

# St. Joseph the Worker Roman Catholic Parish

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Frackville, PA



## Religious Education Handbook

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# Introduction

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Pope Francis calls all of us to the “New Evangelization”. He says that the challenge of catechesis is “ to take awareness of the merciful love of the Father to our brothers; to truly become, ourselves, instruments of salvation for our brothers; and to show others how to meet and follow Christ.” Our religious education program is one way we answer that call to bring others to Christ. The specific objectives of this program are:

- To teach the Catholic Faith in a loving atmosphere
- To develop in a person a healthy and mature relationship with God, others, and oneself
- To help young people to worship God through prayer, the Sacraments, and the Mass
- To help young people to serve the needs of others
- To develop Christ-like attitudes in facing the positive and negative aspects of life

Dear Parent:

Our modern world presents many problems and difficulties which threaten family life. We are keenly aware of the tremendous responsibility that you assume as a parent. We know that you want the best for your children.

In a world of contradictory values, young people need support and encouragement in order to develop into mature, responsible Catholic adults. As a parent, you are the first person who can give witness to the values and the attitude of Jesus Christ. This task extends from infancy to adulthood. It is not finished at your child's reception of Confirmation. As the more concrete concerns of the adolescent years emerge, you have an even more serious obligation to provide for your child's spiritual development. The goal of the religious education program is to assist you with this formation process.

Religious education programs for the youth of a parish help to proclaim and live out the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. This demands a parish's best efforts of time, talent, and treasure. Such programs should be organized and operated to support and supplement, not replace, the religious teaching and up-bringing provided by a child's parents - they who are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Therefore, it is imperative that parents not only recognize the importance of their child's religious formation and instruction, but also take an active part in the program designed to assist them in their task as Catholic/Christian parents.

Our CCD program is dedicated to teaching your children and it assists parents in their role as teachers. We want to help the youth of our parish to know, love, and serve God and their neighbor. Therefore, the philosophy of this program is to motivate these students to live God's plan by word and work as true Christians.

## ***Admission Policy***

The Frackville CCD program is open to all children of our parish, presently in grades pre-K through 8,. The local pastor and the director of the program can approve special considerations.

# Family Information

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## ***1. CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) Mission Statement***

The goal of the CCD Ministry of St. Joseph the Worker is to lead our parish children to a relationship with God in the Catholic tradition. Our CCD program provides classes for children of all abilities. Through a devoted and trained community of volunteers, our students come to experience the fullness of our Catholic faith. The CCD program, with the help of our parents, empowers each student to achieve their potential as active, educated participants in the Body of Christ.

## ***2. REGISTRATION***

CCD families must be registered in the program. New registrations are accepted at any time. Baptismal certificates must be presented at the time of registration. Tuition must accompany the registration form. Parents will be required to provide emergency contact information and are reminded to notify the DRE or teacher if contact information should change. When moving, please notify the parish office of the last day your child will be attending.

### **Tuition:**

- Registration fees: \$40 for one child, \$60 for two children, and \$75 for three or more children. There is no tuition for pre-school.
- Tuition covers the cost of each student's text books, folder, classroom and art supplies, activity days, facility utilities, resource materials and other miscellaneous items during the year. It also helps to defray building maintenance.
- A financial concern should not prevent you from registering your child(ren) in our program. Payment plans are available. If further assistance is needed, please contact the Director of Religious Education.

## ***3. SESSION SCHEDULE***

The first, third, fourth (and fifth when applicable) Sunday of each month beginning on September 13, 2015 through May 1, 2016 from 6:00 pm until 7:30 pm. Please consult the detailed calendar regarding schedule and times.

## ***4. ARRIVAL***

- All students are to report to Annunciation B.V.M. church by 5:50. They should sit in the pews with their class and their teacher(s).

- Students should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the beginning of each session since sessions begin promptly. Lateness interferes with a child's progress and is disruptive to everyone.
- CCD classes will begin with announcements and an opening prayer. Children will be dismissed from the church to their classrooms.
- For safety, all exterior doors will be locked when classes begin.
- If, due to some unforeseen emergency, your child arrives late, you must call the DRE and request entry through the Line Street entrance to the school building. The door will be unlocked for you and the child should proceed directly to their classroom.

### ***5. DISMISSAL***

- All students will be dismissed at 7:30 pm through the Line Street doors of the school.
- Parents will get out of their cars and come into the building to pick up children.
- For safety reasons you must turn off your car while picking up your child.
- Students may not wait for late parents outside the building. If you are delayed, your child(ren) will wait for you in the school cafeteria.

