

Saint Denis Parish Religious Education Handbook

Saint Denis Religious Education Personnel

Pastor: Rev. William Lago

**Parish Catechetical Leader: Eileen Ziesmer
Pastoral Associate**

Assistant: Kathleen Bodner

CLASS SESSIONS

Religious education classes meet on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sundays in St. Denis School.

Mon. Tues. Wed. – Grades 1 - 6, 4:15pm to 5:30pm

Mon.. – Grade 7-8, 6:30pm to 7:45pm

Sunday- Grade 6-8 8:30 am to 10:30am

St. Denis School is located at 119 Virginia Ave, Manasquan. The Religious Education Office is located on the first floor of the school. The phone number is 732-223-1161.

Email stdeniscd@verizon.net

Web Page Address <http://www.churchofstdenis.org>

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Religious Education process will provide programs to assist parents, the primary educators of their children, to foster the worship of Christ and understand the truths of the Catholic Faith.

We strive to enable the student of St. Denis to value his/her dignity and worth as a child of God, and assist them in obtaining a lasting, loving relationship with God in the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, by witness the primacy of God in their lives as they actively participate in the Liturgical and Apostolic life of the Church

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM

1. To develop a strong religious core in each individual to meet the challenge of Christian living in a secular world.
 - a) Through the meaningful religious education in our teaching.
 - b) Through our liturgical and other celebrations of Catholic Culture as a class and as a community.
2. To make the individual aware of his/her responsibility to his/her family, friends, Church and community within our society by providing and sharing experiences that encourage family and community commitment.
3. To develop a sense of Catholic values.
 - a) Through Christian principles which develop self-discipline, self-control, and self-respect.
 - b) Through decision making in everyday life.
4. To provide each child with the means of Religious Education according to the level of his/her abilities making adjustments in the program for student learning abilities as needed.

The Parents

Parents are the main educators of the Faith because they are the main witnesses of the faith. ***It is therefore and expectation by our Catholic Church that all children enrolled in our Religious Education Program and their families attend Mass every week which is the central act of worship and key in religious formation.***

We encourage parents to:

1. Provide for genuine living of the Gospel message and pray daily with your children

2. Insist on a prompt and regular attendance.

Children are to arrive no later than 5 minutes before class and stay for the complete class as they would for any educational setting.

3. Reinforce lessons during the week with their children by discussing his/her thoughts on their weekly lessons with them. ***Read the Family Faith section of text and sign that they have done so every week***

4. MEETINGS

Obligatory parent meetings held during the year are listed on the school calendar. ***All parents/guardians are expected to attend meetings and are responsible to inform the office for any reason they cannot attend and acquire the information missed by meeting with the Coordinator.***

5. And assist the program in maintaining effective communication among parents, students, teachers, and administration by ***take time to read all emails and notices*** from the program.

Your assistance in participating with all aspects of the Religious Education program is essential.

The Student

The student body is unified by its common efforts toward Christian human growth. This growth comes through a community experience:

Students are expected to contribute willingly towards their own growth in faith by:

1. Respecting staff members, volunteers, and peers.

2. Actively participating in religion classes and spiritual devotions, retreats and services

3. Attending Mass on Sundays and Holy days of obligation; attending retreats, services and events designated by the program.

4. Adhering strictly to all regulations especially regarding behavior, bullying and use of technology.

POLICY ON ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

Saint Denis Religious Education Program gives preference to registered parishioners of Saint Denis Parish. All families must be registered at a parish to attend the program. Registration of new students normally takes place in the Spring and Summer but may take place all year. Requirements include:

1. Filling out a Registration form

2. Presentation of a Roman Catholic Baptismal Certificate for each child and or certificate of reception into the Roman Catholic Church and other Sacraments they have received if an upper grade child.

Re-registration takes place in the Spring and is *for all children currently involved in the program who will be returning in the Fall. A new registration form must be submitted every year the child is attending the program.*

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Children attending the Catholic Religious Education Program must be part of the Catholic Church. Transcript of complete record of prior Religious Education program and verification of reception of any additional sacraments must be submitted for anyone entering after grade one.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Prompt, regular attendance is absolutely essential to academic success. The parent/guardian is expected to foster these good habits in the student, both for the benefit of the student's achievement and to encourage respect for all in the classroom.

