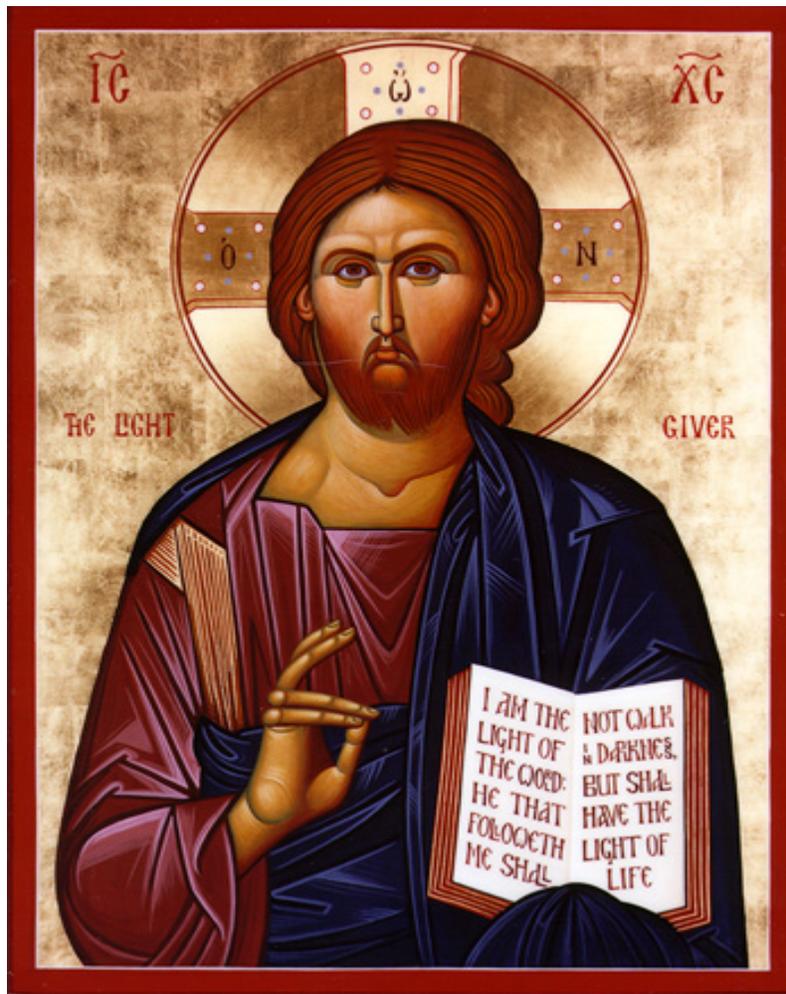


St. Cecilia Church

Parish School of Religion

2016-2017

PARENT HANDBOOK



† †

***SAINTECECILIA PARISH
WELCOMES YOU TO OUR***

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION

2016-2017

Pastor: Reverend Leo L. Connolly
Director, Parish School of Religion: Jim Martin
878-0133
jmartin@saintceciliachurch.org

Coordinator: Kyle Kowaleski
878-5353
kkowaleski@saintceciliachurch.org

***Religious Education Office
434 Norton Road
Columbus OH 43228-2698***



Class times:

PS/K: *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*
Grades 1-3: *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*

Grades 3 - 8

Sundays: 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.
Sundays: 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.
or Mondays 4:30 – 5:54 p.m.
or Mondays: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Sundays: 10:45 – 11:45 a.m.

Telephone numbers:

Religious Education Office (weekdays) 878-0133
School Office (during class time) 878-3555

THE MISSION OF OUR RELIGION PROGRAM IS FIVE-FOLD:

- 1) To proclaim the Gospel*
- 2) To help our children grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ*
- 3) To participate in efforts toward building up the Body of Christ*
- 4) To lead children to worship and prayer*
- 5) To motivate children to live the Christian life in service to others*

St. Cecilia's Religious Education Program is a Catholic environment where your children can learn about our Catholic faith. The full program includes:

- ✓ Basic truths of the faith and basic beliefs of the Catholic Church
- ✓ Prayers of the Catholic Tradition
- ✓ The Sacraments; their meaning, symbols and signs; their effect in our lives and the life of the Church
- ✓ A history of the Church; the marks of the Church; the structure of the Church, and the heroes of the Church (our "Saints")
- ✓ Sacred Scripture – both the Hebrew Scripture (Old Testament) and Christian Scripture (New Testament)
- ✓ Classroom instruction for the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation
- ✓ Primary instructional materials for the academic year
- ✓ A Religious Education Staff dedicated to the faith formation of each child.

