

**ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA**  
**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**  
**FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2025-2026**

St. Teresa of Calcutta Education Center  
**Office of Religious Education (610-287-2500 ext. #2)**  
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**"Each one of them is Jesus in disguise"**  
**Mother Teresa**



**It is to just such as these that  
the Kingdom of God belongs**

ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA  
P.R.E.P. MISSION STATEMENT

*St. Teresa of Calcutta Religious Education Program is dedicated to assisting parents in presenting and teaching our Catholic Faith to the children and young adults of our Parish Community.*

*Our vision is to:*

- \* Worship God through prayer and the Sacraments*
- \* Nourish the community by meeting the spiritual and temporal needs of all our brothers and sisters*
- \* Proclaim the Good News through our examples and teachings*
- \* Teach the message of Christ by choosing to live our Faith with morals and values*
- \* And to thank God every day for his guidance and strength that we may continue to respond to His worthy call*

**ST. TERESA OF CALCUTTA**  
**EDUCATION CENTER MISSION STATEMENT**

- *St. Teresa of Calcutta Education Center will use every opportunity and skill necessary to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as faith-filled learners willing to succeed as productive members of society.*
- *Our learning is made possible in a loving, safe and supportive environment.*
- *We believe as Mother Teresa believed, “Be Jesus to everyone you meet; and in everyone you meet, see Jesus.”*

**PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY**

*Canon Law states that “Parents above all others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example; godparents and those who take the place of parents are bound by an equivalent obligation” (Can. 774). The General Directory for Catechists and the National Directory for Catechists resound the same sentiment. St. Teresa of Calcutta Religious Education Program recognizes and embraces parents in their role as the primary catechists of their children as they strive to fulfill this special role. Our mission is to assist parents by providing sound catechists on the catechism and teachings of the Catholic Church so that their children will be formed in the faith of the Catholic tradition. This is accomplished by providing parents with a variety of resources and programs that will enable their children to cultivate a deep appreciation and understanding of what it means to be a Catholic Christian in today’s changing world. The Parish Religious Education Program provides children with ample opportunities to live and experience their faith through catechists, service, community and worship.*

The purpose of this handbook is to set forth the guidelines for those that participate in the St. Teresa of Calcutta Religious Education Program. By enrolling your child into this program, you agree to support and abide by the provisions outlined in this handbook. Parents are, therefore, encouraged to discuss these provisions with their children to ensure they understand the requirements and obligations in the Parish Religious Education Program.

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## **LEVEL, SESSION, TIME AND DAY OF CLASSES:**

Kindergarten to Level 6 – Session Sunday.....	9:00 to 10:15am
Decision Point Confirmation Program – Session Sunday.....	9:00 to 10:15am
Level 1 to Level 6, Foundations – Session Monday.....	6:30 to 7:45pm
Decision Point Confirmation Program – Session Monday.....	6:30 to 7:45pm
Special Needs – Session Monday.....	6:30 to 7:30pm

## **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL**

**It is very important that your child(ren) arrives no later than class start time and are picked up promptly at the end of class. At no time may you drive, park or stop along the curb in front of the Education Center.** Upon arrival, please park your car and walk your child(ren) to class by entering the middle doors of the Education Center. You must stay with your child(ren) until the teacher and aide arrives in the classroom. At dismissal parents/guardians wait in the lobby until you can go to the classroom to pick up your child(ren). Please wait until the teacher opens the door of the classroom to signal the end of class. The teacher or aide will release the children one at a time to the parent/guardian. (See Carpooling)

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

For emergency and snow closings an email and or text will be sent to families.

## **TARDINESS**

Sessions begin promptly at their designated times. Therefore, any child arriving after the designated starting time will be considered late. It is strongly recommended that children arrive on time for the scheduled beginning of class. Lateness will be noted on the attendance sheet and is a factor in determining perfect attendance. Chronic lateness will require a conference with the parent and may interfere with your child's promotion and reception of sacraments. Parents of students leaving early (15 minutes before the end of class) must give a note or send an email with the reason for the early dismissal to the **PREP OFFICE** before class starts. Students 'leaving earlier than 15 minutes before the end of class will be marked as absent. Parents should pick up their child in the classroom after giving their name to the Hall Monitor. Participation in extra-curricular activities is neither an excuse nor a reason for lateness or early dismissal.

