat invitation from 973-780-0265
- **On the WEBSITE:** <https://stfrancisofassisihackensack.com/religious-education>
- **FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/St.FrancisofAssisiReled>
- **Email:** [stfrancisreled@gmail.com](mailto:stfrancisreled@gmail.com)

**THE PHONE NUMBER FOR THE OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS: 201-488-2614**

**IF WE DO NOT ANSWER, PLEASE LEAVE A CLEAR, BRIEF MESSAGE**

**PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR AVAILABLE TO RECEIVE CALLS DURING YOUR CHILD'S  
CLASS TIME IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY**

**DO NOT CALL THE PARISH OFFICE**

**PLEASE CONTACT US ASAP REGARDING YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE**

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## **LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR**

Dear Parents,

Greetings of Peace and Joy!

I am privileged to welcome your child to this new academic year. We all have an important role in the growth of every child. Thank you all for everything you do for the betterment and well-being of your child. As we enter a new academic year, let us remind ourselves that we are responsible for the growth of the child in the family, church, school and society. Etc.,

As parents you all made a big promise to God and to yourselves, that you would do the best you can. Now the time is at hand to encourage your child to eat well, to study well, to play well, and pray well.

Let us all pray and work together to give a sure foundation to every child in the light of faith.

In His Love,

Fr. Prem Kumar O.F.M. Cap

Pastor

## **LETTER FROM THE PARISH CATECHETICAL COORDINATOR**

Dear Parents:

We welcome you as partners in educating our children in the Catholic faith. Christ before ascending into heaven, gave his apostles a final mission—to make disciples of all nations and to teach them to observe all that He commanded.

Following the example of the first catechist, Jesus Christ, we are all called to proclaim the Word of God and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to fulfill this mission. God's grace calls us to serve His people by teaching Christ's love. I invite you to respond to this call and to consider the opportunity to join in this ministry.

The Religious Education program is only one facet of faith formation. To come into full communion with God, children must be a witness to Sacramental worship and your faith in action. Religious education begins at home, with you and is shared by you and through your good example.

We thank you for your commitment in sending your children to St. Francis and we promise our dedication and support, as we continue on this faith journey together growing closer to and through Jesus, who is "the way, the truth and the life."

Yours in Christ,

*Leanne Christmann*

Director of Religious Education Program

## **OUR MISSION**

The Religious Education Program at St. Francis of Assisi is dedicated to the formation of the entire person to faith, developing a life in harmony with Christ's message and encouraging an active participation in the Liturgy and community. Our mission is to instill in our students' Christian values and attitudes by providing both an education and an environment in which they can grow in faith.

Religious Education begins in and with the "domestic church", the family. We strive to bring to maturity this seed of faith in partnership with the parents who through the sacrament of marriage were called to this ministry by accepting to bring their children up according to the law of Christ and His Church. This call was answered when their children were baptized and the parents "accepted the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith....to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us by loving God and our neighbor."

St. Francis of Assisi Religious Education Program aids parents in educating their children in the Catholic faith. Through this partnership we seek to foster in the hearts of every believer a burning desire, a deeper knowledge, and love of Jesus Christ.

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### **FAITH FORMATION - ONGOING CATECHESIS:**

As Catholics, we need consistent, life-long catechesis to grow in our relationship with God and to more completely understand how to live out our Baptismal vows. The Church believes and proclaims that we never stop learning about our faith, we are always disciples, always learning, growing, and following our Lord.

Catechesis begins in childhood with regular faith formation classes, each having its own year-long scope and sequence. After the reception of the sacraments, children need to continue their faith formation.

Religious Education at St Francis of Assisi Parish offers ongoing faith formation for children that have already made their First Communion through 9th grade Sacrament of Confirmation.

### **Parents of children who received First Holy Communion:**

Your child must continue in our Religious Education Program. If your child is out of our program for 2 or more years, they will be considered a new student when they return for Confirmation Preparation and they will need to complete 1 year of Basic Catechism prior to entering the Pre-Confirmation grade.

