



Religious Education
Parent Handbook
& Policy Guide
2025-2026

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A LETTER TO PARENTS FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The journey of faith is a path that one does not walk alone. Each one of us must be there to help each other grow in our love and knowledge of Our Lord. This is at the heart of our Parish and our Religious Education Program. This is why you have chosen to register your child in the Saint Carlo Acutis Religious Education Program. It is our mission to help form your child in the values handed down to us by Christ.

Here in this program, your children will be given an appreciation for the Scriptures, a better understanding of how to pray to God, and the reassurance He gives to all of us through the Sacraments. Your child's faith journey does not end when they complete our PREP program. In fact, it is just beginning. With your help and guidance, we can help to shape the next generation to be men and women who live a life according to the Gospel.

Sincerely in Christ,

Reverend Richard J. Smith
Pastor
Saint Francis of Assisi

A LETTER TO PARENTS FROM THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to The Saint Carlo Acutis Religious Education Program! St. Francis of Assisi offers religious education for Grades 1 through 7 on Sunday mornings from 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM. This program is open to all parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi. If you are not yet a registered parishioner here at St. Francis, we ask that you please register with the Parish Center as soon as possible. We offer Sacramental Preparation for First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation within the Religious Education classes.

St. Francis of Assisi Parish is committed to the religious education of all our children. As parents, you are the first and primary teachers of the faith. Our goal is to assist you - to help you continue to nourish the Faith of your child through instruction in Church doctrine, the reception of the Sacraments, and in participation at Sunday Mass in accordance with the Catholic Church teachings.

Religious Education is a life-long journey. Since we have only a brief period of time with your children, we need your continued support and affirmation of this message at home every day. Each week your child will be given homework; we ask that you work with your child in completing all homework assignments and become an active teacher of the faith for your child. As a parent, your modeling of the faith is the greatest example of holiness your child will have; how you live your faith is the best model for how your child will live theirs. As a parish family, we will continue to help you foster a life of holiness for your children.

Kind regards,

Maritza Reyes

Religious Education Coordinator

Saint Francis of Assisi

SAINT CARLO ACUTIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation for Children)

Grade School students, who have not yet been Baptized or received any other Sacraments, are introduced to Jesus and receive a basic overview of the Catholic Faith, while receiving preparation for reception of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation).

Grades 1 - 7

William H. Sadlier Religion

Currently, our curriculum uses *Sadlier's Christ In Us* as the books for our students to learn from for our base classes, and *Sadlier's Believe • Celebrate • Live* Books for our Sacrament Classes. All of our books are bilingual. *Christ In Us* is a grade-based program that simultaneously supports and inspires all participants, linking religious education formation to the parish community. Throughout the program, participants accompany one another along a faith journey and live out their lives as missionary disciples in the world.

Our *Believe • Celebrate • Live* Books provide immediate preparation for the celebration of Sacraments. Our 2nd Grade, 3rd Grade, and 7th Grade will all receive a book specifically geared towards preparing them for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

Each book is a worktext that combines literature with activities, discussion questions, and games. Students learn the material and then work together both in class and at home to make sure they truly understand what we discuss. Prayer and Scripture is integrated throughout. Multicultural art and modern graphics give the books an appealing look, and each book is bilingual in both English and Spanish to ensure that students get the most of the material they are learning.

Class Schedule

Classes run from September through May, meeting every Sunday. Classes begin at 10:00 AM, and end at 11:15 AM. We will also be having a monthly Class Mass that the students are obligated to attend. A full calendar will be provided to you at the first Parent Meeting. The calendar will also be available on our website, and will be provided to all the students again on the first day of classes.

Sacrament Requirements

- ❖ The student has had at least two (2) years of religious instruction prior to receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation/Confession and First Eucharist/Communion.
- ❖ The student has completed all levels 3,4,5,6,7 prior to receiving Confirmation.
- ❖ The family is registered in the Parish.
- ❖ The family participates at Sunday Mass.
- ❖ The parent(s) and candidate **MUST** participate in the required **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION ACTIVITIES** (All meetings, special events, retreats and practices).