### ***6. EMERGENCY CLOSING***

- On occasion, concern for the safety of our families requires that the Director make a decision to cancel a scheduled session or event due to inclement weather.
- Cancellations will be announced on the *Frackville Catholic Youth* FaceBook page. Individual teachers will also reach out to the parents of their students by email, text, or phone calls.
- When in doubt, call the Director of Religious Education at 570-874-2093 or 570-617-3208 (cell phone).

### ***7. EMERGENCY EVACUATION***

- In the event of an emergency in the building requiring evacuation, teachers will escort their children through the nearest safe exit. They will walk, as a class, to St. Ann church on Line Street.
- Teachers will begin calling parents using the emergency card index.
- Students will be dismissed from St. Ann church to their parents. Parents will need to enter the church and connect with the teacher before the child is dismissed.

### ***8. ILLNESS DURING CLASS***

Should your child become ill during class, parents will be called immediately. Parents should enter the school through the Line Street door and a program volunteer will open the door upon the parent's arrival. Should the illness (or an injury) require immediate medical or professional assistance, 911 will be called.

## **9. ATTENDANCE**

Thirty hours of religious instruction are required by the Diocese of Allentown, Office of Catholic Education. It is also recommended that a child repeat the level if frequent absences occur (10-15%). Our attendance policy therefore is:

- When a child misses a class, the parent should supervise the completion of the missed lesson. Please contact your CCD teacher to find out what lesson your child missed.
- If long-term absence occurs due to illness or a family situation, parents must contact the Director of Religious Education to arrange a suitable way for their child to complete grade level requirements.
- Children must meet attendance requirements and complete all their assigned work before they are promoted to the next grade level.

Students are expected to attend all classes. Parents are asked to call or email their child's catechist if they are going to be absent. The teacher will relay the material that will be covered in class and the expectations for make-up work in regards to the absence. The child is expected to bring that completed work to their next class. If a child has three or less absences, there is no reason for concern. If a child misses 4 or more classes, the administration will review the reasons for the absences and the child's performance in class and a recommendation will be made to the pastor regarding the child's ability to advance to the next grade or the child's need to repeat that grade level work. Attendance at class and mastery of the material is key to sacramental prep. It is important to note that, while not actually receiving a sacrament in grades 1,3,5,6 and 7, the students are still preparing for their next sacrament. Grade 1 provides an important foundation for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist in second grade. Grades 3 through 7 are fundamental in regards to Confirmation prep. Every child is expected to attend CCD classes. Home schooling is not permitted during a sacramental prep year (2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Confirmation – 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades).

## **10. FAMILY ROLES**

Most of our catechists are parents who work and are busy with family responsibilities. They have spent time preparing their classrooms, their lessons, and their hearts. In order to demonstrate support of these dedicated members of our parish, we ask the parents to observe the following guidelines:

### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Send child to all sessions on time
- Send child to all sessions prepared for the session – book, folder, notebook (where applicable), and pen/pencil
- *Check child's folder/workbook every week for assignments, notices and calendar updates.*
- Attend opening sessions and all required meetings.

- Alert your child's catechist to any medical conditions or allergies that may need to be monitored.
- Support your child's participation in CCD. Encourage your child to have a positive attitude; monitor the completion of homework assignments; and stay in touch with your child's teacher.
- Encourage your child's participation in parish youth activities and Diocesan youth events that our parish offers.
- **Participate in Sunday Mass and the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly with your child.**

### **Student Responsibilities**

- **Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.**
- Cooperate with the catechist in order to maintain a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Participate fully and appropriately in your group's activities.
- Treat others and the property of others with respect.
- Please note, the following is unacceptable behavior:
  - Disrespect for any adult by word or action.
  - Leaving the premises without permission from the catechist.
  - Excessive talking or calling out in class.
  - Fighting, bullying, and teasing.
  - Defacing books, desks, walls, bathroom, etc.
  - Disregard for classroom rules

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Students are prohibited from using cell phones at any time during the CCD session.

### **Disciplinary Policy**

Occasionally there may be situations where disciplinary actions must be taken. They include but are not limited to:

- Disruptive or inappropriate behavior in class
- Unforeseen personality conflicts with the catechist or group members

### **Steps to resolve conflict:**

- First, the catechist discusses the situation and possible solutions with their Director of Religious Education.
- Second, if the problem persists, catechists or the Director of Religious Education will contact the parents.

- Third, if the problem continues, the Director of Religious Education will meet with parents, the student and the catechist, to best resolve the situation.

## **11. COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF**

We encourage all parents to discuss any suggestions or concerns with the Grade Level Catechists and/or the Director of Religious Education.

All Catechists have been trained in Protecting God’s Children and are participating in the required skills development/catechetical formation required by the Diocese of Allentown. The Catechists are volunteers and we encourage parents to support their child’ catechist in every way possible.

