

Saint Cornelius
Parish Religious Education Program

2021-2022

Family Handbook

CLASS SCHEDULE

- Sundays (grades 1-7): 10:00 to 11:15 am
- Summer A (grades 3-7): June 21-25 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
+ 4 Sunday sessions 10:00 to 11:15 am
- Summer B (grades 3-7): August 2-6 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
+ 4 Sunday sessions 10:00 to 11:15 am
- Virtual Family Program (Grades 1-7): At home
September-May

This handbook contains certain policies and procedures for the St. Cornelius Parish Religious Education Program (herein known as the program) in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The program may change any of its policies and procedures as needed and apply them as circumstances dictate.

In the event of such a change, parents will be given prompt notification and provided with an addendum if necessary. If you have questions about a particular policy of procedure, please contact the program director listed on the back of this handbook.

Students and parents must accept and abide by the policies and procedures contained in this handbook in order for the student to attend the program.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The St. Cornelius Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) supports families of the parish by teaching the Catholic faith in Word, Sacraments, and Charity to the children of the parish.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

PHILOSOPHY

In support of the mission of St. Cornelius Parish, the Parish Religious Education Program provides the public and private school students of the parish with a Catholic Education while acknowledging parents/guardians as the primary educators of faith development.

In collaboration with our Pastor, catechists, staff, parents/guardians and parish community, we strive to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a model for our students. In this Christian environment, we hope that the students will grow through their knowledge, work, example, and service. We strive for students to learn how to make their faith living, conscious, and active.

Under the direction of the Pastor and the Director of the Parish Religious Education Program, and in conjunction with Archdiocesan guidelines, and the policies and procedures found in this handbook, the Saint Cornelius Parish Religious Education Program offers faith-filled instruction through several class options. Implementation of policies and curriculum guidelines are the co-responsibility of administration and staff. Adherence to policies and procedures is the co-responsibility of families and students.

REGISTRATION

Registration begins in winter. The deadline for registration is May 1 for the summer programs and July 1 for all other programs. Classes will be filled in the order of registration

including payment. Later registration may decrease the chance of securing a preferred class session.

Upon registration of a new student, a baptismal certificate and First Eucharist certificate (if applicable) must be presented if the child received sacraments outside of St. Cornelius Parish.

Payment in full is expected at the time of registration. Exceptions and accommodations may be made by contacting the program director.

FEES

The tuition for the program is \$200 for the first child and \$75 for each additional child in a family. All fees are non-refundable. An additional materials fee is requested in the fall during sacrament years.

In the event that a student voluntarily leaves the program during the program year, or is dismissed from the program for any reason including, but not limited to poor attendance, a disciplinary incident, or the possession of contraband items, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made to the family.

LEARNING CHALLENGES

Use the registration form to document any learning challenges that your child may have, as we desire to support each student. If you document that your child has an IEP (individualized educational plan) through their school, your child's catechist will be informed. If necessary, an adapted plan for religious education can be arranged.

HEALTH CONCERNS

If your child has any health issues (chronic health conditions, allergies, medications, etc.), indicate that on the registration form. Parents may also arrange a conference with the director

and/or catechist to discuss health issues.

MEDICATION PROCEDURES

The administering of medicine to a child is a parental responsibility and should not be delegated to catechist personnel except under unusual circumstances. We do not provide a school nurse with the exception of the summer program weeks. Please note: No child may carry prescription or over-the-counter-medications with them unless it is a medical emergency such as a prescribed inhaler. These cases will be handled on an individual basis by contacting the program director

CUSTODY POLICY

The program will not become involved in adjudicating the rights of parents in relation to the custody of their children. Therefore, if a parent is separated, divorced, or unmarried, it is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the program director with the latest, most up-to-date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement at the time of registration. If the Custodial Order or Custody Arrangement changes during the course of the year, it remains the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the revised document to the program director immediately. This is also true in the event that such an agreement is issued after the time of enrollment. In the absence of such documentation, the program will and must assume that parents share legal custody.

Our program abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, our program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and other program related information regarding the child.

ATTENDANCE

Parents and students should strive for punctual and consistent attendance. We ask you to arrange extracurricular activities around Religious Education instructional time when possible, and choose a class time that will not result in a regular conflict.

