

# **St. James School of Religion Woodbridge, NJ**

## **Policy Booklet**

### **Mission Statement "Faith and Action"**

**(St. James 2:14)**

**In union with the Holy Trinity and with one another, we, the people of St. James School of Religion, are called by God to pass on the gift of faith by word and deed with our parish community. Hence in the words of St. James, we work at being true witnesses of Christ through "faith and action".**

**By fostering the love of Jesus and following His teachings, we welcome all children to our program regardless of family economic status. By living the example of the Holy Family, we understand the need to nurture and support each other in our family of faith.**

**"My brothers and sisters, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it?"**

We would appreciate your co-operation in the following areas to insure a happy and successful year for your child:

## **1. ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is essential. We have about 26 hours in which to help educate your child. Please do not allow him/her to miss class without good reason. All children are required to pass an end-of-the-year test. If six (6) or more absences occur for grades 1 to 8, the child will either need to be interviewed in order to pass on to the next grade level, or will need to repeat the year. Please call the Religious Ed office **(732) 634-3026** if your child is going to be absent, in order to make us aware of the situation. Instructions will be given to you about making arrangements for missed class work and homework.

**RELIGIOUS ED CANCELLATION POLICY:** If Woodbridge Township schools are cancelled, so are St. James Religious Education classes. If Public Schools have a delayed opening, Religious Ed classes will still be held in the afternoon and evening. If Public Schools have an early dismissal, then Religious Ed classes will be cancelled, as well. If the weather continues to deteriorate after Public School is dismissed, the evening classes may be cancelled. You will be notified by your teacher, but ultimately it is the parent's decision, if the weather conditions are dangerous. Please use good judgment and common sense. Please make sure that the parent/guardian emergency numbers are accurate.

## **2. BEHAVIOR**

With the number of children enrolled in our School of Religion, good behavior is essential to the success of the program. This includes entering and leaving the building in an orderly and polite way, as well as co-operation in the classroom. Please emphasize this with your child before he or she arrives on the first day. Our staff is composed of volunteers and they are genuinely concerned about your child. Their only "reward" is your interest and the religious education of your child. **IF YOUR CHILD'S BEHAVIOR CAUSES PROBLEMS IN THE CLASSROOM, THEY WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE PROGRAM.** If they are enrolled in a sacramental year, the reception of the sacrament will be deferred for at least one year. The time, as you know, is all too short to be spent correcting a child who refuses to co-operate. As always, we appreciate your interest and concern.

### **3. SACRAMENT GRADES – 1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup>, 7<sup>TH</sup> & 8<sup>TH</sup>**

The parents of children in the Sacrament grades are required to attend our education sessions. Important dates are listed in your September letter and in the policy booklet. Please read the weekly church bulletins for reminders, as well. Any child who is receiving a sacrament, needs to attend all previous years of Religious Education, i.e. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>, in order to comprehend a total understanding of the faith life they will live out. If any of these levels are missed, the child will be tested and placed in their appropriate grade level until they are ready to receive the sacrament.

### **4. MASS ATTENDANCE**

Attend Mass weekly with your child. No program can take the place of the example set in the home. There will be **CHILDREN'S WORSHIP BULLETINS** at the four side exits of the church. Please help your child to make use of these bulletins to help them understand the readings at Mass each week.

### **5. GENERAL INFORMATION**

The School of Religion office has its own telephone number (634-3026). Our office is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 10:00 am to 4:00 PM. Our RE class hours are: Monday 4:00 to 5:15 pm - grades 1 to 5; 7:00 to 8:30 pm - grades 6, 7 and 8 & special classes; Thursday 6:15 to 7:30 PM - grades 1 to 5 & special classes. Pre-School is offered to 3, 4, & 5-year-olds during the 10:00 AM Sunday Mass.

For your child's safety, we are required to have two (2) fire drills a year, which will be held in the fall and spring, during their regular Religious Ed class time.

Tardiness: If a student arrives after their class has gone to their room, the student **MUST** report to the Religious Ed Office. Parents are **NOT** permitted to take the child to the classroom

**Dress Code:** Appropriate attire is expected to be worn to Religious Ed classes. Nothing contrary to the Gospel message is allowed.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION (con't)**

**Cell Phones:** We do not encourage your child to bring a cell phone to class. If you feel it is absolutely necessary that they have their phone with them, they will be required to have it turned off. If a student is found with a cell phone during class, it will be taken away and must be picked up by a parent.

## **6. OPERATING INFORMATION**

The text series that we use in our Religious Ed Program is the Sadlier "We Believe" series, the Dynamic Catholic Institute "Decision Point" series and the Benziger Family Life series. The books are consumable and should be brought home each week for homework and for you to review what your child has done in his/her Religious Ed class. Their books are to be returned to class each week. Family Life will be presented during the last three weeks of class. For grades 5 & 6 an adult must pick up the book.

