

The Parish Community of
Saint John Vianney and St. Thomas the Apostle
Parish Religious Education Program

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Office hours:

Monday: 10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Wednesday: 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Thursday: 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm

2021-2022

PREP

Handbook

September 2021

Welcome to a new year of Religious Education! After a very long summer of planning, emailing, and other behind the scenes things, I'm looking forward to working with the families in our parishes in new ways and seeing the students sharing and growing in their faith together in person.

It is important to remember that parents are "*the primary educators in the faith.*" (General Directory for Catechesis, 255). At your child's baptism, you accepted:

"... the responsibility of training [your child] in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him or her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor." (Rite of Baptism, 109.)

But you are not alone in this responsibility! You have a supportive faith community, and you were promised that your:

"sisters and brothers in the family of God will...support and encourage these parents through...prayers and examples" (Rite of Baptism, 110.)

Religious education is an important facet of parish life, and we are here to support you in the faith formation of your children and create a partnership between your family and the parish.

We ask families to take an interest in what their children are learning, and take them to Mass each week. The program we are using this year is based around the readings at Sunday Mass, and all grades are studying the same readings and themes at age-appropriate levels. This can lead to fruitful conversation tying together their lessons from Saturday and their experience at Mass on Sunday!

On an administrative note, please take a moment to familiarize yourselves with our policies and to make note of important dates. Please note that our policies regarding attendance, arrival and dismissal, food in the classrooms, etc. have not changed. **Masks, however, will be universally required at our programs until further notice.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Religious Education Office. Office hours and contact information are listed on the front of this handbook.

Rev. Benjamin J. Williams
Pastor

Alyssa Carolan
Director of Religious Education
& Youth Ministry

Program Policies for Grades K-8

Attendance:

The Religious Education Program is developed in such a way that consistent attendance is essential for adequate instruction to take place.

- Each student is allowed a maximum of five (5) absences for the year.
- Any parent whose child misses six (6) or more classes must meet with the director.
- After each absence, a note of explanation must be presented to the teacher.
- Because of the importance of each grade level, any child who misses part of a year or a year of formal religious instruction will have to repeat the year which they missed.

Cancellation of Classes:

If class needs to be cancelled due to bad weather, information will be posted by 7:00 am. Please do not call the office. There will be 2 places to get the closing information:

- The official St. Thomas the Apostle & St. John Vianney Facebook page
- Flocknote text and email alerts

Arrival and Dismissal from Class:

Students must arrive at White Rock School five minutes before the program begins at 8:30, entering and leaving the school by the front door ONLY. Students and teachers assemble in the Cafeteria to begin the day with prayer at 8:30 before going to their classrooms. Parents are invited to participate in the prayers before they depart!

At the end of class, teachers will dismiss the students to the Cafeteria to meet their parents. Do not park and wait at the front door area. 6, 7 and 8 grade parents park on White Rock Boulevard. There is no parking allowed on Francine Drive.

Tardiness:

We strongly encourage parents to make sure their children are on time for class. A late student disrupts the entire class. Excessive tardiness will accrue and count toward 1 missed class. Arriving to class more than 1/2 hour late (i.e. after 9:00 am) will incur an absence for that day.

Early Dismissal from Class:

Early dismissal from class necessitates a written letter of verification, signed and dated by the legal guardian. No note = no dismissal from class. The parent/guardian must come into the school lobby and sign the student out from class. A student must be in a class a minimum of 45 minutes to be given credit for class attendance (i.e. until 9:15 am). Less than 45 minutes does not constitute a class session. Please urge coaches to adhere to our schedule. We need everyone's cooperation.

Classroom Policies:

- Homework is sometimes given; we ask parents to check in each week with their child.
- While it is nice to share birthdays and holidays with other children in the class, please do not send in snacks of any kind. Food allergies are common.
- Phones and other electronics should be left home.
- We are guests in White Rock School, and students should be respectful; this includes not touching items in the classrooms, picking up trash, and not bringing food to class.
- **Masks must be worn at all times while at White Rock School, regardless of vaccination status.**

Discipline

We are very proud of the conduct of our STA/SJV religious education students. They show a real respect for each other, their teachers, and their classroom environment. Should a problem ever arise in this area, the director will contact the parents.

Special Activities:

Throughout the school year, classes may be participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Stations of the Cross, and other activities that may be added as they arise. Please check the calendar when your child's class will be required to attend these activities and note if they are in another location other than White Rock School.

Sacrament Program Policy:

The students in the 2nd Grade will be preparing for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Please check the calendar for dates as well as the separate Second Grade flyer. The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in High School. In order for a student to be eligible for First Eucharist, two years of sacrament preparation are required. In order for a student to be eligible to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, successful completion of the Elementary Religious Education Program (Levels One - Eight), regular attendance at our High School Religious Program (Grades Nine and Ten), service projects, and a sophomore retreat are required. If your child attends a Catholic high school, it is still necessary to register in the parish for the two-year Confirmation Program; Confirmation is done in the home parish, not in the school.

Teaching Touching Safety:

The Paterson Diocese has mandated a training program for children and young people pertaining to personal safety. This includes information about improper touching and relationships. The Diocese utilizes the Virtus "Teaching Touching Safety" program for children in Parish Religious Education Programs. The material consists of lessons that are age appropriate and will be taught each year to 1st and 4th graders. Information will be sent home with your child when the training dates are approaching.

We thank the principal and teachers of White Rock School for their cooperation in sharing their classrooms with our students!

Our program is staffed by capable and conscientious volunteers. These teachers are trained and provided with ongoing educational opportunities at both the parish and diocesan level. Our teachers and aides have met all the requirements of the Paterson Diocese for youth protection practices, Affirming our Integrity. We couldn't do this without them!

"The faith is passed on 'around the family table,' in ordinary conversation, in the language that persevering love alone knows how to speak." –Pope Francis