## **CARPOOLING**

If you are carpooling, you must complete the Carpooling and Release Form and return to your child's teacher. This form will be kept on file in the office and by the teacher.

**Children will only be released to those named on this form.**

## **P.R.E.P. WEBSITE** ([www.stteresacalcutta.com](http://www.stteresacalcutta.com))

- Family Handbook – Parents should read this handbook and review with their children. The handbook can be downloaded from the website.
- Class Schedule – This schedule will inform families of class dates, Holy Days of Obligation, Class Mass (Levels 3 to 6) and the Children’s Rosary (Levels 4 to 6).
- Sacrament Schedule – Sacrament dates and important meetings pertaining to the sacraments will be listed on this schedule. Parents can view the schedule on the website.
- Decision Point Schedule – parents can view the Level 7 class schedule on the website.



## **REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

The family must be registered in the parish before the Religious Education Office can initiate a child’s registration in the program. Register in the parish by contacting the Parish Office at (610) 287-2525 or email the P.R.E.P. Office for a parish registration form. P.R.E.P. registration is done online through Parish Giving. To register for Religious Education classes go to [www.stteresacalcutta.com](http://www.stteresacalcutta.com), click PREP at the top of the screen, then click “Registration”. A copy of the child’s Baptismal Certificate is required. Payment is made in full by credit card and includes Sacrament Material fees. P.R.E.P. registration begins in March for the following year.

### **TUITION FEES**

One Child	\$235.00
Two Children	\$390.00
Three or more Children	\$510.00

### **SACRAMENT MATERIAL FEE**

Level 2 – Reconciliation	\$35.00
Level 3 – Eucharist	\$35.00
Level 7 – Confirmation	\$60.00

## **TRANSFERRING FROM ANOTHER RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIRES:**

- Parish registration
- Copy of Baptismal Certificate
- Dates of all sacraments received
- Copy of Permanent Record Card or P.R.E.P. report card from previous Religious Education.

## **TRANSFERRING FROM A PAROCHIAL SCHOOL REQUIRES:**

- Parish registration
- Copy of Baptismal Certificate
- Dates of all sacraments received
- Copy of most current report card

## **SACRAMENT PARENT MEETINGS**

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia requires that we have parent meetings for the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation. These scheduled meetings are held prior to the reception of the Sacrament and will be given to you in the beginning of the school year and posted on the P.R.E.P. website.

## **MATERIAL FEE**

There is a \$35.00 Sacrament Material fee for each individual student in levels two and three for the reception of first sacraments. Level 7 will be required to pay a \$60.00 Sacrament Material fee. Sacrament Material fees are paid at the time of registration.

## **TEXTBOOK**

The student should bring their textbook to class every week. Lost textbooks or sacramental material will have to be replaced at full cost to the student.

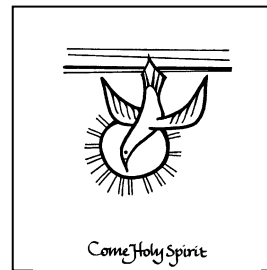
## **EMERGENCY/HEALTH INFORMATION**

Each family must have the Emergency/Health Information section of the registration form completed. Please note any allergies, medications, physical or learning disabilities or other information pertinent to your child. **HIPPA requires that we keep all medical information confidential. Therefore it is the *PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY* to inform the teacher of any new or existing medical information or learning disabilities.**

## **DISCIPLINE**

The Parish Religious Education Program is designed to assist parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behavior that are in accord with Catholic Church teaching. The Parent/Guardian will receive a notice from the teacher if a child has to be repeatedly corrected for disturbing the class, or has excessive lateness or absenteeism. A meeting with the program coordinator or the pastor may be initiated if there has been no change.