Grade Levels: Religious Education Classes are available for preschoolers (must be at least 4 years old by September 1 of the enrollment year) through those entering eighth grade. It is recommended that children attend the same grade level in P.S.R. as they do in public school.

However, ALL students enrolling in our Sacramental Preparation grades (Second and Eighth) must have previously attended a full year of First or Seventh Grade Catholic Religious Instruction, respectively. This could be done in either a Catholic elementary school or a Parish School of Religion (PSR) Program. Any child who has not received the previous year's instruction will need to enroll in First or Seventh Grade in the fall, and complete Second or Eighth Grade next year.

SAINT CECILIA CHURCH
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION
FAMILY EXPECTATIONS

The parents (or guardians) of any students enrolling in our Religious Education Program are expected to be **registered, active and participating** members of the parish. Approval to attend the program may be granted to members of other Roman Catholic parishes, with the prior consent of the Pastors and/or Directors of Religious Education from both parishes.

As Sunday Mass is the center of our Catholic Faith and Parish Life, and therefore vital to the education and Christian formation of our children, P.S.R. families should make attending Mass their first priority. Students are asked to arrive in their classrooms on time, and remain in class the entire hour. **If a family situation occurs and there is a need for your child to arrive late or leave class early, please send a written notice on that day with your child.** Please, no unnecessary absences.

If there is a snow day or other emergency occurrence which results in the cancellation of our classes, the catechist (religion teacher) will inform the families who have students in his or her class.

Parent Information Session

Parents (or another family adult) are asked to attend a P.S.R. Parent Information Session on the first Sunday morning of PSR in the Fall in the Parish Center at 10:45 am. Students attending Sunday sessions will be introduced to their teachers and then proceed to their classrooms. Parents are asked to remain for a brief meeting.

If there is a split in custody agreement or another family situation in which another household is involved, and you wish the other person(s) to receive our family handbook and other information please provide us with the name and address.

Personal Items

As our classrooms are shared space with St. Cecilia School, we ask that no unnecessary personal items be brought to class. It is the responsibility of the child to take any items home which were brought to class each day. If an item is accidentally left in the classroom, please call 878-0133 from 9 am - 4 pm weekdays to inquire about it.

Please do not send your child to class with items of value. **And please, NO CELL PHONES.** If a child needs to place a call to family members, they may use the phone in the school office. Cell phones are a major distraction and temptation for students. If parents need to reach a child during class times, there is always someone in the school office to assist you. When necessary, please call the school office at 878-3555.

Sacramental Preparation Programs

It is expected that our families enrolling children in the religious education classes in our parish actively seek the Catholic sacraments for the children. Preparation programs offered here in the parish include:

Baptism when a child is an infant. Classes for expectant or new parents are held here most months. The classes are announced in the Sunday bulletins, or you may access the schedule for the current year on the parish website (www.saintceciliachurch.org). The class is free and open to any family registered in the parish, but pre-registration is required for the sessions (Please call the Parish Office at 878-5353 on weekdays 9:00am – 4:00pm).

For unbaptized children who are of grade school age, as well as those who were baptized in a different Christian faith, our parish offers the a family program held in the spring so that the child can receive the sacrament during the Easter Season. Pre-registration for the program is required. Please call 878-0133 to register.

For families with children in third grade or above who were baptized Catholic but have not celebrated the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, our parish offers a program called *Completing the Sacraments*. It is held in the fall and designed for the family to attend together, but does require pre-registration. Please call the Religious Education Office for dates and times for these classes.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The preparation programs for the first celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are given when a child is in second grade. Since the preparation for these sacraments is a two-year formation process, all children must have completed first grade religion classes before entering second grade.

Confirmation The Sacrament of Confirmation is generally celebrated in the eighth grade in the diocese of Columbus. To enroll in eighth grade P.S.R. a student should have attended seventh grade Catholic religious instruction. Information on Service Hours, Sponsors, and other facets of the program are given to the students as they begin their eighth grade year.