Fees

The Registration Fees are as follows:

One Student	\$130.00
Two Students	\$230.00
Three Students	\$300.00
Four or More Students:	\$25.00 per additional student

There are also Sacrament Fees for students who will receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion or Confirmation. The Sacrament Fees are as follows:

First Holy Communion:	\$30.00
Confirmation:	\$50.00

Payment can be made via either cash or check. Checks should be made out to “St. Francis of Assisi Parish”, with “PREP” in the memo line.

There is a late fee of \$25 if tuition is not paid by October 1st unless previous arrangements were made with the pastor. **Fees are due at the time of registration. No exceptions. We do not accept debit or credit cards.**

Refunds

Refunds for registration, textbooks, etc. are not offered.

Inclement Weather

Should class be canceled for any reason, an announcement will be made on our Parish Facebook Page. We will also send an email notifying all parents to the email address we have on file for all parents. If you are ever unsure about whether class is canceled, please call the Office at 610-272-0402, or email sfa600prep@gmail.com.

Volunteers

Our program cannot operate without your help. We need Catechists, substitute Catechists, and other volunteers. *All volunteers must complete mandatory diocesan paperwork, including a background check and Safe Environment Training.* If you would like to volunteer, please contact the Parish Center.

Saturday Vigil/Sunday Mass

Attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is an obligation. It is a vital part of the religious formation of all of us, not just those in our classes. It is essential that our Catholic children participate in the liturgical life of that parish as much as possible, including through attendance at weekly Mass.

Our Mass times are as follows:

Saturday Vigil	5:30 PM
Sunday	7:00 AM, 9:00 AM (Spanish), 11:00 AM
Weekdays	8:30 AM (daily except for Wednesdays)

Attendance

PARENTS ARE ASKED TO BRING THEIR CHILDREN TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING'S SIDE DOORS AND PICK THEM UP THERE. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL UNACCOMPANIED.

You have enrolled your child in a regular faith formation class. Regular and consistent attendance is vital to receiving a proper education in the faith. This also includes attending the mandatory monthly Class Mass. Each student is permitted **three** absences per year. This includes being more than 5 minutes late. If your child has more than three unexcused absences, a meeting will be scheduled with you to discuss whether your child should remain in the program.

If your child needs to be dismissed early, please personally notify your child's Catechist at the beginning of class. If your child will be absent, PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE by calling 610-272-0402 and leaving a message, or by emailing sfa600prep@gmail.com by 9:30 AM that Sunday. Please also follow up with a note to your child's Catechist the following Sunday. It is the responsibility of the parents to be aware of their children's attendance status.

A student with three or more absences in a Sacramental year (1st Reconciliation, 1st Communion, or Confirmation) may be asked to delay the reception of the Sacrament until the following year.

Books and Supplies

Students will be issued books, which should be brought to class each week. Students should also bring a pen and pencil to class each week. Please note that our books cost money, and a replacement book may result in a cost to you.

Learning Environment

The learning environment is sacred. Our Catechists are dedicated volunteers who are already donating their time and effort to teaching our children. They are not expected to deal with students who do not plan or want to cooperate. Any student who creates a problem may be removed and their parents will be notified. Any student found leaving the grounds during their religious education classes or whose behavior or attitude is depriving others of a religious education may be asked to leave the program.

No texting at any time. All cell phones, iPods, and other electronics are to be turned off while in class. No food or drink is to be brought into the classrooms. No chewing gum is allowed. Please remember that we are using the St. Francis of Assisi School Building for our classes, and please leave all of the classrooms and desks just as you found them.