STUDENT ABSENCES

The *maximum number of excused absences permitted for a student is five (5)*. Excused absences are considered sickness, family emergency, changes in family situation, appointments with specialists or significant life event. *Sports and other activities are not considered excused absences*. Please be sure that as you help your child make choices for other activities such as sports, dance, etc. that these do not conflict with the Religious Ed. session and day to which you have committed.

For the protection and welfare of all children, parents are requested to keep children at home if they show any sign of the following symptoms: chills, coughing, earache, enlarged glands, fever, sore throat, head ache, nausea, pain, red or discharging eyes, skin eruptions, vomiting, and/or diarrhea.

A parent must call the office no later than 3:30pm to report a student's absence. When the child returns, he/she must present to the teacher a written excuse from a parent/guardian stating the student's name together with the dates and the reason for the absence. Students are responsible to make up all work missed. Contact with their Catechist/Teacher should be made.

Parents will be notified if a child becomes ill while at religion class. Parents must provide transportation for the child from class to home. Therefore, we must have on record the home telephone number(s) and the telephone numbers of the parents' place of business.

The emergency information must be kept up-to-date with names of persons who can be called in case of a parents' absence. Changes in address and telephone must be reported immediately to the office and to the teacher.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Children from grades 1 through 8 are expected to report immediately to their assigned classrooms unless otherwise specified.

The students from grades 1 and 2 are dismissed from the Cafeteria at 5:30 PM. Parents and guardians may wait for the children there. Children from grades 3 and 8 are dismissed from the front doors.

SUPERVISION AND EARLY DISMISSAL

The responsibility for supervision of students Grade 1-6 begins at 4pm and ends at 5:45pm. For Monday night Grades 7-8 begins at 6:15 and ends at 7:45 Students must enter the school and proceed straight into their classroom or cafeteria if scheduled.

After the beginning of the program and for the duration of the program sessions the doors are locked and students and guests will be allowed in by ringing the bell and *must go directly to the office*.

In the event that it becomes necessary for students to be dismissed early, a written request from the parent/guardian should be submitted to the office stating the reason for this request. Parents must come to the office for the child who has permission to leave early and sign the child out. The adult picking them up must be a designated person who can pick them up and must be able to present ID. Early dismissal requests disrupt the student's learning as well as the entire class. They are to be as occasion of emergency only. At Baptism, the previous commitment of Religious Education was made by parents and godparents.

EARLY DISMISSAL, EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

If classes need to be cancelled due to inclement weather the public schools will be notified. There will be a message posted on our website and a message left on phone if able. Families will be emailed and teachers will be notified by phone.

FAMILY VACATIONS

It is requested that any student going on a family vacation during class time must inform the office and their teacher in advance. The responsibility to make up missed work rests entirely on the student at the discretion of the teachers. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make sure that the office is notified of the impending trip and that any/all advance assignments are done by the child and handed in the day the student goes back to school.

TRUANCY

A student who deliberately avoids coming to class, contrary to the wishes of his/her parent/guardian, is considered truant. A student who is chronically truant will have to meet with their parent or guardian and the Coordinator to discuss if they can continue in the program.

STUDENTS LEAVING GROUNDS

For the protection of the students, no child shall leave the grounds during class hours. The parent/guardian must come to the office for the child. If a child leaves the grounds without permission, he/she will be subject to one (or more) of the penalties under the code of discipline.

COMMUNICATION

APPOINTMENTS WITH PERSONNEL

Parents who wish to meet with the Religious Ed Coordinator, a teacher, or any member of the staff, must contact the office to arrange a mutually convenient meeting time. For the sake of good order, parents are asked not to

approach staff members during the class time without arranging an appointment beforehand.

Staff members, who wish to communicate with the parents of a student, may do so by phone or letter. Teachers will not schedule an appointment at times that could conflict with teaching. Teachers are not available during class hours. When there is a conference scheduled both parents and staff must be aware of the purpose of the conference so that all concerned may be appropriately prepared.

COMMUNICATION

The program will communicate with all parents or guardians by email or letter, if necessary, which will be hand delivered by the student as needed. If a response or signature is expected, the letter will indicate this.

MONEY BROUGHT TO CLASS

Money that is sent to school should be placed in a sealed envelope and identified with the child's name and grade, the amount enclosed and its purpose. Children should hand it in to the teacher at the beginning of class or to the office. The program will not be held responsible for any/all money lost or replaced, if it is not handed in.

