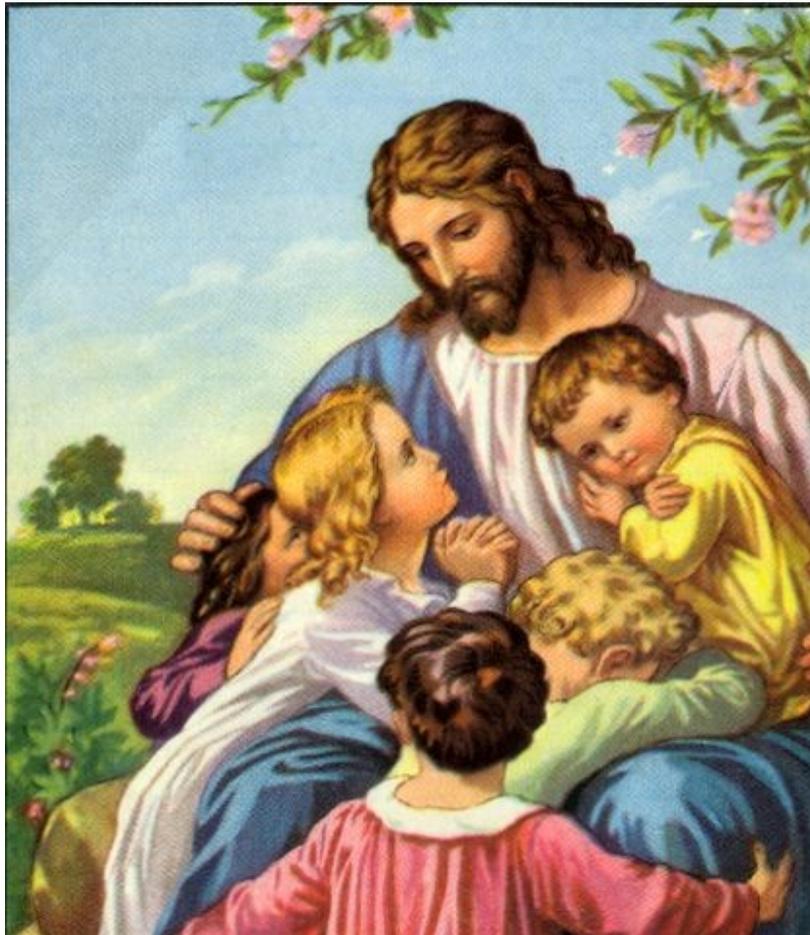


# St. Theresa's Religious Education

## Parent handbook 2019-2020



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## General Program Guidelines and Policies

**Attendance:** Regular attendance at all classes and events is essential for a good education. Families will be contacted after 2 consecutive absences. Excessive, unexcused absences throughout the year may result in your student being required to repeat the current year. Make-up work will be assigned for each absence and should be completed for the following week.

Children should arrive for class on time. Class starts promptly at 10:00am. Outside doors are locked at 10:10 for security reasons. Late arrivals may not be admitted.

Children will not be released from class before 11:15 dismissal, barring an extenuating circumstance.

**Mass:** Regular Mass participation is crucial to your child's proper understanding of the material presented to them in class. Mass is the heart of a child's growth in the love and practice of their faith. When children see that Mass is an important part of your life, they will make it important in their life. Our classes are scheduled between Masses to make attendance convenient.

Regular Mass times- Saturdays 4:00pm Sundays 7:30, 9:00, and 11:30am

**Discipline:** Ordinary discipline problems will be addressed in the classroom by the catechist. Continued disruptive behavior will be sent to the Director's office. A second dismissal to the Director's office will result in parent contact. A third offense may result in the in a student being released from the program to be taught at home with the support and assistance of the Director.

**Conduct:** Students are not permitted to use cell phones for any reason while in class. It is best to keep these items at home. They will be taken away and kept in the Director's office if they are used during class. If a parent needs to get a hold of their child, please call the office.

**Dress code:** Students are expected to dress neatly and suitably for class. Shirts, tops, and dresses should have sleeves and a modest neckline. Pajamas, midriff bearing tops, or very short shorts or dresses are not acceptable. Cleats and sports equipment are not to be worn in the building.