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### **PRECEPTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

All children who have received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion are required to attend Holy Mass every Sunday and Holyday of obligation, confess their sins at least once a year and frequently receive Holy Communion.

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### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM**

#### **Remember the promise you made to God and your child at their Baptism:**

Catholic Rite of Baptism #77; Celebrant's word to the parents:

You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's Commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.

Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?

## **Baptize your child**

It is important that your child be baptized as soon as possible. If you would like to have your child baptized, please call the parish office for more information.

If your child is 7 years old or older, he/she will need to attend the RCIA program

## **Faith and Family**

Parents and families are the domestic Church. We encourage our families to pray together, worship together and practice their Catholic faith together:

- Parents will be required to bring their children to every Sunday Mass to satisfy your obligation as a Catholic family.
- Parents will be required to complete homework assignments with their children.
- Parents will be required to attend the Family events.

Your child's faith formation is a lifelong process, not just a preparation for the sacrament. We are here to help you instruct and prepare your children to live out their Catholic Faith more fully.

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

- All students returning and new must register.
- All children who have not been Confirmed yet must continue to attend the program classes
- Families must be registered members of St Francis of Assisi Parish
- Proper documents and full tuition are needed at time of registration.

## **TRANSFER STUDENTS**

If a family transfers to another parish, a copy of the student's record will be forwarded to their new parish if a formal request is made. Any student entering the program from another parish must present a copy of his/her record from that parish. These records are for the sole use of St. Francis Religious Education Office and are not available to the public. Catechists and/or parents may view these records upon request.

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## **STUDENTS INFORMATION CHANGES**

Please notify the Religious Education Office of any change of address, phone number and/or email, after the school year has started. It is important to keep the Religious Education Student's record up to date so you may be served better.

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## **REGISTRATION FEES (non-refundable)**

Registration fees cover the cost of textbooks and materials used in the program. Please contact the Religious Education Office and/or our website for the latest Registration Fees.

However, if your family is going thru financial difficulties or hardship, please contact the Religious Education Office and ask to speak with the DRE to privately discuss your family situation.

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## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM GRADES**

- **Pre-Catechism Grade 1:** Our Faith Formation Program begins in Grade 1
- **Grade 2 and older Basic Catechism:** It is mandatory for all children to complete this First Year of Basic Catechism
- **Grade 3 + older Immediate reception of the Sacraments of First Penance/Reconciliation and First Holy Communion:** Required to complete at least First Year of Basic Catechism
- **Grades 4-6 Continuing Faith Formation Program:** Required continuation of Faith Formation classes prior to entering the 3-Phase (3 year) Confirmation preparation program. If a child has skipped 2 or more years after First Holy Communion, they will be required to complete an extra year of Basic Catechism class. Upon successful completion, they can be placed in Phase 1 Pre-Confirmation the following year.
- **Confirmation preparation is a 3-phase/year program beginning in Grade 7**
- **Family Catechesis:** parents must attend monthly gatherings

### **Sacrament Preparation for children grade 3 and older**

\*Any Child who has not attended Religious Education classes either at St Francis or any other parish in the past 2 years or more will be considered a new student and will have to complete 1 year of Basic Catechism prior to entering a Sacrament Preparation Program.

#### **Year 1:**

Basic Catechism Classes

#### **Year 2:**

Entry into a Sacramental Preparation class

Continuing Faith Formation:

Entry into regular faith formation classes

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### **RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS (RCIA):**

Adults and children 7 years of age and older who are not baptized and wish to become members of the Roman Catholic Church should follow the complete process of initiation as outlined in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

- Participate in the pre-catechumenate; year 1.
- Be chosen for entrance into the catechumenate in the Rite of Acceptance.
- Participate in the catechumenate for a suitable period, a least one calendar year.
- Participate in the Rite of Election celebrated in the Cathedral on the First Sunday of Lent.
- Observe Lent as a time of purification and enlightenment.
- Participate in the Scrutinies and the Presentations.
- Receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil.
- Observe the season of Easter as a time of post-baptismal catechesis (i.e. mystagogy).

