

**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
PROGRAM
("P.R.E.P.")**

**PROGRAM HANDBOOK
2019 - 2020**



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

WELCOME FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to our Parish Religious Education Program! I want to thank our Coordinator of Religious Education, Kate Gnida, for her dedication and hard work and our staff of volunteer catechists and helpers whose deep faith motivates them to share their time and talent with you.

While God has blessed us with the gift of time—to learn more about Him and our Catholic Faith—our time together is relatively brief! We will spend only about thirty hours together this year. Make the most of those hours by studying your lessons and, above all, by attending Mass each weekend with your larger Parish Family here at Holy Trinity.

All of us involved in P.R.E.P. pray that this year will open you to a greater appreciation of God and the Church. Your Pastor, your parents, and your teachers have an obligation to share the Catholic faith with our children. The Code of Canon Law (Church Law) states: "There is a serious duty on the part of pastors of souls to provide for the catechesis of the Christian people, so that the faith of the people becomes *living, explicit, and productive* through the formation in doctrine and the experience of Christian living. Parents above all are *obliged* to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example." The phrase, "that the faith of the people becomes *living, explicit, and productive*" challenges us as followers—not just admirers—of Christ. Living our faith is not a fifty-minute Sunday obligation but a way of life. Explicit means that others can tell by our words and actions that we are Catholic Christians. Productive implies that our faith deepens our commitment to Christ and edifies others.

In closing, one reminder to parents: You are the primary teachers of your children. You teach best by your active practice of the faith. Please come to Mass with your children on Sunday. And God bless you as we begin another year of growth in our Catholic faith.

Monsignor Eckert

***FROM THE COORDINATOR
OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Church leaders come and go. Most of you have known more than one pastor, more than one bishop, and more than one pope. They pass in and out of your lives. What remains is the Church. It remains because of the action of the Holy Spirit in the ordinary lives of its people, the families who keep the Church alive in their homes, their hearts, and the hearts of their children.

I'd like to thank you for being a part of this important faith experience with your children. We are all answering God's call to spread His Good News – in this case to our children. Nothing does that more effectively than the example of Christian living that we give. Remember when it comes to your children we are here to support you, the primary teachers of religion of your children. Children are great imitators! It is your example and reinforcement of what we are doing that develops your child's growth in their faith. Prayer should be an important part of every family, especially the greatest form of prayer – the Mass. If you and your child are not attending Mass regularly and receiving the sacraments, then what we are trying to accomplish in P.R.E.P. has no meaning. If you have gotten away from Mass and the sacraments then let this year be an opportunity to recommit yourself to a renewed practice of your faith. Your children are depending on you!

Since this religion education is a partnership, it needs to be a give and take. **A lot of information will be coming home to you during the year through our PREP Notes on our parish website. Please check the PREP link on our website each week and review what is in the PREP Notes.** If you have questions or concerns feel free to contact me. I'm more than happy to try to help. We all need to work together to make this the most rewarding experience it can be for our children.

It is my prayer that this year will offer a chance to strengthen your bonds as family and to deepen your faith.

May the grace of the Spirit be with all of you,

Kate Gnida

OUR PROGRAM

Religious Education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church to proclaim and live the Gospel message and values. The Parish Religious Education Program ("P.R.E.P.") supports parents in their role as the primary educators of their children by providing a religious education experience for children attending public schools. As such, it is a partnership between parents and parish.

Religious education involves three aspects:

1. the message revealed by God which the Church proclaims;
2. community in the Holy Spirit; and
3. service to the parish community and the world.

Thus, through P.R.E.P., we seek to foster:

- * knowledge of the Gospel and the tradition of the Catholic Church;
- * a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and the values of the Gospel;
- * an active, conscious and genuine participation in the liturgy, and the habit of personal prayer;
- * a Gospel sense of love that accepts responsibility for self and for the Kingdom through service while developing a healthy and holy sense of hope; and
- * a sense of loyalty and affection for the Church.