**Registration:** Registration for summer and fall sessions begins in spring and continues until class begins.

New students must fill out registration forms and return to the office along with Baptismal certificates if not baptized at St. Theresa's. Families also need to be registered in the parish.

Returning families whose personal information remains the same may re-register over the phone or by e-mail.

**Fees:** Registration fees cover expenses such as textbooks, classroom supplies, and equipment. Sacrament fees help to cover the cost of additional clergy and retreats. Current fees are listed in the office and on the website. Per the Diocese of Trenton, no student will be denied religious education due to an inability to pay. We have options for payment plans, reduced fees, and scholarships. Contact the office for assistance. Fees are due at the time of registration. For families opting to re-register over by phone or e-mail, fees may be mailed or dropped off at the parish office. Checks are made payable to St. Theresa's Church.

**Sacrament prep:** Children are prepared for the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and first Reconciliation during their second year of formation. Students will not be offered reception of these sacraments during their first year no matter their grade in school. Both sacraments will be celebrated in spring of the student's second year.

If a student is behind in sacraments, prep classes will be arranged to bring them current. Depending on enrollment and need, this may be an age-appropriate class with other students at their level or one on one meetings. Reconciliation may be celebrated by any baptized Catholic once the student fully understands the sacrament. First Eucharist is received in spring of the child's second year.

Confirmation is celebrated in the fall of 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade come for regular religious education classes then return in September of 9<sup>th</sup> grade for retreat and prep before being confirmed in October. Students must be in attendance for at least three consecutive years and attend all required classes and retreats before being eligible for the sacrament. Catch-up prep will be provided to students that have missed years. The timing of their sacrament will be at the discretion of the Director and Pastor.

Homeschooling is not an option for first Communion and Confirmation sacrament years.

**Class cancellation:** At times it may be necessary to cancel class due to weather, catechist availability, or other unforeseen issues. Cancellations for weather will be made by 8:00am. All cancellation announcements will be made via Flocknote, the St. Theresa's website, AND the St. Theresa's Religious Education Facebook page.

**Class materials:** Grades 1 through 8 use Loyola Press, *Finding God*. An online version of the textbook, support materials, games, reviews, and make-up work are all available on the publishers website. Some material may require you to set up an account for login. An access code is printed in the front of your child's textbook.

<https://www.loyolapress.com/faith-formation/finding-god/finding-god-2013/parents-and-students>

The early childhood (4 to 5yr olds) class uses Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, *Seeds*. Each lesson is dated and uses that week's Gospel as a base for the lesson.

<http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/>

In addition to *Finding God*, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class will use the program *Decision Point* for further Confirmation prep.

All grades from 1-8 will periodically use RCL Benzinger *Family Life*. This program covers Catholic social issues relevant today. Parent Connection booklets are available for you to review and discuss as a family.

**Arrival and dismissal:** Students should be brought to the gathering space of the Faith Formation building upon arrival. If their catechist has arrived, they may go to class. No student should be alone in the classroom at any time. There is no parking in the circle in front of the building. This is a high traffic area between Masses and should be kept clear for the safety of the children and families walking to and from Mass.

Parents should report to the child's classroom at dismissal for sign-out. The front doors are unlocked around 11:10 and parents may proceed to the classroom once the hall monitor on duty has given the OK.

**Special needs:** We make every attempt to engage all children in our program. For this to work, we need know how best to teach your child. If he or she has any special needs please let the Director know and a plan can be put together. The plan may include inclusion in an age-appropriate classroom, adaptive programs from Loyola Press, or homeschool with support of the Director. This information is not shared outside of our program.

**Confessions:** Regular reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation is important. Confessions are heard in the Faith Formation building for all students in grades 3 to 8 during Lent. All baptized students are expected to participate.

**Catechists and volunteers:** All volunteers and employees are required to submit to a background check and fingerprinting. They are also required to attend Virtus Safe Environment training prior to ever being around our students. Volunteers wear an ID badge with proof of this training at all times while in the building.