Dress appropriately. No tank tops, short shorts, sagging pants, profanity or suggestive logos on clothing, etc. We expect students to dress appropriately and modestly while attending class, Mass, or any events here at St. Francis of Assisi. Hats and hoods are to be removed while inside the classrooms. Please use discretion when choosing clothing for class. **If your child does not comply with the dress code, a parent will be called.**

NO WEAPONS. Bringing weapons of any kind onto St. Francis of Assisi property is strictly forbidden. Anybody found to be carrying a weapon will be terminated from the Religious Education program and reported to the proper authorities.

Use of Student Information on Pictures

The Saint Carlo Acutis Religious Education Program reserves the right to use student pictures in publications. Any parent who does not wish his/her child's picture used must make sure that they specified that in the registration form at time of registration.

Registration Requirements

- ❖ Families are required to be registered parishioners of St. Francis of Assisi.
 - If you are not a registered parishioner, but wish to register your child in our PREP class, we will need a written letter of permission from the pastor of your home Parish allowing you to register your child in our program.
 - If you are not registered here at St. Francis of Assisi *or* at any other Parish, please register at the Parish Center at time of PREP registration.
- ❖ **For NEW registrations *only*:** A copy of your child's Baptism Certificate, as well as any other Sacramental Certificates is required **at the time of registration**.
 - If your child has not been Baptized, PLEASE NOTIFY THE PARISH CENTER AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.
 - If you are unable to make a physical copy of the certificate but you have the original, please bring the original and we will make a copy for you.
- ❖ If your child is transferring to our PREP program from another program at a different Parish, please provide a transfer letter.
- ❖ If applicable, please provide a copy of the most recent Custody Agreements or Custody Order.
- ❖ Please note that if your family is registered at another Parish, and your child is eligible to receive a Sacrament(s) this year, your child **must** return to your home Parish to receive the Sacrament.
 - If you would like your child to receive the Sacrament(s) here at St. Francis of Assisi, you must provide an additional letter of permission from the pastor at your home Parish.

Student Pick-Up Permission Forms

Please write down the names of any adult (18 years of age or older) who can pick up your child in the event that you can't. Please keep in mind that your child will **only** be released from the program to the adults you list below. If at any time during the PREP year you need to update any of the names below please contact the Religious Education Coordinator at the Parish Center.

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Handbook Acknowledgment Form

I, as Parent or Legal Guardian, acknowledge that I have read the entire contents of the Parent-Student Handbook and understand the consequences of any violations of the rules and policies of the Religious Education Program. I agree to cooperate with the Religious Education program in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Parent-Student Handbook. I also understand that the Pastor has the ultimate authority over the administration of the program and the interpretation of the program's rules and policies. Moreover, I further understand that all of the program policies whether written or verbal are only guidelines and are subject to change at the sole discretion of the pastor with or without notice. I also hereby acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms of the RELEASES outlined in the registration form.

Yo, como padre/tutor legal, reconozco que he leído todo el contenido del Manual de Padres y Estudiantes y entiendo las consecuencias de cualquier violación de las reglas y políticas del Programa de Educación Religiosa. Estoy de acuerdo en cooperar con el Programa de Educación en la interpretación y aplicación de las políticas establecidas en el Manual de Padres y Estudiantes. También entiendo que el párroco tiene la total autoridad sobre la administración del programa y la interpretación de las reglas y políticas del programa. Además, entiendo que todas las políticas del programa, ya sean escritas o verbales, son sólo pautas y están sujetas a cambios a la sola discreción del párroco con o sin previo aviso. También reconozco que he leído y estoy de acuerdo con los términos de las exoneraciones descritas en el formulario de inscripción.

Print Parent/Guardian Full Name

Sign Parent/Guardian Full Name

Date

Print Student(s) Name(s)

Please sign, date and return this form to the St. Francis of Assisi Rectory by September 1st, 2025.

Firme, fecha y devuelva este formulario a la rectoría de San Francisco de Asís antes del 1 de Septiembre de 2025.