## **ABSENTEE POLICY**



The Religious Education Staff is careful to track the attendance of all students in the program. Archdiocese policy considers more than **three days** absence in a semester to be excessive. Excessive absences may jeopardize a child's readiness to advance to the next class level, and for those preparing for a sacrament, may result in the postponing of the reception of that sacrament. **If a student misses more than six (6) classes during the year, that student will be required to take the Archdiocesan test for his/her level.** Girl or Boy Scout activities and participation in extracurricular sports and school activities is not an excused absence. When your child(ren) is absent from class, it will be the parents' responsibility to contact the **teacher** for the lesson missed. ***DO NOT CALL THE PREP OFFICE to report an absence or for the lesson covered in class.*** Please go over this lesson with your child(ren) so they do not fall behind in class. Any absence or lateness will affect perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is attending every class within the school year.

## **COMMUNICATION**

**Parish Giving Email** – emailed in September to all families. The email will provide to the parents their child's class and room number.

**This Month at P.R.E.P.** – Monthly email sent to parents with important information about the Religious Education Program.

We encourage open communication among parents, catechists, children and the P.R.E.P. Office. Addressing concerns at the start often leads to a more satisfying resolution. Please make us aware of any special challenges your child has. Do not confront the teachers or aides with sensitive issues at the beginning or end of class. They are usually arriving right after work in the evening or arriving from or leaving for Mass on Sundays. It is best to email the teacher and if a solution can not be reached, contact the program coordinator. We want to protect and support our children in the best way possible. All information is taken seriously, respected, and kept confidential.

## **PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN**

P.R.E.P. staff, teachers, aides and volunteers who have contact with children need to have their Criminal and Child Abuse Clearances on file at the Parish Office before they begin their ministry. Protecting God's Children class should be attended before the start of P.R.E.P. Please check for classes online at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org), and click on **View a list of upcoming Protecting God's Children classes in your area**. You can then register online for one of the classes. This class needs to be taken only once, but the clearances must be repeated every 5 years.



## **KID TALK**

Article 12, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People asks all dioceses to establish Safe Environment Programs for all grade levels, both in P.R.E.P. and Parish Elementary Schools. The Archdiocese of Philadelphia provides a personal safety lesson for each level of P.R.E.P. and mandates that the lesson is taught during one session of the instructional year. These lessons are known as “Kid Talk, Child Abuse Preventative Lessons” and are posted at: <https://childyouthprotection.org/index.php/protect-children/trainings/kidtalk-overview>. If you do not want your child to attend, an opt out form in the P.R.E.P. Office must be signed.

## **NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS**

It is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the Parish with the latest, most up to date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. If either the Custody Order or Custody Agreement changes during the course of the year, it remains the responsibility of both biological parents to provide that document to the Parish immediately. If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program coordinator with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

## **CELL PHONES**

Cell phones have become a necessary tool in keeping communications open with children, especially for working parents. However, it is the policy of this program that cell phones may not be brought to religious education classes. If a student brings a cell phone to class, the phone will be sent to the office and must be picked up by the parent.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- No one is allowed to chew gum in the Education Center.
- Please have your child use the bathroom before class.
- Advise the office of any changes in address, telephone number or health information.
- No toys brought to class.
- Students should spend a reasonable amount of time each week studying at home and completing homework assignments.
- Students are expected to be respectful of each other, the Education Center and the property of other students who use the classroom.

## **GOAL AND OBJECTIVE**

Our goal and objective is to always move forward, expanding our program as we go. We would like to see our students stay with our program from Kindergarten through High School in order for them to receive a continuous religious education. Our curriculum follows the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Office of Catholic Education approves the textbooks used and our catechists are certified through courses offered by the Archdiocese.

## **CURRICULUM**

- **Mass Reporter** – Students in Kindergarten, Levels 1 and 2 will be given a Scavenger Hunt page and a Mass Reporter badge when he or she is scheduled to report at a Mass. There is a sign-up sheet for your use at the Meet and Greet.
- **Children's Mass** – On the class schedule Levels 3 to 6, Sunday session are scheduled to attend the 9am Mass. Parents bring their child to Mass and classes sit together, Blessed Mother side of the Church. The Monday session teachers bring their students to Church at 6:45pm for Mass. Parents are invited to join and the classes will sit in the middle section.
- **Children's Rosary** – Students in levels 4, 5 and 6 will attend the Children's Rosary. On the class schedule students in Levels 5 and 6 are scheduled to lead the Children's Rosary.