This is a TWO-YEAR PROGRAM. \*Registration is BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

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## 2023-2024 GRADE ASSIGNMENTS

**\*days and times are subject to change**

2023-2024	2023 - 2024 Grade/Description	Class day/ time	Books
1-1	Grade 1 (new)	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Finding God Grade K
2-1	Basic Catechism - Grade 2 (continuing from Grade 1 + new )	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Finding God Grade 1
B-1	Basic Catechism Grade 3 & 4 (new)	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Finding God Grade 2
C-1	First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Grade 3 & 4	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Augustine Institute: Signs of Grace
C-2	First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Grade 4 & 5	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Augustine Institute: Signs of Grace
C-3	First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Grade 6, 7, 8 & 9	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola God's Gift First Reconciliation / First Eucharist Intermediate
4-1	Grade 4 (continuing)	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Finding God Grade 3
5-1	Grade 5 (continuing)	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Finding God Grade 4
6-1	Grade 6 (continuing)	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Finding God Grade 5
SP-1	Basic Catechism Grade - Spanish (new)	Sunday 9:15am-10:45am	Loyola Bridges to Faith (Span)
B-2	Basic Catechism Grade 5 & 6 (new)	<b>Wednesday 6 -7pm</b>	Loyola Finding God
B-3	Basic Catechism Grade 7-10 (new)	<b>Wednesday 6 -7pm</b>	Loyola Called to be Catholic
<b>CONFIRMATION PREPARATION</b>			
7-1	7th Grade Pre-Confirmation Phase I - Grade 7 - 10	<b>Sunday 12:00pm-1:30pm</b>	Loyola Finding God Grade 7
8-1	8th Grade Pre-Confirmation Phase II - Grade 8-10 - Boys	Sunday 5:30pm-7:00pm	Loyola Finding God Grade 8
8-2	8th Grade Pre-Confirmation Phase II - Grade 8-10 - Girls	Sunday 5:30pm-7:00pm	Loyola Finding God Grade 8
9-1	9th Grade Confirmation Phase III - Grade 9-12 - Boys	Sunday 5:30pm-7:00pm	Chosen
9-2	9th Grade Confirmation Phase III - Grade 9-12 -Girls	Sunday 5:30pm-7:00pm	Chosen

## CALENDAR

## SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us "The sacraments of Christian initiation — Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist — lay the foundations of every Christian life. The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity."

Catechism of the Catholic Church #1212

### **FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST:**

The preparation of children for First Reconciliation takes place within the same Catechetical year as preparation of First Holy Eucharist.

The sacrament of Reconciliation celebrates the reality of our ongoing conversion and need of forgiveness.

Catechesis for children seeks to strengthen their awareness of the Father's love, of the call to participate in Christ's sacrifice and of the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NCD #121) "As a People of God, we are privileged to come to the table of the Lord and be nourished with Christ, the Bread of Life." We celebrate the sacred meal which Jesus gave to His Church on the night of the Last Supper. The Eucharist is the heart of the Christian life." (CAM 0571)

- **Pre-Catechism Grade 1:** Our Faith Formation Program begins in Grade 1
- **Grades 2 and older Basic Catechism:** It is mandatory for all children to complete **this First Year of Basic Catechism**
- **Grades 3 + older Immediate reception of the Sacraments of First Penance/Reconciliation and First Holy Communion:** (Required to complete at least First Year of Basic Catechism)
- Immediate preparation begins with lessons to prepare for First Penance/Reconciliation with lessons on the Ten Commandments, Examination of Conscience, and the Act of Contrition
- In the same year as First Reconciliation, the immediate preparation for First Holy communion begins with lessons on the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist and the prayers of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
- Parents will be required to attend 2 meetings during the year (see the Calendar) and a practice on the reception of the Sacrament.
- **Grades 4-6 Continuing Faith Formation Program:** Required continuation of Faith Formation classes prior to entering into the 3-Phase (3 year) Confirmation preparation program. If a child has skipped 2 or more years after First Holy Communion, they will be required to complete an extra year of Basic Catechism class. Upon successful completion, they can be placed in Phase 1 Pre-Confirmation the following year.