## **7. CURRICULUM GUIDELINE FOR BUILDING FAITH**

Pre-K – Discovering God's Child, Discovering God's World, Discovering God's Love.

1<sup>st</sup> Grade – We Believe – God Loves Us

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – We Believe – Jesus Shares God's Life

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade – We Believe – We Are the Church

4<sup>th</sup> Grade – We Believe – God's Law Guides Us

5<sup>th</sup> Grade – We Believe – We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments.

6<sup>th</sup> Grade – We Believe – We Are God's People / Bible

7<sup>th</sup> Grade - Decision Point Confirmation Preparation

8<sup>th</sup> Grade - Decision Point Confirmation Preparation

All students in every grade level must pass a final grade level test in order to move on.

## 8. SCHOOL ARRIVAL

At drop-off time, you must park in the church lot and walk your child over to the school yard for line-up. **DO NOT DRIVE INTO THE SCHOOL YARD , park by the yellow curb or park on Grenville Street.** This is a great safety hazard to all the children. Enter the school building **ONLY** through the Religious Ed door #2 from the school parking lot. For safety reasons, no other doors are to be opened. Children are to arrive no more than five minutes before classes and are to be picked up immediately after class.

## 9. SCHOOL DISMISSAL

On Monday afternoon, it will be necessary for the parents to come into the school gym to pick their children up after class, as it will be dark by 5:15 and it will be a matter of safety for your child. No students will be dismissed into the school parking lot at dismissal. It is necessary that you park in the **CHURCH LOT** and walk over to the school for drop-off and pick-up of your children.

On Monday evenings, the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades will line up in the gym upon arrival. At dismissal, all walkers who have turned in notarized walking permission slips will be dismissed from the gym, and all students whose parents come in to the building for pick-up will be dismissed from the school gym as well.

On Thursday evenings, grades 1 to 5, will line up and be dismissed from the school gym. It will be necessary for the parents to come into the school to pick their children up from all evening classes. No students will be dismissed into the school parking lot for the evening classes. It is necessary that you park in the **CHURCH LOT** and walk over to the school for drop-off and pick-up of your children.

If your child needs to leave class early, you must send a note to their teacher and sign them out in the Religious Education Office. They will be dismissed from there. We **DO NOT** encourage your child to walk home from Religious Ed classes on **Monday evening**, but if **you** choose to have them do this, you **MUST** fill out a walking permission form from the Diocese of Metuchen. This form can be picked up in the Religious Ed Office. Without this completed form, your child will not be permitted to walk home or to leave the building without an adult.

## 10. HOMEWORK

Please check your children's Religious Ed folders weekly for assignments and important messages. In order to encourage home/school relationship, we are asking the Religious Education teachers to give some homework assignment every week. Please be sure to ask your child each week what they learned this week and what their homework assignment is. Have your child bring their Religious Ed folder, books and their pens and pencils to class every week. Grades 6, 7 & 8 must also bring a Catholic Bible, which can be purchased in the Religious Ed Office, if necessary.

## 11. VISITATION

If anyone needs to visit the classrooms for any reason, they must first stop at the Religious Ed Office to sign in. NO ONE is to go to a classroom without first reporting to the office.

## 12. CHILD ABUSE POLICY

If a catechist/director suspects a child has been abused, NJ State Statues require that Division of Youth & Family Services be notified immediately. PCL / Catechist will not send a student home with a driver who is visibly impaired – director reserves the right to call the emergency number.

## 13. DRUGS

Drugs are **not allowed** on the premises. If a student is found to be possession, they will be detained until the police are notified.

#### **14. NECESSARY HELP**

We absolutely need Assistants for all our programs. With so many students enrolled in the Religious Ed program, we need your help.

#### **15. REGISTRATION AND FEES**

Registration for First Graders takes place annually at the end of April. A copy of the Baptismal certificate and a \$10.00 registration fee (for the entire family) is required. Re-registration forms for all other grade levels are sent in the mail in the Spring. If this paperwork is not sent to the Religious Ed Office by the deadline in May, a **\$25.00 LATE FEE** will be required. The tuition fee, (our policy is sent to you every year with your re-registration forms), is to be paid by September of the new school year. There is a fee for the sacramental years - \$20.00 for 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, \$25.00 for 7<sup>th</sup> grades and \$50.00 for 8<sup>th</sup> grades (includes Confirmation gown & retreat fee).