THE FAMILY'S ROLE

- 1) **Attend Mass weekly with your child/ren.** At the heart of our Catholic tradition is the Mass (or Eucharistic liturgy). The Second Vatican Council called the Eucharistic liturgy the "summit" and the "fount" of the entire Christian life—both the high point to which all our activity leads as well as the source of grace to strengthen us for Gospel living. Developing the habit of weekly worship with the community is even more important than PREP. Without it, your child's attendance at PREP occurs in a vacuum.
- 2) **Encourage proper and respectful behavior towards teachers, aides and peers.**
- 3) **Teach your child respect for holy places and times of prayer.** When we gather together for prayer, the catechist or aide should not need to spend time instructing the children about how to behave during worship.

- 4) **Remind your child to show respect for the property of others.** PREP shares space with the students and teachers of Holy Trinity School. We should leave the classrooms and desks as we found them.
- 5) **Show interest in and enthusiasm for what your child is learning.** This year Our Level K students will be using "Alleluia" from Our Sunday Visitor and our Levels 1-5 will be using "Finding God" from Loyola Press. Our Level 6 and 7 Confirmation students will be using a variety of resources for their preparation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Your child's catechist may send a notice home each week telling you what chapter they worked on in class and directing you to the home activities for that week. Make time to do these activities together. This is one way that the children learn that faith is something that permeates all of life.
- 6) **Homework may be assigned to reinforce the lessons presented in class.** Please encourage your child to be responsible in this area by asking about any assignments, reviewing them with your child, and checking it. Establishing a specific time to complete the assignment will help your child realize its importance.
- 7) **Check the list of prayers and other formulas to be memorized, which are listed at the end of this handbook.** Be sure that your child learns what is expected at her/his grade level. (Obviously, s/he should also know the items in the previous levels as well.) Class time is too short for the catechists to spend time doing memorization drills. Therefore, **we count on you to include this in your prayer time and faith-sharing time.**

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Our primary goal is to provide an atmosphere in which each child can experience God's love through supportive Christian community. Fostering a genuine relationship with God that expresses itself in committed Christian witness is as important as passing on the beliefs and customs of the Catholic Christian tradition. In this effort, parents and parish are partners.

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Attendance and Absenteeism

- 1) Please try to schedule vacation and other activities so that nothing but illness or family emergency will interfere with the weekly class. The positive example of responsibility that you show to your child in reference to this commitment will be a valuable lesson.
- 2) Ideally, to foster proper learning and a deeper appreciation of their faith, families and students should strive for perfect attendance. This is particularly true in a sacramental level, when more than two absences could jeopardize the child's readiness for the sacrament.
- 3) ****All students with more than 3 absences must provide a doctor's note for all future absences during that school year. A warning letter will be sent after 3 absences.****
- 4) ****Any student who accumulates more than 5 absences will be in jeopardy of repeating the level the following year.**** A meeting will be held with the pastor, the director, the catechist and the parent to determine the child's status for the following year.
- 5) After each absence, a child will be issued an excuse sheet which includes work they need to make up. This sheet should be returned the following week with the reason for the absence and the parent's signature. The parent should work with the child to complete any make-up work.

Class Cancellations/Snow Policy

At times we find it necessary to cancel classes due to the weather. **Class cancellations are posted on our website, www.holytrinitymorrisville.org at the PREP link after 3:00 PM.** Those who have shared their email address will also receive an email stating that PREP will be cancelled. There no longer is a phone chain. For those who belong to the Holy Trinity Facebook page cancellations will also be posted there. During inclement weather it is always wise to check the website for cancellations. Even though the roads may be clear, sometimes the conditions of the sidewalks or parking lot makes it necessary to cancel classes. Parents who do not have access to the internet must sign up at the office to receive a phone call.

