

# SAINT PHILIP CHURCH

## *Faith Formation*



## Handbook of Programming

St. Philip Church  
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# WELCOME

Thank you for choosing to enroll your children in the Faith Formation programming at St. Philip Parish. As parents, you are the primary educators of your children. We are excited to support you in the great mission to which you have been called in educating your children to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ!

At St. Philip Parish we aim to complement and supplement your responsibility to teach and raise your children in the Catholic faith. We desire to provide support and encouragement as you seek to fulfill this responsibility through our religious education classes, children and youth programming, adult catechesis and faith opportunities and other parish resources. Our programming, however, is designed to supplement the faith formation your children receive at home, not replace it. Therefore, it is important that you continue to teach your children at home and living out the Catholic faith we profess. In this light, it is assumed that parents are doing the following as the primary way of passing on the faith.

**Firstly, take your children to Mass every Sunday** as commanded by God and **schedule Confession for all those of age at Church's the recommendation of once-monthly** to help them grow in virtue. The Eucharist is a great and awesome privilege by which we are afforded the gift of everlasting life and keep receiving the spiritual food of grace to sustain us on this journey. Reconciliation restores our relationship with God when we break it by sin.

**Secondly, pray daily with and for your children.** Communication is the foundation of any relationship and our faith is all about relationship with God. Prayer is how we communicate with God. By praying daily with your children, you are fostering the relationship they have by virtue of their Baptism.

**Thirdly, continue your own faith formation.** It is a lifelong process and doesn't end at Confirmation. That would be akin to stopping learning anything after high school. When your children see you learning about your faith, they will follow you as the model of faith. Plus, the more you learn, the more you will be able to share with them.



# **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Given that parents are the primary formators of their children's faith, it is understood that enrollment in our programming at St. Philip Parish includes the following expectations from parents:

Follow the precepts of the Catholic Church which describe the minimum effort we must make to be considered a practicing Catholic in good standing. All Catholics have are called to holiness though, which means moving beyond the minimum by growing in love of God and love of neighbor.

Precepts of the Catholic Church:

- Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Confession at least once a year.
- Receive Holy Communion at least once a year during the Easter season.
- Observe the days of fasting and abstinence.
- Provide for the material needs of the Church.

In addition to above the precepts of the Church, we ask that parents sign the family enrollment agreement at the end of this handbook agreeing that you will, to the best of your ability:

- Read this program handbook and understand all that is expected of you.
- Lead your family in daily prayer, teaching your child(ren) to develop their relationship with God.
- Have my child(ren) attend all required classes and events on time.
- Assist my child(ren) in completing all required at-home assignments understanding that our program is collaborative/hybrid.
- Notify the director in the case of sickness or emergency, prior to a missed class.
- Share with my child(ren) the expectation of being respectful of my classmates, my catechists, the program coordinator, and my parish priests.
- Seek to grow in understanding my Catholic faith in order to lead my family in understanding it.

# **OVERVIEW**

In order for you to enroll in our Faith Formation programming, the family must be registered at St. Philip Parish, unless permission is obtained by your parish's pastor under special circumstances. Upon initial registration, please submit a copy of your child's Baptismal certificate and/or other Sacraments your child has received.

Unless enrolled at a Catholic School or Homeschooled, children begin catechetical classes with the parish in Grade 1 and continue with formal instruction through Grade 6. Youth in Grades 7 & 8 should enroll in our Confirmation Program regardless of attendance at a Catholic, Public, Homeschool or Private School.

## **Welcome Interview**

In order to welcome you to our program, share the vision of it and assess your family's individual needs, we ask that at least one parent attend an initial meeting with the Director of Religious Education upon registration.

## **First Penance & First Communion**

The Sacraments of First Penance and First Communion are usually administered during Grade 2. Children must be enrolled beginning in Grade 1 in preparation for this Grade 2 year. First Penance is typically celebrated during December of their Grade 2 year and First Communion is typically celebrated during May of their Grade 2 year.

## **Confirmation**

Confirmation is typically administered in Grade 8 at St. Philip Parish. It is a 2-Year Program. In order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in Grade 8, the student must be baptized Catholic or made a profession of faith, received First Communion, is regularly attending Mass, going to Confession regularly and completed Year 1 of our Confirmation Program. Youth and their families are expected to attend all classes, join 2 service ministries at the church and attend a retreat. Please see the Confirmation manual for all information on completing this Sacrament.

## **Homeschool Option**

In recognizing that parents are the primary catechists for their children, families may opt to provide faith formation at home. We provide instructional materials for this option beginning in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade. We ask that children are enrolled in our programming during Sacramental year classes (Grades 2, 7 & 8).

## **Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC)**

When a child is 7 years or older and has not received one of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Penance, Communion or Confirmation), we create an individualized plan for a family to learn about the faith and receive instruction to receive their Sacraments. Please contact our office for more information.

## **Special Religious Education (SPRED)**

St. Philip Parish offers a program for all children with special needs. This program has a dedicated group of volunteers who provide one-on-one catechesis and a supportive connection to the parish. Please contact the Office of Faith Formation for more information.

## **Prayer Mastery List**

Guide for your children to master standard prayers by their school grade year:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Prayers</b>
K	Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Guardian Angel
1	Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals
2	Act of Contrition, Mass Responses
3	St. Michael Prayer
4	Rosary Prayers and Mysteries
5	Apostles' and Nicene Creeds
6	Divine Mercy Chaplet
7	The Memorare, The Angelus, Stations of the Cross
8	Divine Praises/Exposition/Benediction Form, Come Holy Spirit

## **Registration**

Registration for the upcoming school year begins in the Spring of the previous year with registrations due by June 1<sup>st</sup>. This helps us plan for volunteers for our classes. Students entering our Sacramental Preparation Years (2, 7 & 8), are required to have met all pre-requisites for entrance into those programs. Parents must submit a new registration form each year to enroll them in our program. Please note that financial burden is never a barrier to participation in any of our programming. Please request that fees be waived upon registration.



# CATECHISTS AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT

## **Catechists**

While parents are the primary formators of the faith, our parish catechists support parents in this duty. They provide a systematic, age-appropriate presentation of the faith, which adheres to the Standards set forth by the Diocese of Providence. Catechists must be practicing Catholics in good standing with the Church, up to date with Safe Environment protocols as set forth by the Diocesan Office of Compliance, committed to presenting and witnessing to the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church and willing to grow in knowledge and understanding of their faith. Catechists are volunteers from our parish who seek to give of their time and talents in this important ministry.

## **Safe Environment Training**

The Diocese of Providence and St. Philip Parish require that all staff, volunteers and clergy be vetted through regularly updated training and criminal background checks. We adhere to all requirements as set forth by the Diocese in order to safeguard the children in our programming.

## **Circle of Grace Program**

The Diocese of Providence and St. Philip Parish are committed to providing a safe environment to all the children entrusted to our care. Therefore, we utilize the Circle of Grace Program for all students in our Faith Formation programming. One lesson per year is sent home for parents to continue to teach their children the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help when needed through their relationships with trusted adults. Circle of Grace is NOT a sex education program but a program for children to recognize their worth as a child of God.



# **POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

## **Attendance**

Students in all required programming are expected to attend each class and required event. Our regular catechetical classes are cooperative, with children only attending 2 classes per month in house and the expectation that some lessons be completed at home on the “off” weeks. This allows for a flexible program schedule that doesn’t tax parent’s and children’s evenings out, as would a completely in-house program. With this said, children should miss no more than 2 classes. Please contact the Office of Faith Formation if your child needs to miss a class for whatever reason.

## **Check-In/Check-Out Procedure**

Parents are expected to check-in their child at the start of each class and check them out at the end of class times in the School Library up until the beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. Please do not send your child in without a parent or guardian. We have a busy parking lot and want to ensure that every child leaves with a parent. Children may come to class no sooner than 15 minutes prior to class and wait in the School Library until their teacher arrives and class starts. Parents are expected to pick their child up within 5 minutes of class ending, so as not to hold up our volunteers.

## **Tardiness/Early Dismissals**

The exterior door will be locked 10 minutes after classes begin and until 10 minutes before classes get out to ensure the safety of our children. If your child will be more than 10 minutes late or needs to leave more than 10 minutes early, please plan to complete that missed lesson at home to better utilize that time missed and not disrupt the class with a late arrival.

## **Flocknote/Communication**

Upon registration, your family’s primary email address will be added to our Flocknote email and messaging system. This is the way that we communicate en masse to our families. Please be on the lookout for parish and class updates.

## **Inclement Weather**

In the case of any type of cancellation due to inclement weather, families will be texted and/or emailed through Flocknote using the primary contact’s number and email provided at registration. Our policy is that if St. Philip School or Smithfield Schools are closed, then our classes for that day are cancelled.

## Code of Conduct

- Students should act respectfully toward all adults and youth volunteers.
- Toys, games and phones, should be put away (or better yet, left home) during class times. Catechists can confiscate any item that is distracting until the end of class.
- Students should not bring food, gum, or drinks to any class. Water bottles are allowed. Snacks may be provided at the catechist's discretion. Please inform us of any allergies when you register your child.
- We utilize the classrooms of St. Philip School and children should respect the property and items in each classroom.
- Please have your child use the restroom prior to coming to class. With just an hour for class times, this helps us to utilize the time we have without distraction.
- If a student is unable to maintain a certain level of respect and self-discipline in classes, a parent will be notified and asked to help the child modify their behavior. If negative or distracting behavior persists in classes, an alternative program will be created for a parent to catechize their child at home.
- Clothing must cover all private areas as well as shoulders and midriffs. No tank tops or halter tops are permitted, nor are tight-fitting or short bottoms.

## Mass Attendance Envelopes

To encourage attendance at Mass as the primary way we worship and express our belonging to the Body of Christ, all families who are new to our programming and/or are in a Sacramental Program, will receive Mass Attendance envelopes. The virtue of Religion is attained by habits. The hope is that the habit of Sunday Mass attendance will be incorporated into your life to more readily attain the virtue of Religion.

**If you attended Mass at St. Philip's ...** then please drop your envelope into the collection basket with a money-offering for the support of our Parish, a written sacrifice you have made, a written good deed you have done, a prayer you are requesting from God, or a note of thanksgiving for a blessing. **If you attended Mass at St. Philip's but forgot your Mass envelope...** then place the bulletin (with your name written on it) in the Large Black Mailbox marked Office of Faith Formation outside the McNamara building. **If you attended Mass at another Catholic Church...** then take a parish bulletin from the Church you have attended and clearly write your name on it and place it in Faith Formation Mailbox.





## **OTHER RESOURCES**

### **St. Philip Kids' Camp**

This once-a-month Bible Camp morning gives children an opportunity to put what they learn in the classroom to practice. Children in grades PK through 5 come together on a Saturday morning from 9-11 am and participate in interactive stations all based on a catechetical theme.

### **Vacation Bible Camp**

For 1 week during the summer from 9-12 am, our parish center is transformed for our yearly Vacation Bible Camp for children in grades PK through 5. This fantastic week carries a Gospel message through various interactive stations. Children love this week of faith and fun!

### **Youth Ministry**

Middle and High School youth from our parish have countless opportunities to get involved, whether through liturgical service, community service, faith-based programming, social nights, prayer and retreat experiences. Please contact our Youth Ministry Coordinator for more information: [youth@saintphilip.com](mailto:youth@saintphilip.com)

### **Deeper Discipleship for Adults**

Knowledge of the faith should grow with us. It does not end at Confirmation. We offer ongoing opportunities at the parish and through the Diocese of Providence for going deeper.

### **OCIA**

Want to become Catholic or complete your Sacraments? The Order of Christian Initiation for Adults gives adults the opportunity to investigate the teachings of the Church. Our team presents the Catholic faith in a systematic way to understand and answer the questions you need answered in order to commit to this lifelong journey.

### **FORMED**

Formed is the Catholic Faith on demand. For those who want to go deeper on their own time and in their own homes, our parish has a subscription to FORMED. This app has tons of Catholic content at your fingertips for Parents, Adults, Youth and even Children. Go to [formed.com](http://formed.com) and put in our zip code: 02828. Select St. Philip Parish to get started.

# SAINT PHILIP CHURCH

## *Parent Agreement*

*“Called by Christ as Disciples; Sent to Serve in His Name”*

Parent Commitment:

- I have read the program handbook and I understand all that is expected of me.
- I will lead my family to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- I will utilize the Sacrament of Confession with my family, as needed, or once-monthly as recommended.
- I will lead my family in daily prayer, teaching them to develop their relationship with God.
- I will have my child(ren) attend all required classes and events.
- I will also assist my child in completing all required at-home assignments understanding that our program is collaborative.
- I will notify the director in the case of sickness or emergency, prior to a missed class.
- I will share with my child(ren) the expectation of being respectful of my classmates, my catechists, the program coordinator, and my parish priests.
- I will seek to grow in understanding my Catholic faith in order to lead my family in understanding it.

Print Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_