In addition to the sacramental preparation material which the children will work on in class, each family will be responsible for attending and participating in the at all "Parent/Child Meeting" events (see Calendar) and to complete Home Lessons together. A letter describing the program and a schedule of events and assignments will be distributed well in advance. Failure to attend and/or complete the assignments will be considered as a lack of preparation for receiving the sacrament and may delay the reception of the sacrament of your children.

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## **SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION:**

Confirmation is a sacrament in which we are sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and strengthened to give witness to the Good News. It is often viewed as completing the Sacramental initiation, but that does not mean it should be the conclusion of an active interest in learning about the Catholic faith and Christian life.

Young people are confirmed in their faith by being incorporated into the community of believers. This is an on-going process in which the adult community plays a vital role. These young people must witness a community that learns, shares, worships and serves together. The minimum age requirement in receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is fourteen years old.

It is expected that at this age, a person has reached a certain degree of maturity and thereby responsible enough to commit himself/herself personally to the Catholic Church.

### **The Confirmation Program has three phases:**

Phase I: Building upon the foundation of our Faith

Phase II: Comprehensive introduction to the Sacrament of Confirmation

Phase III: Preparation for immediate reception of the Sacrament; Works of Mercy and living the Beatitudes

The program is designed to give each candidate the needed formation to make a sound decision that will shape his/her faith life in the parish community.

### **Requirements for the Sacrament of Confirmation:**

The requirements listed below are the MINIMUM requirements to be met to be recommended for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- All Candidates must be baptized and must have the proper documentation
- Candidate professes belief and has basic understanding of God and the Trinity.
- Candidate professes belief and has basic understanding of the Eucharist.
- Attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- Possesses adequate understanding of the conversion/discernment process
- Memorized the basic prayers; the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, the Nicene Creed.
- Selection of a sponsor who is a confirmed, practicing Catholic who will walk the journey with you.
- Selection of a Saint's name as your Confirmation name and a summary of why you chose the name/saint.
- Completion of Service Projects
- Candidates must attend monthly FOCUS youth ministry for events and fundraising.
- Attendance of the Confirmation Retreat
- Candidates should conduct an interview with priests and / or the Director of Religious Education.
- Candidates must write a letter to the Pastor.
- Works of Mercy
- Candidates in all Phases 2 and 3 of Confirmation preparation must participate in Works of Mercy Service Projects and comply with all the requirements outlined in the Confirmation Program.

## ATTENDANCE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL GRADES

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

A regular class and Mass attendance to our Religious Education Program is very important if we want our students maintain a good understanding of God's love through the study of the Scriptures, prayers, Church doctrine, and faith community.

**Absences:** According to the policy of the Archdiocese of Newark, at a minimum, parish religious education programs are required to include 35 hours of instructional time per year. Hours of instructional time are not defined as a child's time spent in front of a catechist or in front of a screen, but time engaged in learning under the guidance and direction of catechists and parents. Regular attendance is essential to your child's development and formation in the Religious Education Program. Children are expected to attend every class (including online sessions). Attendance will be taken at all class sessions and parents/guardians will be notified about each absence. The parents/guardians of a child who accrues more than the allotted absences must meet with the pastor and Director of Religious Education to assess the readiness of the family to participate in our program.

IMPORTANT-There are some required class dates and retreats for sacramental preparation (First Penance, First Eucharist, and Confirmation) that cannot be missed.

**Reporting Absences:** If your child will not be attending class (including online sessions), the parent/guardian must call or email the Director of Religious Education of the parish in which your children attend classes. Include your child's name, grade, and reason for their absence in your message.

Absences shall not exceed three (3) per calendar year. This policy will be strictly enforced. Parents of students who are absent and who fail to notify the office will be called.