Snacks

The students in our Religious Education Program have just one hour a week of instruction. Because of this very short time, we feel that it is vital to devote as much of our time as possible to providing instruction. For this reason, we do not provide weekly snacks during our religion classes.

The Liturgical celebrations of Christmas and Easter will be celebrated in the classrooms and treats may be enjoyed at these times. Children in younger classes who wish to celebrate their birthdays with their class may bring individual treats to be handed out at the end of class to be enjoyed at home.

Parents are asked to please provide appropriate meals (breakfast on Sundays or supper on Mondays) so that your child will be able to function in class. If your child has a condition that would call for supplemental nourishment that would affect the time he or she is in class, please call us at 878-0133.

Reminder: Chewing gum is not permitted in the school or the church at any time.

POLICIES

SAFE ENVIRONMENT / BACKGROUND CHECK FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

All PSR staff and volunteers who have care and custody of youth must have on file a current Bureau of Criminal Investigation criminal background check and must attend the “Protecting God’s Children” workshop.

PARENTAL PARTICIPATION

Parents are welcome to participate and be present in all activities for children and youth sponsored by the parish. Parents participating in activities involving other children must first meet the Save Environment criteria listed above. While efforts should be made to create an environment where children and youth are comfortable expressing themselves, “...the right and duty of the parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.” (CCC 2221) Parents should never be denied the right to observe programs in which their children participate.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

As a means of communication with our families, P.S.R. student assessment and evaluations are sent home twice per year. Attendance records, class participation, student comprehension of materials and catechist comments are included.

We ask parents to review the information and discuss it with the children. Any concerns may be addressed to the catechist. Parents may see teachers at the end of class time, or contact them by email or phone. We ask that the mid-year reports be signed and returned to the teacher at the next class session.

CLASSROOM VISITORS

In an effort to provide the best religious education possible, it is important to keep the integrity of the classroom. For this reason, **we do not permit friends, relatives, or neighbors to accompany students to class.** Parents, as stated above, are always welcome.

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

It is the responsibility of the catechetical leader, any catechist, or parish staff to report immediately to the appropriate community agency any suspected case of child abuse and/or neglect. Normally the pastor or his representative should make the referral.

BULLYING

St. Cecilia’s catechetical program and staff members will not tolerate any bullying on parish grounds or at any program activity on or off site.

Bullying is a pattern of abuse over time and involves a child or youth being “picked on.” Bullying includes physical intimidation or assault; extortion; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Any staff member who observes or becomes aware of an act of bullying will take immediate, appropriate steps to intervene. If the staff member believes that his/her intervention has not resolved the matter, or if the bullying persists, he/she shall report to the pastor for further investigation.

It is expected that children or youth and their parents who become aware of an act of bullying on parish grounds or at any program activity on or off site to report it to the catechetical leader for further investigation. The catechetical leader will contact parents of the aggressor and the victim.

Consequences for a child or youth who bullies others could include counseling, parent conference, and/or suspension from activities depending on the results of the investigation.

SAFETY NOTES

Access to buildings: In the interests of the children's safety, we lock the exterior school doors during P.S.R. class time. Students entering late (or parents coming early) will need to be "buzzed in" at the front door. You may exit from any door at any time.

Emergency access to the building must be available at all times. So that emergency vehicles can quickly and easily enter the building should the need occur, families are asked NOT to park or idle in the circular drive immediately in front of the school. We ask that you please park all cars in the main lot when coming and going to PSR classes.

The Saint Cecilia Parish Complex is a drug-free, weapons-free environment. More information on this policy may be found on the parish website.

In support of our parish commitment to the safety and well-being of all the children we serve, our P.S.R. students will participate in emergency evacuation procedures (i.e., fire drill, tornado drill, and lock-down procedures).