ENROLLMENT

The faith formation provided in our program involves incremental learning. Each year builds upon the learning of the previous year. Therefore, it is essential that participants remain enrolled in the program consistently from 1st grade through 7th grade. If a student has missed years of study before a sacrament year, students will be evaluated by the pastor or program director to determine how best to proceed. The pastor may delay sacraments until a later year if sufficient understanding is not demonstrated by the student.

ABSENCES

While we expect every child to be present at each session, there are allowable reasons for a student's absence. If there is a planned absence, please advise the program director and catechist of the dates, and review the work that will be missed.

Absences are excused when children are ill, there is a death in the family or a health emergency. Unexcused absences are those for any other reason, including a family vacation, non-emergency medical appointment, or sports event or practice.

Students may not have unexcused absences that constitute more than 15% of instruction time for the school year. That equates to 5 or more unexcused class days for weekly PREP classes. Unexcused absences may be made up by attending a different class time or by meeting with the program director for individual instruction. Summer PREP students may not miss more than 1 follow-up class without attending a make-up class.

ARRIVAL

All students will enter the school building through the **front doors only**. Parents may drop off children at the sidewalk in front of the school or park and walk their children inside. **DO NOT** drop off children in the parking lot to walk to the school themselves. The doors will be opened 10 minutes before each session begins. Students who arrive at their classroom before their catechist should wait quietly in the hallway until the catechist arrives. No student is permitted in any classroom without an adult present.

DISMISSAL

All children must be picked up by a parent or legal guardian or someone else designated by parents. If you are car-pooling and/or your child is being picked up by another person, this must be marked on the registration form or communicated in a note to the program director.

At dismissal, the students will be outside with their catechists for pick up via carline. Please do not drive around other cars after picking up your child, for the safety of all of our PREP families. In the event of inclement weather, we will have the students wait inside for dismissal to the car line.

Extreme care must be used in our busy parking lot. Parents, be sure your child is walking with you to and from the car and not running ahead. **DO NOT** park in the fire lane in front of the school or in spaces marked for handicapped individuals (unless you have the appropriate tag).

EARLY DISMISSAL

Early dismissal should be considered an unusual occurrence. In the event that this is necessary, the following procedure must be followed: Send in a written note, email, or call ahead. When you come to the school, sign an early release form in the school office.

The program director or program volunteer will call your child to the office. Parents may not go to the classroom.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

In the event of inclement weather or other calamity, we will email you if class is cancelled. If the Unionville-Chadds Ford or Garnet Valley School District closes or dismisses early because of bad weather, PREP classes for that day will be canceled automatically. The program director will send an email to parents in that case as well.

CALENDAR

Calendars will be available in August before each school year. Every effort is made to avoid scheduling classes during school breaks and long weekends. All calendars are tentative and subject to change. Any changes will be conveyed to parents by the program director.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

The primary instruction material used at St. Cornelius Religious Education Program is the *Finding God* series by Loyola Press. Areas of specific focus are:

GRADE 1: *Students learn about the Holy Trinity, Creation, and our place in God's family.*

GRADE 2: *Students learn about Sacraments, review Baptism and the Mass, and prepare for the celebrations of Penance and Eucharist.*

GRADE 3: *Students learn about being members of the Catholic faith community, as well as about the Church: its marks and core beliefs as found in the Apostle's Creed, and ministries within the Church.*

GRADE 4: *Students learn about morality through the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.*

GRADE 5: *Students learn more about the Seven Sacraments which are presented as sacred signs as well as celebrations. Students also learn about the Trinity and Church as they relate to the sacraments, and the Liturgical Year.*

GRADE 6: *Students learn about the story of salvation history through Bible study.*

GRADE 7: *Students learn more about the Holy Spirit, with particular emphasis on Confirmation preparation. The candidates grow in their knowledge and experience of God's Spirit in their lives.*

FAMILY PROGRAM CATECHESIS

Because of the communal nature of our faith, and the offering of multiple times for Religious Education classes, use of our traditional programs are preferred. Due to the COVID pandemic, we are partnering with families through the use of our Virtual Family Program to instruct our children in grades 1-7, including sacramental preparation. If you have any questions regarding our family program, please contact our Director of Religious Education.