**Make-up Work:** All assignments missed during an absence are the responsibility of the parent/guardian to complete with their child. The catechist and Director of Religious Education will review the lessons missed and prepare the necessary lessons for the parents/guardians. Parents/Guardians are asked to contact the Director of Religious Education to make arrangements for a child who has a long-term disability or illness.

Children who are late or absent for class will be required to make up that time to be determined by the DRE and the Catechist. Those in sacramental preparation programs please refer to the section of the handbook for those additional attendance requirements.

### **LATENESS**

Your child will be considered late when they arrive 15 minutes or more after the program begins.

Late arrivals are discouraged since they are disruptive and disrespectful to the Catechist and the rest of the class. Students who are consistently tardy will be put on probation and parents will be notified.

### **THE RULE FOR ATTENDANCE IS:**

**3 LATES = 1 ABSENCE**

**3+ ABSENCES = REPEAT OF GRADE**

## **ARRIVAL**

(SEE “GRADE ASSIGNMENT CHART” FOR THE CURRENT YEAR FOR THE DAYS AND TIMES OF CLASSES)

All students are to enter the building through the GYMNASIUM DOORS ON Holt St. (parents must bring their children up the stairs and into the building).

Students will check-in and receive a name tag with their grade and teacher’s name. Aides will be available the first few weeks to escort the younger children to their classroom). The main doors will be closed when class time begins.

All students, teachers and volunteers will assemble by class inside the gymnasium for prayers and announcements. The director will send the students and teachers to their designated class locations

Latecomers will need wait in the vestibule for assistance. Only children are allowed into the building.

## **DISMISSAL**

The doors will remain locked until dismissal time.

All classes will be dismissed BY CLASS / GRADE at the gymnasium doors. Parents/guardians must wait outside the doors. No child will be permitted to leave on their own without parental consent. If someone, other than the designated person is picking up a child, you must complete a “Permission to walk or picked up by” form (will be available in a Google form format) to notify us of the change.

Only a legal guardian or parent is allowed to pick up their child.

You must give us written permission to allow your child to leave on their own and walk home. Please complete the permission form.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL/PICKUP**

Even though early pick-up is discouraged, we understand that sometimes it is necessary for parents to use an early dismissal for their children.

If your child needs to leave early from class, the PARENT OR GUARDIAN MUST NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IN ADVANCE BY PHONE OR EMAIL.

## **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

Custodial parents are responsible for informing the Religious Education office and providing an official copy of any court orders specifying that there is to be no information or communication with the non-custodial parent.

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## **CLASS CANCELLATION**

When in-person classes resume, a staff person from the Office of Religious Education will contact parents via text message and post to social media.

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## **HEALTH CONCERNS AND MEDICATION**

Health concerns should be brought to the attention of the Religious Education Office during registration and indicated on the student's emergency information section. If your child has been diagnosed with a medical condition after registration, please inform the Office and Catechist as soon as possible.

With regards to medication, NO medication will be administered to students during school hours. All medical information is kept in the strictest of confidence.

Make sure that you have carefully read the "Emergency Release" on the Student Registration form. You will be contacted immediately in case of an emergency regarding your child. Also please make sure that you have given us all emergency contact phone numbers. Please be sure we have a reliable phone number.

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## **SUNDAY LITURGY OBLIGATION**

As a faithful Catholic family, parent and children attendance for weekly Sunday Liturgy/Mass is MANDATORY.

Parents are responsible to bring your children to any Sunday Mass to pray and worship together. You can attend any Mass that works for you and your family schedule.

Also remember that you need to be in the state of grace in order to receive the Holy Eucharist, the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus. You are encouraged to frequently go to the Sacrament of Confession with your children.

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## **FAMILY EVENTS/ACTIVITIES**

Faith and Family: Parents and families are the domestic Church.

We encourage our families to pray together, worship together and practice their Catholic faith together.

Parents/Guardians will be REQUIRED to attend events and activities. There will be events scheduled. The dates for these events will be on the Religious Education Calendar.