ST. CECILIA'S SPORTS ELIGIBILITY

Because the St. Cecilia Athletic Teams are *parish* teams, parish children attending P.S.R. classes are eligible to play. However, because our relationship with Jesus Christ and our knowledge of his teaching is the very reason we exist as Church, the religious education of our children should take priority over any secular event. Therefore, attendance at Religion Classes is a prerequisite to a student's eligibility to participate in sports at St. Cecilia's. To maintain their eligibility, **they must have attended at least 75% of the P.S.R. classes in the previous trimester AND year.** Attendance at spring classes is used to determine eligibility for fall sports; and that of fall classes for winter sports in the same year, etc. The overall attendance for the previous year is also checked. Should a real need arise for a student to miss class, our catechists are most willing to provide a lesson plan for the student to complete at home with the parents, and return to the teacher the following week. When the work is completed, the student will be given credit for the missed class.

Teams which use ineligible players can forfeit all games in which they participate.

In the past, there have been occasions when a child on a St. Cecilia team is asked by a coach to leave P.S.R. early on Sunday or arrive late on Monday. Although this is not a desirable situation, we **MUST** have a written note from the Athletic Association Director, the sport commissioner, or the coach to allow this. Otherwise, the child will be expected to be present for the entire class time. Thank you for honoring these stipulations.

HARASSMENT POLICY

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or can take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does not include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.
2. It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spiritually enriching environment in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No participant, volunteer adult leader, or parish staff member – male or female – should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.
3. Conduct which constitutes sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexually harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - ✦ Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions;
 - ✦ Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender-based nature;
 - ✦ Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance;
 - ✦ The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects;
 - ✦ Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex;
 - ✦ Graffiti of a sexual nature;
 - ✦ Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others;
 - ✦ Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity.

Sexual harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature – it also includes harassment that is based on **gender**. Gender-based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or behaviors which are based upon race, color, age, religion disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between employees and volunteers must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission to unwelcome sexual activity will have any effect on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement.

Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a student after an accomplishment, a youth minister consoling an adolescent with an injury or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, youth participant, or visitor to the parish activity.

5. Any person who believes that he/she is subject to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact the (a) program administrator, (b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of religious education. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a program administrator or a pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan director of religious education. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

Dear Parents:

What follows is the Code of Conduct that all staff members and volunteers at St. Cecilia Church must read and sign. A copy from each person is kept on file in our offices. We enclose it in this handbook for your information.

SAINT CECILIA CHURCH CODE OF CONDUCT

- Staff/Volunteers work collaboratively with the pastor and/or other associates in ministry.
- Staff/Volunteers faithfully represent and practice the teachings of the Catholic Church with integrity in word and action.
- Staff/Volunteers are competent and receive education and training commensurate with their role(s) and responsibilities.
- Staff/Volunteers respect the diversity of spiritualities in the faith community and will not make their own personal form of spirituality normative.
- Staff/Volunteers serve all people without regard to gender, creed, national origin, marital status, socioeconomic status, or political beliefs.
- Staff/Volunteers act to ensure all persons have access to the resources, services and opportunities they require with particular regard for persons with special needs and disabilities.
- Staff/Volunteers are accountable to the pastor or other duly appointed representative.
- Staff/Volunteers are called to serve the faith community, carrying out their ministry conscientiously, zealously and diligently.
- Staff/Volunteers exercise responsible stewardship of resources while holding themselves to the highest standards of integrity regarding fiscal matters placed in their trust.
- Staff/Volunteers respect confidentiality.
- Staff/Volunteers adhere to civil and ecclesial law, policy and procedure concerning the reporting of neglect, suspected abuse or when physical harm could come to the person or to a third party.
- Staff/Volunteer support the rights and roles of parents while ministering to the needs and concerns of minors.
- Staff/Volunteers are aware they have considerable personal power because of their ministerial position. Therefore, they will sustain respectful ministerial relationships, avoiding manipulation and other abuses of power. Physical, sexual, or romantic relationships between adult staff/volunteer and a minor are unethical and are prohibited.
- Staff/Volunteers model healthy and positive behaviors with minors. Procuring, providing, or using alcohol and/or controlled substances for or with minors is unethical and is prohibited.
- Staff/Volunteers are aware of the signs of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and neglect.
- Staff/Volunteers are aware of their limitations with respect to paraprofessional counseling and make appropriate referrals.
- Staff/Volunteers are aware of and comply with all applicable parish and/or diocesan policies with special attention to sexual misconduct, safety, transportation, parental permissions, and medical emergency policies.