#### **16. RECORDS**

**Please make sure that all information on the registration form is accurate. If there are any changes throughout the school year, please notify our office of these changes, so we can keep our permanent record cards up to date and send any correspondence correctly.** These permanent records keep track of your students' Religious Education and Sacramental records. The students receive progress reports twice per year, in January and in May. Please be sure to review your child's progress report and return the signed envelope to their next class. If there are any areas of concerns noted on the report card, please address these concerns with your child. Unsatisfactory in any area on the final report card will require a meeting with the PCL and/or a grade level final test. Please contact our office with any questions or concerns at any time that you might have regarding your child's Religious Education. If in the future you find it necessary to leave our program for any reason, you must notify our office immediately. We will forward the appropriate transfer paperwork to the new program you will be attending, and adjust our records accordingly.

## 17. FOOD ALLERGIES

It is the goal of St. James Parish to provide an allergen free environment for children with food allergies, so that they may enjoy a safe and respectful place to grow in their faith. Recognizing that strict avoidance of the allergen is the only way to prevent a potentially life threatening reaction, we ask your cooperation with the following policy: **Consent for classroom celebrations must be provided by the teacher and no snacks are to be sent in to class unless directed by your child's teacher.** Parents and guardians of highly allergic children **MUST** make known the special needs of the child to the parish catechetical leader so that all precautions will be taken. If your child carries an epinephrine pen, it is necessary that you bring it to the attention of the parish catechetical leader and let them know whether your child is able to self medicate and can inject himself/herself if necessary.

## 18. SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

We are looking forward to another good year as we bring God's word to you and your family. You can be assured of our continuing concern and interest in each and every child who comes to us. In return, we urge you to become involved in all our programs this year. Remember, you are important to your child's spiritual education.

As the school year progresses, I hope to meet with you parents/guardians to discuss your child's religious education. We have slated several meetings for this purpose. Please mark them on your calendar and prepare to make time for your child's most important education, their spiritual growth in faith.



### 2016/ 2017 MEETING SCHEDULE

- Sun., Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> - Catechetical Sunday – 10:00 am Mass Commissioning of Catechists. Come to support our catechists.
- Mon., Sept. 26<sup>th</sup> - Meeting for all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, parents and/or sponsor at 7:30 pm in gym. Confirmation requirements for “The Gospel of Mark”, will be explained in detail.
- Thurs, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup> - Meeting for all first grade parents and parents of students new to our program (6:30 PM in the school gym)
- Sat., Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Day of Reflection for 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents, sponsors & students - 2:00 to 5:15 pm in McCorristin Hall; Rite of Enrollment & Commissioning of Sponsors Mass for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation students, sponsors and parents at 5:30 pm in church.
- Sun., Oct. 30<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Retreat – 10:00 am to 3:30 pm in gym
- Tues., Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> - Parents’ First Reconciliation meeting (7:00 pm in McCorristin Hall)
- Sat., Feb 25<sup>th</sup> - Parents & Students First Eucharist Retreat in McCorristin Hall at 1:30 to 4:00 pm
- Tues., April 4<sup>th</sup> - Confirmation Service Fair for 7<sup>th</sup> grade Confirmation candidates and parents (7:00 pm in the school gym)

**2016/2017 RELIGIOUS ED CALENDAR**

- September 19<sup>th</sup> - First Monday Religious Ed Class**
- September 22<sup>nd</sup> - First Thursday Religious Ed Class**

The following is this year's schedule of holidays for Religious Ed.

**MONDAY**

- October 3<sup>rd</sup> - Public School Holiday
- October 10<sup>th</sup> - Public School Holiday
- October 31<sup>st</sup> - Halloween
- November 7<sup>th</sup> - Public School Fall Break
- December 26<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Break
- January 2<sup>nd</sup> - Public School Holiday
- January 16<sup>th</sup> - Martin Luther King's Birthday
- February 20<sup>th</sup> - President's Day
- April 17<sup>th</sup> - Easter Break
- May 1<sup>st</sup> - First Communion practice for 2<sup>nd</sup> grades and First Communion students **ONLY**

**THURSDAY**

- October 27<sup>th</sup> - Public School Holiday
- November 10<sup>th</sup> - Public School Fall Break
- November 24<sup>th</sup> - Thanksgiving
- December 22<sup>nd</sup> - Christmas Break
- December 29<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Break
- February 23<sup>rd</sup> - Public School Teacher's Conference
- April 13<sup>th</sup> - Holy Thursday
- April 20<sup>th</sup> - Easter Break
- May 4<sup>th</sup> - First Communion practice for 2<sup>nd</sup> grades and First Communion students **ONLY**

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- April 24<sup>th</sup> - Last Monday Religious Ed Class**
- April 27<sup>th</sup> - Last Thursday Religious Ed Class**

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The theme for SONShine Summer for 2017 is "Action Apostles". Watch the **BULLETIN** for details as next summer approaches!!