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## **HOMEWORK**

Students will be given homework each week. The homework will be in their FOLDER or in Google Classroom. The catechist will determine a grade appropriate assignment. Catechists will check that weekly assignments have been completed and if the situation warrants the office will contact parents when repeated assignments have not been completed. Children are expected to complete missed assignments and turn them in to their catechist the next time class meets.

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## **TEXTBOOKS**

All students are provided with their own textbooks. Should your child lose his/her textbook, please contact the Religious Education office as soon as possible in case someone brought it to the office. Our office will do whatever possible to try to locate a lost textbook. However, is up to the student to keep a close watch of his/her textbook. And since there are a limited number of replacement textbooks available in our office, be advised that the cost for a replacement textbook is \$25.00.

**Reminder: All students must bring to class a single subject notebook, a folder, and a writing pen or pencil.**

## **QUIZZES AND FINAL TESTS**

At the discretion of the catechist, children will be periodically quizzed to check on their progress. At the end of the year a Final Exam will be administered by the catechists. Catechists will review with children in class prior to the test and the tests will be given on the following dates as indicated in the calendar:

It is the responsibility of the parents to be aware of testing dates and to ensure that the children study and come prepared for testing. The reception of Sacraments may be delayed should the child not pass their exams.

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## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students are expected to show respect for all persons and their feelings in words and actions. All types of bullying behavior, verbal or physical, will not be tolerated and may lead to suspension or expulsion from the classroom and/or program.

Students are expected to comply with the classroom rules set out by their Catechist.

NO food is allowed to in the classroom session.

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## **RESTROOM FACILITIES**

When in-person classes resume, the use of restroom facilities should be limited to emergencies only. The constant use of the facilities is disruptive to the class. Children should use the facilities prior to the start of Religious Education class.

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## **DISCIPLINE**

At St. Francis of Assisi, all students are expected to share in the faith learning experiences of the parish program. Students are expected to be polite and respectful to the Religious Education staff, catechists, their peers, themselves, and St. Francis property. Any inappropriate, dangerous, or disrespectful behavior at any time while students are on parish grounds may result in immediate contact with the parents, who may be asked to remove their child from the premises. Should such removal occur, it will count as an absence.

The same criteria applies to any program sponsored activities such as retreats, service projects, etc. In the classroom, the catechist is primarily responsible for discipline. The following steps of action will be taken should a student's behavior disrupt the learning process to ensure that class participation may continue.

At the first incident the student will be reminded of expected behavior and consequences of misbehavior.

After the second incident, the student will be sent to the office for a discussion with the DRE about appropriate behavior.

After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the student will be sent to the office to do his or her religious education assignment. The student's parents/guardians will be contacted.

Continued non-compliance may result in the student repeating the grade level or being expelled from the program.

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## **EXPECTATIONS**

### **Parents/Guardians:**

1. Ensure that their children attend classes promptly and regularly.
2. Inform the Religious Education Office of any special needs or circumstances that may affect their children in the classroom.
3. All parents are required to be an active part of their children's learning. It is vital to the life of the parish that parents serve as models of Christian service and responsibility for their children. There are many opportunities in which parents may participate and assist in the parish activities and religious education program.
4. Parents are expected to follow up their children's lessons at home and ensure that they study for their midterm and final exams.
5. Parents of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation Candidates are required to attend the Religious Education meetings. Failure to attend the required meeting may delay their children's reception of the sacrament. In case of an emergency, parents are responsible for calling the Religious Education Office and make some other arrangements to make up for such meetings.

### **Students:**

1. Conduct themselves according to the Student Code of Conduct.
2. Come prepared to class, willing to participate and share with others.
3. Attend class regularly and complete any assignments or homework.

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## **CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

When in-person classes resume, the following policy will be followed. Any student who brings a cell phone or any electronic devices to Religious Education class must turn it off in the building. There will be no use of phones and electronic devices in class unless directed by catechists. Abuse of this policy will result in the removal of the phone/electronic device by the catechist. Parent/Guardian must pick up the phone/electronic device from the Director of Religious Education after class dismissal. If you need to contact your child in the event of an emergency, please call the Office of Religious Education.