The CCD administration can be contacted using any of the means listed below:

<b>Grade/Position</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Cell</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Director of Religious Education (DRE)</b>	Carolyn Tenaglia	570-874-2093	570-617-3208	<a href="mailto:carolyntenaglia@yahoo.com">carolyntenaglia@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Pre-K (ages 3 &amp; 4)</b>	Jennifer Bennett	570-205-3990	570-205-3990	<a href="mailto:Jsp2181@gmail.com">Jsp2181@gmail.com</a>
<b>Kindergarten</b>	Siobhan Walsh	570-449-7229	Same	<a href="mailto:Siob07@yahoo.com">Siob07@yahoo.com</a>
<b>First Grade</b>	Dawn Evert	570-874-2668	570-449-1414	<a href="mailto:Ozzman13@verizon.net">Ozzman13@verizon.net</a>
<b>Second Grade</b>	Larissa Borzok	570-590-5659	Same	<a href="mailto:larissaborzok@hotmail.com">larissaborzok@hotmail.com</a>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade/Position</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Cell</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Third Grade</b>	Jami Zelwalk	570-874-0298	570-617-1259	<a href="mailto:Jami.zelwalk@gmail.com">Jami.zelwalk@gmail.com</a>
<b>Fourth Grade</b>	Nan Lauta	570-590-0386		<a href="mailto:Nlauta@hotmail.com">Nlauta@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Fifth Grade</b>	Carolyn Tenaglia	570-874-2093	570-617-3208	<a href="mailto:carolyntenaglia@yahoo.com">carolyntenaglia@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Sixth Grade</b>	Kathi Blasser	717-265-5332	Same	<a href="mailto:Kath0718@comcast.net">Kath0718@comcast.net</a>
<b>Seventh Grade</b>	Melissa Perneta Liz Roberts	570-874-1875 570-874-3566	570-985-8653 570-205-9332	<a href="mailto:kperneta@ptd.net">kperneta@ptd.net</a> <a href="mailto:Jnl2003@verizon.net">Jnl2003@verizon.net</a>
<b>Eighth Grade/Confirmation</b>	Eileen Barlow	570-462-4334	570-590-4332	<a href="mailto:nannyb@ptd.net">nannyb@ptd.net</a>

## **12. SACRAMENTAL INFORMATION**

Parents are expected to follow Diocese of Allentown's policy with regard to sacramental preparation and celebration with their children. This policy will be explained more fully at the parent sessions held in conjunction with each sacrament.

- Registration in the parish is required.
- Since catechesis involves much more than classroom preparation, *the most important preparation is active participation in the Sunday Liturgy (Mass)*.

### **First Reconciliation and First Eucharist**

Two years of preparation are required for the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist. Guidelines put forth by the Diocese of Allentown concerning baptized children specify that the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be received prior to First Eucharist, a sacrament of initiation.

- Reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist traditionally occurs in Grade 2, called First Communion.

### **First Communion Requirements**

The expectation for each child preparing for the celebration of this sacrament is:

- Must be baptized.
- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.
- Have completed two consecutive years of religious formational instruction.
- Have a satisfactory attendance record.
- Have an appreciation and understanding of the sacrament appropriate for the age level and ability.

The expectation for parents who choose to have their children celebrate this sacrament is:

- Be registered in the parish.
- Know and support the teaching of the church.
- Be personally involved in your child's preparation by attending parent meetings and other scheduled activities.

### **Confirmation**

The Sacrament of Confirmation is also a sacrament of initiation, which requires two years of preparation. Therefore, candidates in Confirmation Prep begins in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and continues until the students receive the sacrament in their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

### **Confirmation Requirements**

It is the expectation that candidates who wish to receive the sacrament of Confirmation:

- Must be baptized.
- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass with their families.

- Have a satisfactory attendance record.
- Complete a Confirmation formation program; attend a retreat (at the discretion of the Confirmation Prep Coordinator), offer 10 hours of service to the parish and community and work closely with their sponsor.

It is expected that parents of candidates preparing for Confirmation:

- Be registered in the parish.
- Participate weekly in Sunday Mass.
- Know and support the teachings of the Church.
- Be personally involved in the preparation through attendance at parent meetings.
- Guide the candidate in the selection of a sponsor.
- Oversee the candidate's fulfillment of requirements.

### **Sponsor**

The role of the sponsor is to help the candidate throughout his/her life to fulfill his/her baptismal promises. The sponsor should be one whose positive influence on the candidate is permanent and strong; hence it is not just an honorary title, but a responsibility to set a good Catholic example.