CUSTODIAL AND NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

I. RECORDS

The Saint Denis Religious Education program abides by the provisions of applicable law with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the

contrary, and upon request, the school will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the student's religious records.

II. COURT ORDERS AFFECTING PARENTS

If there is a court order specifying the rights and responsibilities of individual parents, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide an official copy of the court order. The custodial parent may wish to supply the DRE with "custody section" of the divorce decree if it contains information which may be useful to the school in fulfilling its obligation.

DISMISSAL

Only the custodial parent or his /her designee may pick up a child during or at the end of the day. The non-custodial parent will not be permitted to remove the child at the end of the day, unless there is a written authorization from the custodial parent. In an emergency, a clearly defined, one-time telephone authorization may be acceptable.

As the Religious Education Program grows, we constantly have a need to be more conscientious of the children's safety. Procedures have been established that will help alleviate any congestion. You are asked to park your car facing the church as we do on Sunday. Come over and meet your child/children then return to your car. **You are not to stop, park or double park at the entrance.** This is unsafe and causes children to run out to the parking lot unsupervised.

We need everyone's cooperation- parent, children, and teacher to insure an orderly and safe dismissal. Remember our first concern is the safety of all our students.

DRESS CODE

The following items are not allowed to be worn to the Religious Education Program:

- Caps, hats, bandanas or any other head coverings If wearing a hoodie no hood may be worn up and over the head
 - Flip Flops (as they are a safety concern)
 - cleats,
 - T shirts with inappropriate images or words
 - Short shorts more than 3 inches above mid-thigh and skirts that are above mid-thigh
 - sleeveless or thin strapped shirts or sheer tops
 - pajamas
- Headphones, earphones or bluetooth devices unless worn for a medical reason

FAMILY LIFE PROGRAM

In keeping with the Diocesan Policy the school curriculum includes a Family Life Program. The **RCL** *Benzinger Family Life Series* The purpose of this program is to help foster in our children personal growth, Catholic moral development, and respect for life as well as discuss child safety as outlines by the USCCB Charter. The program focuses on the following five themes:

- (1) Family living
- (2) Personal growth and self-understanding
- (3) Respect for life
- (4) Christian sexuality as expressed in Church teaching
- (5) Christian social living

BOOKS

At the beginning of each year the students will be given a religion text that they are expected to bring to every class. Teachers at times may make a special request if completing a project. Students who lose their books are expected to purchase a new one.

TEXTS USED

All texts are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in keeping with the spirit of the national Directory for Catechesis. The books used in 1-6 grades are the *Alive in Christ Series* produces by Our Sunday Visitor. Grades 7-8 will be using *Confirmation Prep Course* produced by Midwest Theological Institute.

GENERAL DISCIPLINE POLICY

A spirit of Christian charity, respect for authority and mutual cooperation are essential elements of the learning environment at the Saint Denis Religious Education program.

Students are expected to act with courtesy and respect toward one another and toward all members of the staff. They must take seriously their obligation to develop lifetime habits of self-control and concern for the well-being of others. Home and school will work together to help students to learn and live the qualities of responsible behavior and the elements of good citizenship.

A student who chooses to disrupt the good order or to violate a policy or regulation will have to accept the consequences of the irresponsible choices. Appropriate discipline is within the discretion of the Program Coordinator /

teacher and when necessary the pastor. Actions for discipline have two levels. Accountability for actions at the first level such as play fighting, touching other students, gum chewing, constant/excessive talking and disruptive behavior, dress code violations, cheating in class work, lack of responsibility for supplies and general disrespect, etc.: will take the following forms;

1. **First Offense**- verbal warning to student by Catechist and possible referral to office action depending. If sent to office. Student will not return to class and be given an assignment to complete.

2 **Second Offense**- Continuing behavior problems will be handles by the DRE/ Coordinator and the pastor as needed, with the cooperation of the Catechist and the parents involved. Action will take whatever form necessary to ensure the integrity of the class and the child. If necessary, the parent will be called to pick the child up.

3. **Third(+) Offense**- The Director/Coordinator and Pastor reserves the right to remove the child from the Parish Religious Education Program if these cooperative efforts of parents and school staff prove ineffective. The students will be subject to immediate dismissal from the program if incident is extreme.

