

St. Agnes Parish

*55 South Avenue
Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716
Telephone 732-291-2035*

Religious Education Program Guidelines 2011-2012

Pastor: Rev. William Dunlap

Director of Religious Education: Mrs. Barbara Hardiman



*Your child is registered in class _____ Room Number _____
Teacher's Name _____*

ST AGNES REP PROGRAM - GENERAL INFORMATION

PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

The philosophy and mission of the St. Agnes Religious Education program is intended to be Christ centered, first and foremost, helping to bring each child to a better understanding of their relationship with God and His mission for all of us. This program aids the parents in the role as the primary educator of their child(ren). We expect each family to foster an understanding and appreciation of the rich sacramental life of the Church by participating fully in liturgical celebrations. We believe that children learn about God's love through the example of family and by attending Mass regularly to hear the Gospel proclaimed and to receive Jesus in their hearts.

Recognizing the family as the primary and most important faith example and teacher of their child(ren), we are committed to providing real and consistent support for all families in the faith formation of their child(ren). The classroom experience is meant to enhance, not to replace the practice of our faith; therefore our classrooms will seek to instill an age appropriate understanding of liturgy and traditional prayer experiences. Through the study of Church teachings and history, we aim to help each child not only to grow in faith, but to recognize the Body of Christ in their everyday world.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The family of each student in the Religious Education Program must be registered members of the St Agnes Parish. All new students at the time of their registration are required to provide a photo copy of their Baptismal certificate if not baptized at St Agnes Parish. Those children who have received First Penance and First Eucharist must also provide a photocopy of these certificates if they were not received at St Agnes Parish. *Any student presented for admission without sufficient documented catechetical history, shall be evaluated and placed accordingly in a class.*

A \$100.00 fee for one student, \$130.00 for two students and \$150.00 for three or more students is charged in order to defer the cost of books and materials used for instructional purposes. Other fees for sacramental preparation (First Eucharist and Confirmation) will be charged separately.

TIME AND PLACE

Classes are held for grades 1 thru 4 on Tuesday **or** Thursday afternoons from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. and for grades 5 thru 7 on Wednesday afternoon from 4:00 pm to 5:15pm in the Mother Teresa Regional Elementary School building. All students are expected to be on time and ready to begin class promptly. All students must respect the property and items in the classroom in which they meet.

DROP OFF AND PICKING UP STUDENTS

For the safety of all students and pedestrians, it is the parent/guardians responsibility to bring their children to the cafeteria in the school building. The Parking lot in the rear of the school building and the Parish parking lot near the Church will be open for parking. Entry to the building will be thru the main entrance doors in the front of the building. This door will be locked 15 minutes after the class arrival time. Access to the building for any reason after this time shall be thru the main entrance and visitors are required to report to the Director's Office. Students are to be picked up at dismissal time in the cafeteria. Any student walking home or going home with someone other than their parent or guardian must have a note.

ATTENDANCE

Classes will begin promptly and attendance is recorded each day classes are scheduled. Four absences during the year will be considered grounds for retaining a student at the same grade level. Parents are asked to contact the REP office (telephone 732-291-2035) concerning absences and an absent note must be submitted to the catechist upon the student's return. No unregistered children, friend or family member may attend religious education class as a guest of the student.

SUPPLIES

Each child will receive a religion textbook for his/her appropriate grade. Grades 2 and 8 will also receive a Sacramental textbook in preparation of their respective sacraments. Book replacements will be made only after a replacement fee of \$25 has been paid. Each child is required to bring their textbook and Bible (Bible required for grades 5, 6, 7 and 8) to class each week, in addition to a pocket folder to carry correspondence, class work and testing, plus a pencil for primary (grades 1 to 5) and a pen for middle school (grades 6 to 8).

INSTRUCTIONAL

The Religious Education Program at St. Agnes Parish consists of class meetings from September to May. The classes follow the approved textbook and the Diocesan Guidelines for Elementary Religion Curriculum for the Diocese of Trenton. Each class begins and ends with a prayer. All assignments or projects are to be completed fully and on time. It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to take an active interest in their child's work and to see that assignments/projects are completed on time. All testing should be signed by a parent and returned to the catechist.

PROGRESS REPORTS

In order to keep the parent(s)/guardian(s) informed on their child's progress within the program, progress reports will be distributed twice a year: generally after the first 15 classes and at the last class of the year. These reports are to be signed by the parents and returned to the catechist the following week by the student.

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

Prayer is communicating with God. Therefore, an essential element of the program is teaching our students the need for prayer and how to pray. It is also important for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid their child in learning common prayers of the Church so that the child will be able to participate in the prayers of the Catholic community. We also encourage the parents of our students to provide an opportunity for the students to pray together as a family in the home as well as in the larger faith community, which is the Catholic Church. We also stress the importance of the Bible in the life of the followers of Jesus. The Bible, as well as the tradition of the Church, is a source of knowledge of the Lord. We ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid our catechists by encouraging in their child a love and respect for the Bible.

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Throughout the year, special celebrations of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) and the Mass are scheduled. Your participation demonstrates to your child the importance of Christ in your family life. Information regarding these celebrations will be sent home with the students and will be published in the parish bulletin.

THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

The Mass, the Eucharistic celebration, is the source and summit of the whole Church. Parents are encouraged to attend Mass with their children in order to reinforce and put into practice the faith and formal instruction presented in the classroom. Religious education classes are not meant to be a substitute for attendance at Mass. Please refer to the St. Agnes Parish bulletin to determine when we celebrate the Eucharist for your convenience in fulfilling this obligation. Likewise, we encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide an opportunity for their child to frequent the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) once they have received this sacrament for the first time.

FOOD PANTRY

In keeping with our Parish programs, we will continue to help those who are in need. Our food pantry is also in need of our help. Students and their families are invited to participate by helping St. Vincent de Paul Society with providing items such as non-perishable foods, baby products, personal hygiene products, paper goods, cleaning supplies and supermarket gift cards to name a few. While this is not mandatory, we appreciate any donations your child can drop off.

ST AGNES CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

All members of the St Agnes Parish community are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner at all times. As a community, the St Agnes Parish Religious Education Program strives to set a Christian example for all. Parents, students, catechists, staff and volunteers should remember to conduct themselves accordingly at all parish functions and at any event where they are representing the parish.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner, which promotes the dignity and respect of all persons in the school community. Mutual respect is essential to the Catholic community of St Agnes Parish Religious Education Program. The inability to follow rules and procedures results in a disruption of the learning environment.

In the building students are expected to:

- Walk in an orderly manner through the halls and on the stairs. Running is strictly forbidden.
- Not wear roller-sneakers, roller blades or athletic foot-wear in the building at any time
- Not bring weapons of any kind
- Only use authorized portions of the building

In the classroom students are expected to:

- Abide by the rules of the Catechist and classroom Aides
- Respect the property of the classroom
- Respect all members of the parish community and visitors
- Be courteous in speech and manners
- Arrive to class on time
- Use appropriate language
- No chewing gum or candy

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Any violation concerning the possession or use of alcohol or drugs is a major infraction. If it becomes clear that a student is guilty of selling drugs, or recruiting for drug abuse, the student is guilty of a crime and the appropriate law enforcement agency will be notified for possible legal action.

Students who choose not to follow the policies and procedures, or who do not respect the dignity and rights of others will be referred to the Pastor and the Director of Religious Education for disciplinary action.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of any electric device during class, including cell phones, ipods and beepers is prohibited. This policy will be strictly enforced.

FOOD IN THE CLASSROOM

Unauthorized student supplied food, including beverages of any kind, is strictly prohibited in the classroom. All celebrations that might include food must be approved by the Program Director in advance and any special dietary needs must be brought to the attention of the Catechist

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN WORKSHOPS

In order to aid parents or guardians as the primary teachers of the child, there will be mandatory parent workshops for those parents who have children registered in Grade 2 (Sacraments of Reconciliation - Penance- and First Holy Eucharist) and Grade 8 (Sacrament of Confirmation). There will be one workshop for each of these sacraments. (The schedule for these workshops can be found in the REP Calendar.)

These workshops are designed for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to increase their knowledge of the individual sacrament and to give information on how to assist their child in preparing for the Sacraments. Important information regarding the theology of the sacrament, as well as guidelines and necessary forms will be given only during these workshops. At least one Parent or guardian must attend each parental workshop given prior to the child's reception of each sacrament.

FIRST RECONCILIATION (PENANCE) and FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with diocesan directives, the reception of First Reconciliation precedes First Eucharist. The reception of these two sacraments occurs in the second grade.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Trenton that, in order for a child to receive these sacraments the child must be enrolled in a religious education program for one year prior to entering the sacramental preparation class. All students must have successfully completed the first-grade level in an approved religious education program in order to be admitted to the Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance) and First Holy Eucharist. The celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation takes place in the winter and First Eucharist takes place in the spring of the second grade. Parent(s)/guardian(s)/guardian(s) and catechists will take care that the students are properly instructed in the celebration of these sacraments.

Letters and forms will be provided concerning the procedures and policies for the celebration of these sacraments. It is important to return these forms on time. Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the preparation of these sacraments.

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS

In preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, students must attend all classes, attend the Confirmation Commitment Mass, Day of Recollection (retreat) and Reconciliation (Penance) Service, complete 30 hours of community service, Confirmation Journal, and complete administrative forms. All forms and fees required for the celebration of this sacrament must be returned on time and fully completed. The confirmandi are to choose a saint's name and a sponsor for Confirmation, according to canon law and diocesan directives concerning the celebration of this sacrament. This information will be provided at the parent(s)/guardian(s) workshop. The date for Confirmation is provided by the bishop of the diocese and is celebrated in the spring of the 8th grade. Details concerning the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be provided as the date approaches.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

In the event of severe weather, any information regarding school closing will be announced as soon as available on radio station WJLK 94.3 THE POINT, or log on to: www.shorestormwatch.com

ST AGNES REP PROGRAM
GENERAL INFORMATION ACKNOWLEDGEMENT PAGE
September 2011 – May 2012

As parents / Guardians for the following Student (s) we acknowledge that the St Agnes Religious Education Program has certain expectations from us as it relates to the Religious Education of our child(ren).

We understand the items and information described in the REP Guidelines and have discussed them with our Child(ren).

Date - _____

Child(ren) - _____ **GRADE -** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature - _____