

St. Rose of Lima
Office of Religious Education
Parent Guide for School Policy



Religious Education Office located @ St Rose Rectory:

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DRE Email: cre@strosenj.com

Secretary Email: cresecretary@strosenj.com

Web Page: www.strosenj.com (click on "Religious Education")

Religious Education Class Session Times:

Mondays 3:45pm - 5:00pm (Grades 1-6) 7:00pm - 8:15pm (Grades 3-8)

Rev. E. Joseph Byerley, Pastor

Rev. Ed Kennedy, Parocial Vicar

Rev. James Bartoloma, In-Residence

Rev. Alfred Hewitt, Retired- In-Residence

Ms. Deborah Smaldore, DRE

Mrs. Geri Grzegorski, DRE Secretary

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”(Act 2:42)*

Introduction

***Welcome to St. Rose Religious Education Program!
Centered in the Holy Eucharist, St. Rose of Lima Church is a
Roman Catholic Community united in worship, prayer,
education, and Christian fellowship.***

***At Baptism, parents accept the responsibility of bringing
their children to an understanding of faith. “This childhood
religious awakening which takes place in the family is
irreplaceable” (GDC #226*). It is through the love of parents
that a child comes to an understanding of the unique, personal
love God has for each of them. For this reason, the Office for
Religious Education seeks to support the vital role parents have
in the religious development of their children.***

***By providing instruction on Holy Scripture and the sacred
doctrine and traditions of the Catholic Faith to parish children
and preparing them for the life-giving encounter with Jesus
Christ in the Sacraments, St. Rose’s Religious Education Staff
strive to cultivate in students a joyful and vigorous sacramental
life, a lifelong pattern of daily prayer, Christian service and a
deep understanding, intimacy, and commitment to Jesus Christ
in the Holy Catholic Church. Committed to this active
partnership between parish staff, catechists and families, we
place our efforts with confidence in God’s loving hands.***

*GDC stands for the General Directory on Catechesis:

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

*"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."*

Course Content

The National Directory for Catechesis states "Catechesis aims to bring about in the believer an ever more mature faith in Jesus Christ, a deeper knowledge and love of his person and message, and a firm commitment to follow him." This publication, along with *The General Directory for Catechesis* outlines six fundamental purposes in the ministry of catechesis:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Knowledge of Faith | 4. Learning to Pray |
| 2. Liturgical Education | 5. Education for Community Life |
| 3. Moral Formation | 6. Missionary Initiation |

The Catechetical Curriculum of the Diocese of Camden is used as a guideline to provide consistency throughout the diocese. St. Rose Religious Education Program's current textbook series is the Faith and Life Series by Ignatius Press.

Grade 1 - Introduction to the Trinity, with emphasis on the life of Jesus, the plan of salvation, and the child's part in the plan. Special emphasis on growing to know, love, and trust God. Acquaints child with Mary, angels, and saints.

Grade 2 - Preparation for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. Emphasis on God's mercy and love, the commandments, the order and significance of the Mass, creation and redemption.

Grade 3 - Focuses on God's plan of salvation, from creation to the Incarnation and Redemption to the birth of the Church at Pentecost. Emphasis on our life in the Church, love for God's law, and the importance of Confession, Communion and the Mass. Students are shown that they belong to God's chosen people and the child's family is an important part of God's family, the Church.

Grade 4 - Concentrates on God's plan to save his people from sin (Salvation History), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us in our pilgrimage on earth to Heaven through his Word, his law, and his Church. Helps students understand their life purpose and goal.

Grade 5 - A thorough study of the articles of the Creed as the basic belief of our Catholic faith, with a special emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, and the prophets, and the prayers of the Church.

Grade 6 - The blueprint for a life of love: the law of God, especially in the Ten Commandments, and the presence of Jesus in the Holy Mass. The interaction of the challenges of God's law and his gifts of grace that help us fulfill his law.

Grade 7 & 8 – Focuses on grace as our link with God: His gift to us to bring us to Himself and His eternal life, with an emphasis on transmission of grace through the seven sacraments and on God's loving gifts of revelation of Himself through the prophets, the Incarnation, and the Church, and the role of grace in developing the virtues. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Parents please see the Parent Handbook of "Prayers & Tenets of Faith by Grade" accessible on our website: www.strosenj.com under the Religious Ed page for the specific prayers and special tenets of the faith your child will be asked to know by heart for their grade.

Receiving the Sacrament of Penance & Reconciliation

During Advent and Lent, every CCD grade, except Grades One & Two, is prepared to receive Penance and Reconciliation. Our parish priests hear the children's confessions in the Church during one of their normal class sessions.

Service

As Catholics, we strive to become more like Jesus, who 'laid down his life' for every soul ever created. Thus, Christian service is an integral part of religious education. Parents are invited to take the lead in the training of service as a way of life. Under the leadership of St. Rose's Social Action Committee, CCD children are invited, to the extent financially feasible for the family, to participate in several collections for the poor each year: At Thanksgiving & Easter the children are asked to bring in food for the baskets given to families in our parish and in other nearby parishes; at Christmas, children in each grade are invited to bring in gifts for a particular family in need.

Celebration of Holy Mass

Celebration of Mass is essential to developing our relationship with God, and is therefore integral to the religious education program. The importance of attendance at Sunday Mass and Mass on Holy Days of Obligation is at the core of the Catholic Faith; we can never really understand nor live our faith apart from the Mass and the faith community of the parish. Lessons are prepared with the presumption that students are familiar with the Liturgy through regular participation in the Mass. Twice during the year, once in the Fall and then again for the last session of CCD in May, the students will have a special Mass together, during the regular class time, followed by a party. All CCD families are invited to attend the Mass and party along with the students.

Please Note: To be eligible to enter a parish sacramental preparation program, a child must be attending Mass regularly.

Sacramental Preparation

Although it is the custom at Saint Rose of Lima Parish for a child to be in second grade at the time of First Holy Eucharist and First Penance and to be in ninth grade at the time of Confirmation, the reception of a sacrament is never automatic, but rather is based upon the readiness of the child, which includes class attendance and participation, and proper disposition and formation (as expressed by Christian behavior both inside and outside the classroom). Approval depends upon submission of required assignments and documents, as well as parent and student attendance at required meetings, classes, and special prep events. **Please note: Preparation for Sacraments is 2 years (1st&2nd grade for First Penance and First Holy Eucharist, 7th& 8th grade for Confirmation).**

In accordance with the policy of the Diocese of Camden, which seeks to offer special supports to parents with children in the important sacramental years of First Penance, The Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation, Parents are required to attend Parent Sacramental Preparation meetings sponsored by the parish religious education office. These meetings are especially designed to help parents update their own understandings of the sacraments while being made thoroughly familiar with the preparation their children are receiving. The dates for these meetings are listed on the religious education calendar and parents are notified of specific dates and times through e-mail. If it should be impossible for you to attend a meeting, please contact the Religious Education Office in advance to make alternative arrangements to secure the information given. Please understand that these alternative arrangements will not be able to duplicate the scope and impact of the original meeting where priests, catechists, Coordinator of Religious Education and parents are all involved.

Textbooks & Activity Books

As part of the Faith and Life Curriculum, each student receives a soft-cover student textbook as well as a student activity book. Students are expected to bring their books to class every week. *Many parents have found it helpful to keep religious education materials separate from other school materials in a backpack dedicated for this purpose.*

It is important that the children respectfully care for their religion books. Books that are defaced or abused may have to be replaced at the parent's expense. Please help us avoid this by noting how your child(ren) is caring for his/her books. If a textbook or activity book is lost the student will be required to purchase a new one. Please contact the office for the replacement fee.

Homework Assignments: *Spiritual Exercises*

Apart from special or additional assignments required in the Sacramental Prep Grades (1,2,7,8) students in all grades are asked to read the chapter being taught prior to the class.

Also weekly for homework each child will be usually be asked to complete the Chapter Review for the chapter that was covered in class, with their parents assistance or oversight. Please make it a part of your weekly routine to share this time with your child, reviewing his or her religion lesson for the week, reading the chapters together (i.e. in the younger grades), and helping them with the memorization of their prayers and completion of homework assignments.

Students will be held accountable for any incomplete or missing homework assignments and teachers or the DRE will follow-up with families where this is the case.

Please Note: At the beginning of year, students' textbooks will have a lesson plan calendar stapled inside the front cover which details what chapters/topics will be covered weekly. These calendars will also be posted by grade on our parish website under the Religious Ed link: www.strosenj.com

Tests and Progress Reports

To encourage Student/Teacher accomplishment and accountability for faith learning, students' progress will be assessed throughout the year. Students are expected to attain basic, adequate faith knowledge so as to assist them in growing in their relationship with our Lord. If a student is having trouble meeting the Religious Education requirements, the Religion Teacher (or as needed, CRE) will contact the parents to see how they can work together to develop a plan by which he or she can succeed in meeting the year's faith learning criteria. Plans may require the student to work with the parents and the religious education office outside of class time.

Students will need to be retested if they score below 70. *If this is the case, the teacher will contact the parents and let them know their child will be given time to prepare again and be retested; in that conversation if there are extenuating factors that may have contributed to the poor test scores teachers/parents can work so the child is able to learn the faith in the most helpful way possible (i.e. oral tests can be substituted as needed etc).*

Please Note: Students need a test average of at least 70 to be promoted to the next grade without need of extra summer work.

Progress reports will be distributed Mid-Year (late January or early February) and at the conclusion of Religious Ed Classes in May. Areas assessed include grasp of content, class participation, homework, prayers committed to memory, conduct, and class attendance.

Attendance Policy

Students at all grade levels are expected to attend every class in order to gain the full knowledge and experience that the catechists have to offer them, and well as to help build a sense of community among their classmates. However, if absence from class is unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the student with their parents' supervision to complete the 4 Activity Pages that go with the missed chapter covered in class, along with the chapter review, before the next class. Of course in extenuating circumstances (i.e. prolonged illness) extra time will be given to make-up the missed work. *As noted previously, Lesson schedules can be found stapled in the front of every student textbook and each lesson plan and chapter review are also posted on the Parish website by grade/ session.*

Tests are also listed on the Lesson Schedules and students who have missed a class prior to a test are responsible for their own test preparation. Upon returning to class, the student will be asked to complete the missed test.

For any Absences, parents are asked to email their child's catechist or the DRE 24 hours ahead of class, if possible, to explain the reason for an absence or lateness. You can always call the teacher or the Rectory if you do not have access to email and/or send a note in with your child the following week if you are unable to give us advance notice of the absence.

Absentee or lateness emails/ messages and reason for the absence will be kept on file in the religious education office.

- **Excessive Absences** (i.e. more than **four**) may be cause for a meeting with the pastor or DRE, sacrament deferral (if applicable), retention of a child in any grade. Make-up work in summer equivalent to the hours missed in class will need to be done in order to move to the next grade level.

If a child must leave class early, parents are asked to send an email or a note to the Coordinator of Religious Education *before* class starts. For early dismissal, the parent is expected to go to the school office in order to sign the student out. We ask that you bring valid identification so that we may better ensure the safety of your child.

Tardiness

Children who arrive late are at a disadvantage faith-learning wise and they cause distraction and disruption for both the teacher and their fellow students. Please do your best to have your children arrive on time for class each week. In case of any unavoidable delay, please send a note with your child explaining the tardiness. The note needs to be brought to the office before the child reports to class. *Three late arrivals will be counted as an absence.*

Discipline Policies

Our Faith is grounded in the belief that every person is created uniquely in the image and likeness of God and is therefore worthy of the deepest respect and love. Student behavior must be characterized by genuine Christian love, mutual reverence, and honesty. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior towards catechists or one's fellow students will be addressed promptly.

The normal steps for disciplinary action will be:

1. In class correction by the teacher; if needed teacher may contact parent by phone that week.
2. Student sent to the office to meet with the coordinator; special extra homework will be given.
3. Parent notified by the coordinator and a conference held
4. Parent and child meet with the coordinator and pastor
5. Child removed from the program and student record documented
6. Sacraments may be deferred

Dress Guidelines

Recalling our dignity as temples of the Holy Spirit, we ask and expect students to always dress modestly when attending CCD and Church. If a student is dressed immodestly we will notify the parents so this can be addressed.

Arrival

Child safety is paramount at all times, especially during arrival and dismissal.

Parents are asked to help us keep the St. Rose Religious Education students safe by honoring the following rules:

- ⊕ Students should always exit cars on the sidewalk side of the street and Cross at the cross walks. If a crossing guard is on duty, follow his/her directions.
- ⊕ **Please NEVER pull up in front of the school on Kings Highway to let children out or to pick them up.** Cars stopping in front of the school on Kings Highway present a very serious danger to the Crossing Guard and children and will be ticketed by police.
- ⊕ **Students will enter/exit the school ONLY through the Front Glass Double Doors of St. Rose School** (located on Kings Highway side). The DRE or her Staff will be present to greet each family/ child.

Classes begin promptly at 3:45 pm for the Day Session and 7 pm for the Evening Session.

All Students should arrive at least 5 minutes prior to the start of their session. Upon arrival:

All Daytime RE Students are welcome to use our outside grounds at parental discretion up til our outside bell rings at 3:40 pm (we are not able to provide outside supervision so please be sure your child is attended by an adult or trusted chaperone if they are unable to be on their own outside).

By 3:40 pm, **Grades 1, 2 and 3 should report directly to the Gym** where there is a place assigned for their class/catechist. **Grades 4, 5 and 6 go directly to their classrooms.**

An inside/outside bell will ring 3 minutes before the session starts (3:42 pm) to signal teachers to line their class up and move to their classrooms.

Evening RE Students should go directly to their classroom. *A 7 pm bell signals the session start.*

For both Day/Eve Session, the doors will be locked once class begins for safety's sake and all late-arriving students must ring the front door bell and check in with the RE Receptionist stationed there before going elsewhere in the Building.

Dismissal

- Day Session Dismissal Bell will ring @ 5 pm, the end of the session.
- Evening Session Dismissal Bell will ring @ 8:15 pm, the end of the session.
- Students in Grades 1-8 (*whether in the day or evening session*) who are to be picked up, as indicated on the dismissal form, are to be met at their classroom door by those responsible for their pick-up. Parents arriving early for pick up are welcome to wait in the gym or entrance hallway outside the classroom until dismissal.
- **If you are going to be late**, please call the rectory (547-0564) to alert us so we can have your child supervised.

Communications

Email and the weekly church bulletin are essential vehicles of communication.

The weekly bulletin is available at all Masses and at www.strosenj.com.

Throughout the year the DRE (cre@strosenj.com) or DRE Secretary (cresecretary@strosenj.com) usually sends frequent emails for any pertinent Religious Education information, news, or reminders.

Teachers are asked and expected to communicate weekly with the parents in their class via email to update them on homework, etc. Each teacher has been given a St. Rose email account to use for this purpose. These email addresses will be posted by grade/class on our website: www.strosenj.com under the Religious Education Link.

As the need arises, additional information will be distributed to students via a flyer in their take-home folder from class. In rare cases, notifications may be sent via U.S. mail.

Child Protection Policy

The DRE, catechists, and all aides over the age of 18 are required by Diocesan Policy on Child Protection to be fingerprinted and undergo a background check to be eligible to volunteer for the Religious Education Program. Volunteers must also attend Virtus training (Protecting God's Children).

The Virtus child safety program – Empowering God's Children - required by the Camden Diocese Office of Safe Environment is used to educate children in all grade levels concerning personal safety skills to protect against possible physical or sexual abuse. Parent participation in this program through reinforcement of the lessons is essential. *The lessons are listed on each grade's yearly Lesson-Plan-by-Week and will be posted on our website for parents to read and download.*

Questions or Concerns

The St. Rose of Lima Pastor and Religious Education Office hope that you will have no reasons to be dissatisfied, but mistakes happen and misunderstandings arise. If you ever have questions or concerns about your child's religion program, sacramental preparation, or any other such matter, please feel free to call the Director of Religious Education to talk or to make an appointment to come in.

Your concerns are respected and your questions are appreciated. Please do not hesitate to make them known to the Director of Religious Education or our Pastor!

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:8)

***All God's blessings and love to you and your family daily,
as we work in this great effort together***

to help your child(ren) 'draw near to God'!