Actions at the more serious level which violate the law, threaten or cause harm to other students or staff members, disrupt or impede the welfare and progress of the community, or bring discredit to the school will not be tolerated. Actions such as fighting which results in injury to others, willful disrespect for authority, bullying and cyberbullying, truancy/habitual lateness or absences, leaving the class, school/school property without permission; theft, vandalism, obscene language / behavior/gestures/implications; and blatant

disregard for Catholic values as defined in the Catechism will not be tolerated and will be subject to immediate action.

Every offense or infraction that endanger or threatens another will immediately yield a discussion with the parent regarding suspension and legal authorities will be contacted as the las dictates

POLICY ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

SAINT DENIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION strongly discourages the administration of either prescription or non-prescription medication in the class. However, if it is absolutely essential that a student receive medication while under the School supervision, the following procedures apply:

1. A parent/guardian should come to the School and personally administer the medication
2. If this arrangement is not possible, such as an allergic reaction the Coordinator. (his/her designee) will administer the medication under the following conditions:
 - a. The medication must be given to the Coordinator or the secretary by the parent/guardian.
 - b. The medication must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container.
 - c. The parent/guardian and the student's physician must complete and sign an "Authorization to Administer Medication in School" form. This form is available in the office.

Students will be permitted to self-administer medication only for life-threatening illnesses or conditions. The

parent/guardian must schedule a conference with the Coordinator. to discuss in detail the need for medication. The parent/guardian and the student's physician must complete and sign an "Authorization for Self-Administration of Medication in School" form. This form is available from the School.

SAFETY

Students shall be immunized in compliance with State requirements. Communicable diseases must be reported and the student upon returning must have a note of release from the physician. The School should be informed of any serious or chronic medical condition. If a student is absent from the program due to a communicable disease, i.e. chicken pox or a transferable condition i.e. lice they must have a note clearing them by a doctor to return to the program class. At home work will be arranged during these times.

FIRE DRILLS

A fire evacuation plan is to be posted in each room. Students should study the plan and become familiar with it. When the fire alarm sounds, students will immediately stand and leave the room in silence. Running and talking are not permitted, and no student is to pass another or break the line of march. The first students to reach an outside door are to hold it open, until all have left the building.

Students are to remain at least 50 feet away from the building until the signal is given by the Coordinator. or his/her authorized representatives.

COMPLIANCE WITH LAW

A. SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

New Jersey State law requires that if any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child may have been subjected to abuse or neglect, must make a report to the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services. It is the protocol of this parish that if you are aware that a student is being harmed or harming themselves or has indicated that they want to harm another or has indicated in any way that they have suicidal thoughts, that any volunteer working with youth must report this event to the DRE or pastor immediately. If DRE is not present the church phone number 732-223-0287 and press 1 for an emergency notification of the pastor or call 911 if warranted. If you are aware of abuse all volunteers and staff must report this immediately to the DRE or pastor and are responsible to contact the state office to report immediately

Call New Jersey's Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873). They are available and will respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If a child is in immediate danger, you should call 911.

Home Study

Parish children at catechetical age are expected to participate in a formal religious education program. According to Diocesan Guidelines, **Home Study is to be reserved for *special circumstances* such as health or educational needs that the program cannot provide. It is to be used for a**

limited period of time. When special circumstances exist families are requested to discuss these situations with the Program Coordinator. If Home Study is granted the *annual tuition fee remains the same.* **Please note that *Home Study is not allowed during the Sacramental years except for extreme circumstances.***

Catechists Curriculum

“Catechesis is education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine, with the purpose of initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 5)” The areas of catechesis are: God, Sacraments, Church, Prayer/Worship, Moral Life and Scripture

Our Religious Education program adheres to the Guidelines set by the Diocesan Office of Catechesis.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation will be scheduled during Lent during the regularly scheduled weekly sessions. This affords each child the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation for their Easter obligation. It is encouraged that parents bring their children to the sacrament of Reconciliation quarterly throughout the rest of the year and are encouraged going together as a family to the Sacraments.

AMENDMENTS TO THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is subject to change at any time when determined necessary by the Director of Religious Education

(D.R.E.). If changes are made to the handbook, parents or guardians will be notified promptly.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Saint Denis Religious Education Program admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the Saint Denis religious education program. Saint Denis does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its religious program and other administered programs.