

# Saint Stephen Catholic Church Pennsauken, New Jersey

Confraternity of Catholic Doctrine  
Program Policies and Procedures



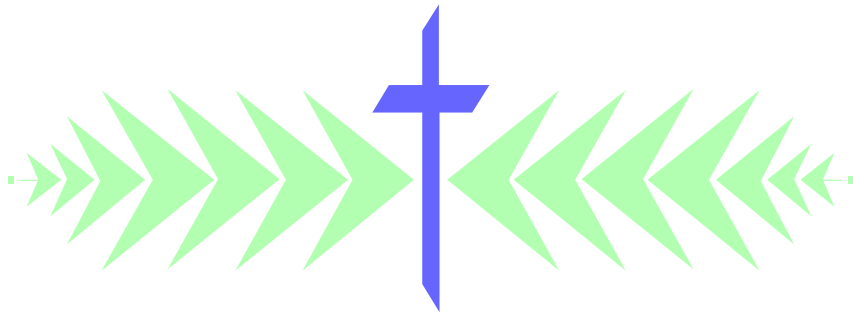
Rev. Daniel Rocco, Pastor  
Dcn. Anthony and Phyl Cioe, Coordinators

## Dear Parents and Teachers,

We welcome you as we embark on the important and necessary journey of working together in the religious education of our children. There is nothing more fundamental to the development of our children's faith than ensuring that they have a strong background in the teachings of Jesus Christ. They should be able to understand the traditions of the Church and the true meanings of the Sacraments.

This booklet will serve as an important reference on the direction of the Saint Stephen Religious Education Program. It includes sacramental requirements and program policies.

**Let us be examples to our children in our daily lives. Only in this way can we achieve our mutual goals.**



**Teachers:** Our teachers are all members of Saint Stephen Parish who have volunteered their time, talents, and efforts to help in the religious education of your child.

They are enthusiastic and dedicated. Some of them have teaching experience -- some of them do not. However, they are on the job and are willing to be trained to become excellent teachers.

Before you criticize them, we would ask you to consider how much time, effort, and dedication **YOU** would be willing to put into the same program if called upon to do so!

If you wish to speak to the teacher of your child or the Moderator, *this has to be done by appointment*. Please do not use class time for this purpose. Also, any grievances must be **in writing** and sent to the Moderator. A meeting will then be scheduled.

## **ROLE OF PARENTS**

Parents are vital to the successful catechizing of CCD and parochial school students.

Pope John Paul II said:

*“Education in the Faith by parents which should begin from the children’s most tender age, is already being given when the members of a family help each other to grow in faith through the WITNESS of their Christian lives . . .”* Catechesi Tradendae No. 68

### **Faith can be thought of in the following ways:**

- as a supernatural gift of God in Baptism;
- as a theological virtue;
- as a body of divinely revealed truths;
- as belief;
- as a perception of divine things (*the faith-filled person lives this present life with the hope of eternity*);
- as an attitude;
- **AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, AS WITNESS.**

If your love of God can’t get you to Church ON SUNDAY ---don’t count too heavily on it to get you TO HEAVEN!

### Parents are led to spiritual growth by:

- Prayer and the faithful, **WEEKLY** participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
- The frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation (*Confession*) and the Holy Eucharist as a family.
- Good moral ethics (*the Gospel morality*).
- Ongoing adult religious instruction through the reading of good Catholic literature, and attending parish adult education courses.
- **VIGILANCE** regarding family use of the **MEDIA**.

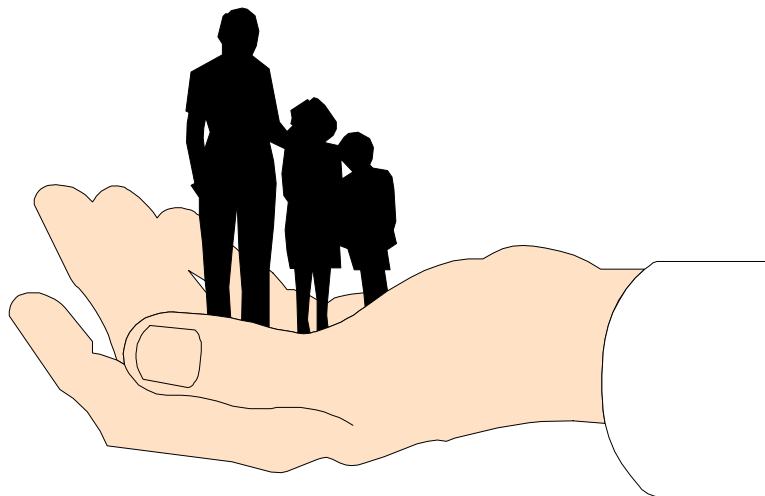
### Some home catechetical teaching methods are:

- Sunday Mass together,
- frequent reception of the sacraments as a family,
- morning and evening prayers together,
- the family rosary,
- short daily readings from Scripture or the lives of the saints.