- In conformity with the new *Code of Canon Law*, *parents may not be sponsors*.
- Sponsors must be at least 16 years old.
- Sponsors must be Catholics who have been confirmed, received Eucharist and practice the Faith. “Practicing” means, in the case of an adult, registered in a parish, frequenting the Sacraments, regularly attending Mass and in a valid marriage.
- Sponsors must have a Letter of Eligibility from the pastor of their present parish if the sponsor is not from The Roman Catholic Parishes of Frackville.
- Encourage a sharing of faith between Sponsors and Candidates.

## **Catechist Information**

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The parish family of St. Joseph the Worker, solemnly commit ourselves to the following:

- To provide regular prayer and worship opportunities for students and their families.
- To offer guidance and support in preparing your children for Sacraments according to his/her need and age level.
- To foster a Catholic identity in each student through guided religious instruction, worship experiences, and service activities.

### **1. RESPONSIBILITIES of CATECHISTS**

The ministry of Catechist is a vocation, an interior call of the Holy Spirit. Commissioned by the Church, catechists participate in a divine calling to teach as Jesus did. Catechists need to be practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the church.

- Catechist must be over 18 years of age.

- Actively participate in the Sunday Liturgy (Mass).
- Meet legal requirements established by the Diocese of Allentown – i.e. having PA Criminal Record Check and PA Child Abuse History Clearance forms on file with the Parish.
- Attended a Safe Environment Program (Protecting God's children).
- Attend all grade level meetings.
- Follow guidelines and curriculum set by the Parish CCD office and the Diocese of Allentown.

## CCD Curriculum

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All aspects of Catholic life and practice are covered between the years Pre-Kindergarten and 8th grade. Not every element of Church teaching can be covered at each grade level. By the time a student has experienced all grade levels; he or she will have been formed in the faith and will know that learning about the faith is a lifelong task.

### Central Theme by Grade Level:

Pre-Kindergarten: I am a child of God

Kindergarten: Creation and the ABC's of Christian Faith

First Grade: Creation, Trinity and Baptism

Second Grade: Reconciliation and First Communion

Third Grade: Church Community

Fourth Grade: Ten Commandments and Beatitudes

Fifth Grade: Sacraments and Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Sixth Grade: Salvation History

Seventh Grade: Jesus Christ, Discipleship and Confirmation

Eighth Grade: Confirmation and Morality

## Supplemental Activities

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Catechists, parish staff, and parish volunteers are committed to developing a comprehensive youth ministry program for our parish. These activities are intended to supplement the faith development fostered in the classroom and the home. Parents are encouraged to promote

participation in these activities and are always welcome to become involved. Current offerings include:

- Candy sale at the annual Frackville Pumpkin Festival – all proceeds benefit the Frackville Food Bank. Details will be provided through parish social media, bulletins, and the Frackville Catholic Youth Facebook page.
- Birthright Giving Tree – parish children create special gift tags to adorn parish Christmas trees. Parishioners take the tags and replace with a donation of baby items to support our local birthright and needy families. Information will be provided by CCD teachers to each student.
- Parish Christmas Pageant – traditionally held the last Sunday of Advent, the children illustrate the Nativity Story by portraying key players and providing musical accompaniment and a chorus. Practices occur following CCD classes – beginning in late October. Details will be shared when available.
- Soup-er Bowl Sunday – Children accept donations at all Masses Super Bowl Weekend. Donations are given to the Frackville Food Bank.
- Allelu! – Liturgy of the Word for Children is offered every Sunday at the 10:00 Mass. This program is intended for children in pre-K thru the reception of First Holy Communion.
- Children’s Choir – For any parish child who enjoys singing. Practices occur on “CCD Sundays” (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays) from 5:00 – 6:00 at Annunciation BVM church. Children in the CCD program simply remain for their CCD instruction at the conclusion of the practice. Children’s Choir sings at the 11:15 Mass on the last Sunday of each month.
- Altar Servers – Children in grades 3 and above – who have received Communion – are invited to participate. An Altar Server class is formed each school year and typically consists of four one-hour classes. Information with details will be provided through church bulletins, parent update handouts, and the Frackville Catholic Youth FaceBook page.
- Children’s Bulletins – available each week in all of our churches. These bulletins contain an age-appropriate explanation of the Gospel message each week. There are two versions – one for ages 3 – 6 and another for ages 7 through 12.

- Vacation Bible School – a week full of fun and faith formation. Held each June on the grounds of the Annunciation B.V.M. church. Each year, VBS has an exciting theme and includes crafts, singing, dancing, bible skits, games, snacks, and imagination experiments. Older parish children can assist as crew leaders or can get involved with the decorations and preparations in the months leading up to VBS.