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Arrival and Dismissal

Classes are held from 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. For the safety and well-being of your child:

- Doors will be unlocked at 6:15 p.m. Children should arrive between 6:20-6:30 p.m.
- Primary-grade children **must** be escorted to their rooms by the parent or adult responsible for bringing them to class.
- Any child arriving late or leaving early must be checked in/out at the office. If your child/ren must leave early, please send a note in with your child to advise the office and the catechist. When you arrive for your child/ren, come to the front desk. One of the office aides will go to the classroom(s) to get your child/ren. If you arrive after 6:30 PM, you must enter by the schoolyard door as the Stockham Avenue door will be locked at 6:30.
- The schoolyard door is locked at 6:40PM and unlocked at 7:40PM. A member of the office staff is always near the schoolyard door if you need to enter the building at other times.
- We will record any child who arrives after the bell has been rung as being late for that class.
- Four late notations and/or early dismissals equal one absence. **The policy regarding the need of a doctor's note after 3 absences will also apply here.**
- Dismissal procedures – The Stockham Avenue door will be opened at 7:40 PM. Parents may enter the school before 7:40 only by the schoolyard door. **If parents arrive before 7:40, they must wait in the school hall for the bell to ring.** Parents will not be allowed to go to the classrooms prior to 7:45. At 7:45 parents may proceed to the classrooms to pick up their children. **The catechist will not release a child until an adult comes to the classroom for him/her.** If you intend to have someone other than the child's parent pick the child up, a note should be given to the catechist when the child is dropped off at PREP.
- Please be certain that your child knows their teacher's name and class location.
- If you expect to be late picking your child/ren up, please let the office know so that we can notify them and keep them safely in the building.

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- Please also notify the office at 215-295-6900 if, after dropping your child/ren off, plans are changed as to who will pick the child/ren up at dismissal.

Parking

Parents or parent surrogates may park on Osborne Avenue, Stockham Avenue, in the school yard, in the alley behind church (please observe the "One Way" signs), or in the lot at the YMCA ("New School") building. Please do not double-park. Please do not block the driveway into the schoolyard as this can prevent the staff from getting into the building in a timely manner. Your patience and cooperation are appreciated. Also, please respect the property of our neighbors and do not park and block their driveways.

Fire Drills

Please stress to your child(ren) the importance of being familiar with the fire drill instructions and listening to the teacher's directives. Explain that they will be involved with fire drills during the year.

Progress Reports and Attendance Awards

Progress Reports help to affirm your child's progress and participation in class and to indicate areas where extra help or growth is needed. They will be issued at the midpoint of the year and again at the end. Please be certain to review the report and discuss it with your child. Please sign and return the mid-year report card as soon as possible.

Recognition is also given at the end of the year for perfect attendance and for faithful attendance. **It has been rightly observed that perfect attendance should be expected. It is.** Nonetheless, perfect or nearly perfect attendance often reflects not just good luck—e.g., no one got sick this year—but also a commitment to the value of religious education in the life of the child and the family. Because this commitment is an important witness to our children, the staff of PREP continues to believe that attendance awards are important.

Funding and Fees

Catechists and aides are *unpaid volunteers*. Tuition fees cover book costs and other operating expenses. *Please contact the Coordinator of Religious Education or the pastor if you need to make special financial arrangements, or to apply for a tuition scholarship.*

A replacement fee of \$15.00 is charged for lost textbooks.

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Communication

As in the past we will be providing the PREP NOTES each week on the PREP link on our parish website, www.holytrinitymorrisville.org.

NOTES will be available each Wednesday. PREP NOTES are also emailed each week directly to each family who has provided us with their email address on their registration form. For those who do not have internet access, a few copies of the NOTES will be available at the office. Only special handouts regarding sacrament information, or parish functions will be sent home with each child when necessary.

Payments

This year we will continue our policy with regard to the way payments are made at PREP. Payments made by check may still be returned through your child's catechist. However, **ALL PAYMENTS MADE IN CASH MUST BE TAKEN DIRECTLY TO THE OFFICE WHERE YOU WILL BE ISSUED A RECEIPT.** This includes payments for sacramental tuition fees, fundraisers, etc. If you are paying by check you may also turn in the payment to the office and ask for a receipt. The safest way to be sure that your payment reaches me is to turn it into the office and obtain a receipt.

Large Group Events

During the year, several large group events, usually involving all the children in P.R.E.P., will be held. Since these events are designed to help meet our goal of catechizing the whole child, they are scheduled during class time. Therefore, attendance is expected.

Families may be invited to these events, and we warmly encouraged your participation. Check the calendar, and watch for notices with more information.

General Respect and Discipline

We expect children to come prepared for class each week with their text, homework, and any other material expected by their catechist.