## **SAFETY**

### **CHILD ABUSE**

Child Abuse is of serious concern to us. In accordance with diocesan policy, all catechetical volunteers have attended and/or will have to complete a "Protecting God's Children" seminar. This seminar trains all volunteers to properly detect and report "Child Abuses" and/or suspicious behaviors.

### **SECURITY**

In accordance with state law, the doors of the school building must be locked for the safety of the children attending classes. No one may pass through the gymnasium door leading to the classrooms unless they have been given authorization by the Director of the program and is escorted to and from the classroom.

## **FIRE SAFETY**

One or more Fire drills will be conducted during a regular school year. All students, staff and catechists will depart the facility in accordance with the evacuation instructions provided in every classroom.

Catechist will bring with them the attendance list and take roll call outside the building to ensure that all students are present.

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## **GOOGLE CLASSROOM GUIDELINES**

- Student Google email assignments: Each child will have a Google email with the first 3 letter of their first name, the first 3 letters of their last name, and domain name as stfrancishackensack.com
- Student Names and their Grade assignments will be posted on the website and message via text
- All classwork materials will be posted online in their Goggle Classroom
- All Lessons and Assignments must be completed by the due posted by the Catechist
- A Midterm report will be emailed by the end of January 2024
- A Final Exam will be administered in May 2024
- Behavior or Participation issues will be communicated to the Parent/Guardian if they occur (see Parent Handbook)

## **DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

The Archdiocese of Newark continues to use digital tools as needed to serve the young people and families of St Francis of Assisi Parish.

Parish program facilitators may choose to deliver virtual programming and content for its participants, through online platforms in addition to in-person programming. Additionally, in the event that circumstances warrant a temporary pause of in-person faith formation classes, parish program facilitators will notify families of alternate virtual programming. The program(s) will use software, tools and applications provided by third-parties that participants, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and/or staff will access via the internet and use for purposes of communication, programming, and potential content creation. These platforms may include but are not limited to: Google Classroom, GoToMeeting, Webex, and Zoom.

To enroll in any of these programs, you must provide your consent and release for your child to participate in these online applications for distance-based, virtual program purposes. Please be aware that each application collects different information about its users and has its own privacy terms and conditions to which members must adhere and which parish or diocese cannot control or assume responsibility. Please review these carefully before registering your child.

Our commitment to keeping the children and youth we serve safe is always our number one priority. To that end, we will actively monitor participant activity of children while engaged in our digital learning platforms. It is parents' responsibility to monitor their child's internet usage as a whole, including their use of any internet sites that are outside of our digital learning platforms. All online activities contemplated hereunder must also comply with the Archdiocese of Newark Safe Environment Protocols and must also follow any use requirements developed by the Archdiocese of Newark and/or the Department for the Protection of the Faithful.

## CATECHISTS

“The catechist is the instructor of religion who is committed to participation in the ministry of the Word. Through religious instruction of others, the Catechist strives toward a mutual fulfillment of faith which is living, a conscious and active Christian life.

The Catechist part in the mission and ministry is harmonious with the role of the Church as a whole. i.e. to lead people to renewed conversion and toward growth in likeness to Jesus.” (Catechetical Administrative Manual– Archdiocese of Newark).

The Religious Education Program depends on dedicated individuals of the parish who wish to share their faith and time on a weekly basis.

### Catechists/Assistants

1. Provide an appropriate Christian environment in which your Children will be able to learn and grow in their faith.
2. Prepare and teach lessons in accordance with Religious Education guidelines.
3. Be a Catholic Christian Role Model
4. Be good examples of Love, kindness, patience, peace, and joy.

You may be called to be a Catechist if you are a person who:

- Loves children
- Wants to share your time with the faith community.
- Believes in the importance of a solid faith formation of children
- Can serve as a good Catholic role model
- Are over 18 years of age
- Have received all three Sacraments of Initiation in the Roman Catholic Church

Training and/or formation workshops will be provided by the parish and the Archdiocese of Newark.