All of these help to make the **FAITH** important!

### Parents can reinforce parish instruction by:

- Knowing the program and becoming familiar with the student text and whatever else is sent home from parochial school or CCD class with the student. Insisting that the children do their religion assignments at home, offering help when needed
- Attending Parent-Partnership Programs
- Sitting in on a class or two. They can see firsthand what their child is learning.
- This helps reinforce the teacher's efforts after class is over



**Families that pray  
together stay together.**



## **General Information**

***Faith and grace grow in the human soul through the power of the Holy Spirit.***

**Absence:** If there is an emergency or sickness and the child cannot attend a class, a note from the parents stating the reason for the absence must be brought by the child to following class.

**2 Absences** - The parents will be notified by the child's teacher.

**3 Absences** - A student's eligibility to continue in the program will be questioned by the teacher and CCD Moderator.

**4 Absences** - A meeting with the parents will be called and the student is required to take an oral evaluation.

**5 Absences** - *Student's Eligibility for the sacrament for which he or she is preparing, if any, will be terminated.*

*Exceptions are possible, but only with sufficient reason (presented to the Coordinators).*

**Transfers:** Students coming from other parishes due to their family moving or changing parishes will be subject to an oral evaluation according to grade level. This evaluation will be mandatory before they can be placed into the CCD program.

**Lateness:** It is unfair to the teacher and other students in the class to be continually interrupted by the children straggling into class. If a student is late, he/she must report to the CCD office and receive an admission slip from the Moderator.

**Report Cards:** These will be issued twice a year. They will take the form of a simple report card or perhaps a more personal letter from the Teacher. You are to sign the

report card and make sure your child returns it to the CCD Teacher.

**Care of Text Books:** Parents should see that the children always bring their books to class and that they take good care of these books. Any student who loses a book must pay a general fee of \$15.00 for its replacement.

**Dress Code:** Please be advised students and faculty **are not** permitted to wear shorts or other revealing/inappropriate clothing at any time during the school year. **No** baseball caps or hats are to be worn in the building.

**Registration:** Students must register each year. Each parent will sign a covenant agreement and register their child in the proper class of the Religious Education Program during April.

**Registration Fee:** Due to expenses associated with the program, we are asking for a minimum enrollment fee. The fee is a family rate and, if you cannot afford it, please bring this to the attention of our pastor.

**Discipline:** Children disrupting class will first be warned and the parent or parents will be notified. If a child continues to disturb the class after the first incident he or she will see the moderator together with the parent. After that he or she will be denied classroom attendance and the religious education of this child will be the sole responsibility of the parent.

**Home Follow-Up:** Parents are encouraged to take a genuine interest in their child's work. The one and a quarter hour of formal religious instruction is just a foundation for the continuing education process in the home.

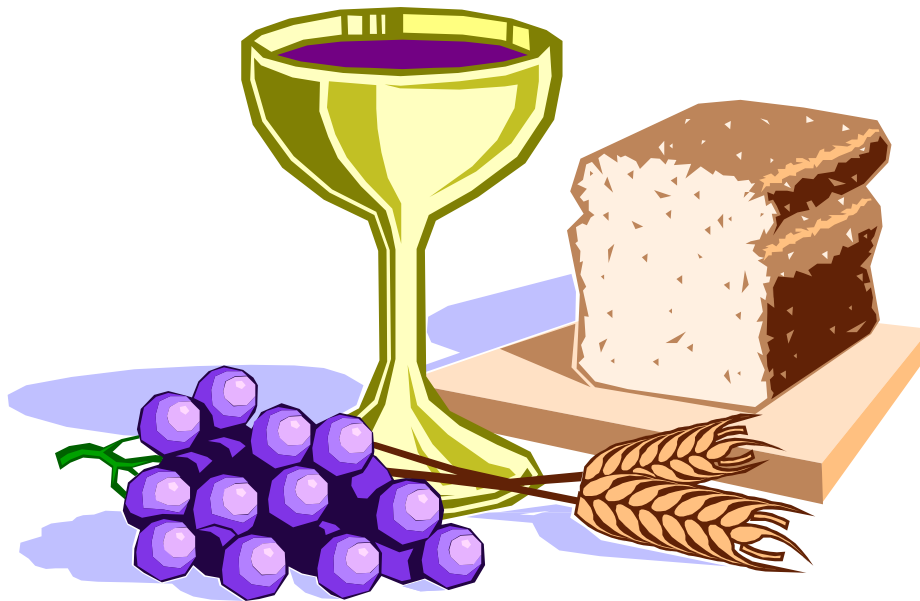
**Attendance:** With religious instruction taking place only for one and a quarter hour, it is a **MUST** that your child attends every class, **as well as their respective class Masses**. When they miss a class, it breaks the continuity of the lessons and there is no time to go over former lessons. **REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS A MUST!** Note, no sport activities will be considered an excuse from classes or church functions.