PRAYERS TO MEMORIZE AND CHERISH

Archdiocesan guidelines require that prayer memorization be part of the religious education curriculum. Prayer memorization for grades 1 to 6 is worked on primarily at home. Below is a list of the prayers children in each grade are expected to memorize, in addition to all prayers from previous years.

GRADE 1: *Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

GRADE 2: *Act of Contrition, Form of Confession*

GRADE 3: *Apostles' Creed, Morning Offering, Introduction of Rosary & Mysteries*

GRADE 4: *Hail, Holy Queen, The Rosary*

GRADE 5: *Prayers at Mass, The Angelus*

GRADE 6: *Act of Faith; Act of Hope; Act of Love; Come, Holy Spirit*

These prayers can be found in your child's text book. Per

Archdiocesan request, the students will learn the Traditional Act of Contrition, beginning “Oh my God, I am heartily sorry...” which may not be the version found in the textbook.

THE MASS

Mass is the most beautiful and powerful prayer that we have, and the Eucharist is the Source and Summit of our faith. It is therefore the expectation that each family enrolled in the Parish Religious Education Program attend Mass weekly.

THE SAINTS AND DEVOTIONS

The saints intercede for us so that we might follow their example and draw close to Jesus. Devotional items such as rosaries, statues, religious images and prayer books and cards help us to focus on the mysteries of our faith. These items may be used in instruction, and families are encouraged to use them at home.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

“The Christian home is the first school and the parents are the first to communicate the faith”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #226

Since example is more powerful than words, parents are encouraged to do the following:

- ❖ Provide an atmosphere of prayer in the home
- ❖ Attend weekly Mass as a family
- ❖ Know your Catholic Faith: involve yourself in the parish
- ❖ Encourage and demonstrate frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation
- ❖ Model Catholic ethics and Gospel charity within and outside the family
- ❖ Attend Sacramental preparation programs and meetings
- ❖ Ensure children arrive on time for class and complete any homework assignments
- ❖ Support the policies and procedures detailed in this handbook

- ❖ Observe drop-off and dismissal procedures
- ❖ Participate in the program as a volunteer when possible

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Archdiocese requires that Catechists present the *KidTalk* Safe Environment lessons to students each year. The date for this instruction is provided to families in advance and, if a parent signs an “opt-out letter,” a child can be excused from the lesson. Parents may review the lessons online at: <http://phillyocf.org/safe-environment-2/>.

All catechists, aides, and volunteers must be in compliance with all Archdiocesan regulations and are required to obtain certain clearances. The fees for these clearances for volunteers have been waived. If you recently moved into the state of PA, a fingerprint clearance is also required at a cost to the individual. To meet the minimal clearance for occasional volunteering, you will need:

- **PA State Criminal History Report**
- **PA Department of Public Welfare and Child Abuse Clearance Check**
- **Disclosure Statement Application for Volunteers -or- FBI Fingerprinting**

Copies must be printed and submitted to the Director of the Parish Religious Education Program before volunteering. Additionally, any volunteer with weekly contact with children must also participate in additional training in compliance with Archdiocesan regulations. These requirements are in place to ensure the safety and protection of the children in the program.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

For a productive learning experience, mutual respect is imperative. Student responsibilities for creating this atmosphere

include:

- ❖ Maintain a respectful attitude and speech to catechists and fellow students at all times
- ❖ Participate in class
- ❖ Maintain a reverent attitude when appropriate, such as in church and during prayer
- ❖ Punctuality
- ❖ Preparedness
- ❖ Attentiveness
- ❖ Careful listening to the catechist and to fellow students
- ❖ Respect the shared space: As we share this facility with the St. Cornelius Early Learning Center students and teachers, we are reminded to leave the rooms and school areas as we found them, if not better.

HOMEWORK

Catechists may assign homework. Assignments will be communicated in the form of a handout or email. Set aside a special time and treat it with importance. Homework also includes Mass attendance each week. So much of our teaching is centered around the Mass that the children need this experience to comprehend and connect to what they are learning in class.

TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Every registered student is given a textbook at the beginning of the year. The cost is covered by program fees. The student is required to bring the textbook to every class session. If a textbook is lost, the cost is \$25.00 to replace it. Other supplies are provided by the Parish Religious Education Program.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

Students will come dressed appropriately to learn, to reflect a spiritual respectfulness of our bodies, and to be safe. Remove all hats and caps when entering the building. Modest dress is required. Be sure to dress appropriately for the weather.

BULLY BEHAVIOR

Bullying may involve but is not limited to: written or verbal threats, teasing, name-calling, slurs, rumors, jokes, false accusations, intimidation, stalking innuendos, demeaning comments, pranks, writing/drawing unkind notes or pictures, social isolation, gestures, cyber-bullying or other cruel verbal or written conduct.

Each student and parent has a duty to report any incident of bullying/cyberbullying to the program director. Parents are encouraged to share with the director any inappropriate emails or social media posting. Appropriate legal authorities may be contacted as needed.

DISCIPLINE

Good conduct is expected from every child who is attending the Parish Religious Education Program. A disruption is unfair to both the catechist and the other students. Serious breaches of conduct, such as constant interruptions of the class, destruction of property, etc, are cause for a child to be dismissed from class and sent to the office. Parents will be notified of the situation. Parents are required to pay for any damage caused by their child.

The Saint Cornelius Parish Religious Education Program strives to foster values and behaviors that are in accord with Catholic teaching. The program has no tolerance for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper or obscene language, fighting, physical, emotional or psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene gestures, and harassment (sexual and other forms). Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and will not be tolerated in any form. These categories do not cover every possible situation.

Conduct by children or parents/guardians, or anyone acting on their behalf, that is incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the Parish is grounds for disciplinary action including, but not limited to, immediate dismissal of the student as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate authorities.

In the event a student engages in any of the above listed behaviors or any other inappropriate conduct, the following actions may be taken.

1. First incident: The student may be removed from the session and the parent or guardian will be notified by the program director. The program director will schedule a conference with the parents, student and catechist to discuss the matter as needed.

2. Second incident: The student will be removed from the session and be suspended from the program for a period of one session. The parents/guardians will be immediately notified by the program director and required to pick up their child. Prior to returning to the program, the program director will schedule a conference with the parents, student, and catechist to further discuss the matter.

3. Third incident: The student will be removed from the session and dismissed from the program. The parents/guardian will be immediately notified by the program director and required to pick up their child. No refund of tuition or material fees will be made.

The program reserves the right to supersede the forgoing course of action depending on the particular circumstances of any given situation.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Parents may deny permission, via the registration form, for your child to be photographed or have their name listed in the church bulletin. Parents must be careful not to photograph other parents' children without approval.

CONTRABAND

Bringing weapons, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco products to a Religious Education session is strictly prohibited. The contraband will be confiscated and the proper legal authorities will be notified as appropriate. Gum, food, beverages, toys, and electronic games are also not permitted and may be confiscated.

Cell phone: Students may bring cellphones to class if the cell phone is turned off or on silent and is not being used by the student for texting, talking or other purposes. If the student is using the cellphone during class, the cell phone will be confiscated and returned to the parents only. Parents may contact their children during Religious Education sessions by calling the school office at 610-459-8663.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication between parents and the Parish Religious Education Program is essential to achieve our collaborative goals. Avenues of communication between parent(s), catechists, and the program director may take the following forms:

- Email
- Notices in the parish bulletin
- Phone calls
- Mailings to parents
- Informational meetings

Communication directly between parents and catechists is encouraged. The program director is also available to respond to

your comments or questions by phone or email. Please do not expect to talk with a catechist before or during class time unless scheduled prior. Barring unusual circumstances, the program director is available before, during, and immediately following classes

CONTACT INFORMATION

St. Cornelius Church

160 Ridge Road
Chadds Ford, PA 19317
610-459-2502

St. Cornelius School

610-459-8663

Rev. Msgr. David Diamond, Pastor

Mrs. Julie Sullivan, Parish Religious Education

Program Director

610-459-2502

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