Do not send your child to class with food, gum, toys or other items unless there is a medical reason. If there is a medical reason, please advise the catechist or CRE.

Children are allowed to use the bathrooms only for emergencies during class time. Please see to it that your child(ren) attend to bathroom needs before class begins.

Classes are held in the same classrooms that are used during the rest of the week by Holy Trinity School students. Please stress to your child the importance of respecting the property of others. Children are not allowed to use or "borrow" items in the classroom. P.R.E.P. and parents will provide all needed books and supplies.

Most important, we expect each child to exhibit, at a level appropriate to their age, a basic Christian respect for others. Therefore, we will not tolerate behavior that is disrespectful, inappropriate, offensive or disruptive. We will contact parents about their child's unacceptable behavior in order to bring about an amicable solution. If a child is repeatedly disciplined for unacceptable behavior, we will require him or her to do home study with a parent or guardian's supervision.

Volunteers

Observing their parents and family members involved in parish activities, children learn that following Christ is an exterior as well as an interior activity! Therefore, we invite each and every family who has a child in P.R.E.P. to get involved with at least one of the many tasks, large and small, that keep our program running. We welcome involvement by parents, grandparents, guardians and high-school age siblings. Please refer to the Volunteer form included in the Back to PREP mailing for a detailed listing. Contact the Religious Education Office to obtain a copy or for more information.

PREPARATION FOR INITIATION SACRAMENTS

The celebration of the sacraments of initiation is a parish event. Therefore, the children in the Parish Religious Education Program and the children in Holy Trinity School celebrate sacraments together. Parent meetings, retreats, rehearsals, and the sacramental celebrations themselves, are coordinated parish activities. Parents are expected to attend one meeting during the year in order that they may share more fully in the preparation of their child for these celebrations. In addition, parents and children who will be candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation during the school year attend an introductory meeting in the Fall. A separate Sacrament Preparation Tuition (SPT) schedule applies for each of the sacraments, to cover the cost of materials and activities associated with preparation for each sacrament.

Announcements of the names of students who are receiving First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation are published in the sacramental booklet, and the parish bulletin which is posted on the parish website. A permission slip must be signed by the parent in order to have your child's name included. More information will be provided at the Sacramental meetings.

First Penance ("Reconciliation" or "Confession")

The Sacrament of Penance is received for the first time in the Spring by children in Level Two of our program. These children will have completed one full year of religious education prior to the year in which the sacrament is celebrated, and **be in regular attendance** during the course of the second level year.

First Eucharist ("Holy Communion")

The Sacrament of Eucharist is received for the first time in the Spring by children in Level Three of our program. These children will have completed two full years of religious education prior to the year in which the sacrament is celebrated, and **be in regular attendance** during the course of the third level year.

Confirmation

Confirmation is celebrated with the Bishop on a date designated by the Archdiocesan Office of Worship. Children in the Seventh Level of our Religious Education Program are candidates for Confirmation. Candidates will have participated in a full complement of religious studies in prior years and **be in regular attendance** during the school year of reception of the sacrament.

Children's Initiation

Sometimes it happens that children do not receive formal religious education until later than the norm. Older children who enter PREP without having received catechesis and without having celebrated the Initiation Sacraments may be eligible to participate in the RCIA adapted for children. The pastor and CRE will consult with parents in these situations to determine the best way to accommodate the child's needs for religious formation.

PRAYERS & FORMULAS TO BE MEMORIZED

GRADE	PRAYERS	FORMULAS
1	Sign of the Cross Our Father Hail Mary Glory Be... Grace Before Meals Grace After Meals	Name of the Sacrament of Baptism
2	Simple Morning Offering Act of Contrition Lord, Have Mercy (from the Mass)	Names of the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist
3	Morning Offering Apostles' Creed	Names of the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist
4, 5, 6, 7	Angelus/Queen of Heaven Prayers at Mass Rosary Hail Holy Queen Acts of Faith, Hope, Love Come, Holy Spirit	Names of the Seven Sacraments Ten Commandments Eight Beatitudes Seven Precepts of the Church Corporal Works of Mercy Spiritual Works of Mercy