**School Calendar:** Each year before the new school year we will issue a school calendar to the parents of CCD children so that they will know sufficiently in advance the scheduled dates for various meetings, holidays, etc.

**School Hours:** **Classes for all grades** will be held every **Wednesday evening from 6:15 PM to 7:30 PM** in our School building.

**Care of Property:** The students, under the direction and guidance of the teacher, are responsible for the care and maintenance of the classroom and other facilities. Destruction of school or personal property, in any form, will not be tolerated.

**Dismissal:** Dismissal takes place at 7:30. All students must be retrieved from the class by a parent or other responsible adult.



## **PARENTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS**

It is vital that parents attend all the Sacramental Preparation Sessions for those students who will receive First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

NOTE TO PARENTS: We are most happy to help you with the religious education of your children. However, we cannot take the place of ***YOU THE PARENTS!*** We will do everything we can to provide a good Catholic Christian education for your children. However, we cannot stress strongly enough that while we ***HELP*** with their religious education, ***YOU***, as their parents, must form your children into good Catholics by your ***EXAMPLE*** - by attending Mass every Sunday, supporting your Church both morally and financially, and living a good Christian life. ***THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE GOOD EXAMPLE THAT PARENTS GIVE TO YOUR CHILDREN. PARENTS ARE THE BEST TEACHERS!***

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR SACRAMENTS**

#### **First Penance and First Holy Communion**

##### **Eligibility:**

To receive First Penance and First Holy Communion:

- A child must be in the second grade or beyond, with two years preparation.
- Have At least a minimal understanding of the sacraments
- The child must attend Sunday Mass every Sunday
- Students must abide by the program's class attendance policy.
- Full attendance at all sacramental preparation classes is required of the parents

Exception to the above rules will only be made on an individual basis and only for **very serious reasons**, subject to the discretion of the Moderator.



## **Confirmation**

### **Criteria for Evaluating a Candidate for Confirmation**

1. Each candidate must attend a **Two-Year** Confirmation Program in order to be confirmed – which means ...
  - a) For students attending Saint Stephen Regional School, religious instruction is part of their school day.
  - b) For CCD children, candidates must attend classes once a week from **6:15 PM to 7:30 PM** from September until May.
2. Parents of Confirmandi must attend sacramental parent sponsor programs.
3. The attitude of the student, his/her interest in our catholic faith, and ability to understand the teachings of Christ and the Catholic Church, and also to explain the Catholic faith on his/her level must be demonstrated.
4. Weekly attendance at Sunday Mass and the frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion are prerequisites. If a candidate wishes to be confirmed in our Faith, ***FAITHFUL*** attendance at Mass is the least he/she could do.
5. Candidates must have completed a minimum of 20 **Service Hours**. Approved hours will be achieved by sharing their time and talent with family, church, and community.
6. Candidates must attend a Day of Recollection (*Retreat*) in preparation for the reception of the Sacrament.
7. Candidates should show a willingness to continue their faith development by participating in our parish youth ministry, service projects, etc.

8. Candidates should choose a confirmation name, which has a Christian significance. The confirmation name should be a saint's name in order to reflect the new role of the candidate in his/her journey toward Catholic maturity.
9. As followers of Jesus who wish to be confirmed in the Spirit, the candidate must be a witness to his/her faith. As the candidate prepares for Confirmation, he/she is asked to proclaim the Kingdom of God to others through his/her willingness to help others. Before Confirmation, each candidate will be required to submit a written report of his service project.
10. The priest of the parish will interview the candidates **8 weeks** prior to the sacrament to determine their readiness for the reception of Confirmation.
11. At the beginning of Phase II the candidates for Confirmation will make a public commitment to study, pray and witness to their Catholic faith.
12. An Enrollment Ceremony takes place at the beginning of the immediate preparation for the sacrament. At this time (*about six months before the reception of the sacrament*) the candidate is publicly accepted into the immediate preparation program by signing an enrollment book or some other symbolic action.

### **The Role of the Sponsor**

1. Must belong to the Catholic faith, having received Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.
2. Must be at least 16 years of age and actively participating in the life of the Church.
3. If married, married in the Catholic Church.
4. Must obtain a statement of eligibility from his/her pastor.
5. May be either male or female for any candidate.
6. Strongly recommended to be the candidate's Baptismal sponsor.
7. Must **not** be a parent of the candidate