## **PROGRAM FORMAT**

### **Kindergarten**

Experiencing mystery, wonder, and awe in his/her life, the child learns to celebrate Jesus' being, to rejoice in Jesus' love for him/her, and respond to Jesus' love and friendship.

### **Level One**

Creation, Jesus' life, Mary as our Mother and as Queen of Heaven, the Sacraments, especially Baptism will be taught. The importance of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and the other Holy Days are explained as they occur. Prayers that will be learned are: The Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.

### **Level Two**

Becoming more familiar with Mass, choosing right from wrong and finding out that God truly is a forgiving God. The Ten Commandments are reviewed and explained in more detail in preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parents and child(ren) must successfully complete preparation material for the sacrament and the child must have a satisfactory attendance record before receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

### **Level Three**

The Sacramental Program of Eucharist is taught in Level Three in preparation for the child to receive his/her First Holy Communion. There is a review of the Sacrament of Baptism and the Ten Commandments. Time is also spent on the Liturgical Seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter. Students must have successfully completed two years of preparation and a satisfactory attendance record before receiving the Sacrament of First Eucharist.

**Level Four**

Students in this level explore in depth the Ten Commandments, importance of being a member of the Church, celebrating the Eucharist, and sharing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are encouraged to try to live according to the Law of Love, The Beatitudes, and The Works of Mercy. Special emphasis is placed on celebrating the Liturgical Seasons.

**Level Five**

The curriculum in this level centers on the worship of the Church. Each of the seven sacraments is studied in depth. The Eucharistic Celebration, The Mass, is also explored, as well as the vestments, vessels, and ministers involved in this celebration.

**Level Six**

Students are introduced to the history and origins of the Inspired Word of God (the Bible). They learn, by book, chapter, and verse, how to use the Bible as a source of God's Will for them. Students will begin to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**Level Seven Decision Point Confirmation Program**

Key life issues are introduced and young people are taught through the process of gathering, believing and responding to help them reflect on God's presence in their lives. They are called to recognize, live, explore and share their faith. Various specific issues dealing with morality may be discussed. Parents and child(ren) must successfully complete preparation material for the sacrament and the child must have a satisfactory attendance record before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**Jr. Youth Group**

Students in this level have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Their relationship with Jesus is growing deeper and prayer is an essential part of their life.

**High School/Youth Group**

Attention is given to discovering who they are and how to deal with their adolescent/adult feelings. They are confronted with real life situations and instructed through activities and discussions how to apply their faith and increase their relationship with God.

## DISCIPLINE/BEHAVIOR STANDARD

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Catechists explain reasonable standards of discipline in their classrooms. Students are expected to be respectful, attentive, honest, and obedient. Parents are also expected to be respectful and considerate of all teachers, aides and other parishioners.

In order for children to learn to be responsible for their relationship with God in the practice of their faith, we ask parents to join us in stressing the importance of the following with their children:

### **Responsibility & Accountability**

- ♥ Each student who has reached the age of reason (seven) shares the responsibility with their parent of full, conscious and active participation at the Sunday Mass;
- ♥ For themselves:
  - Behavior
  - Personal Appearance
- ♥ For their work:
  - Class participation
  - Assignments
- ♥ For their possessions:
  - Careful use of materials provided for their use – textbook, pencils, crayons, etc.
  - Anything that detracts from the classroom environment should be left at home.

### **Justice**

- ♥ Cheating
  - Violates the law of honesty and will not be tolerated.
- ♥ Vandalism
  - Any deliberate destruction of property demands restitution.

### **Christian Behavior**

- ♥ A respectful and courteous attitude is to be displayed toward everyone.
- ♥ Disruptive behavior and abusive language will not be tolerated.

***Families who do not respond to these Christian values are subject to dismissal.***

***Thank you and God bless you!***