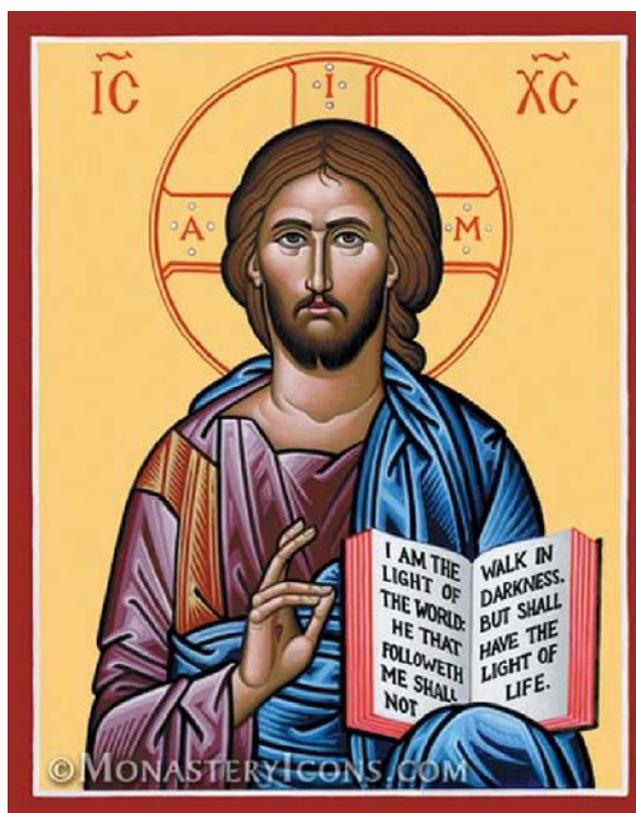


THE CHURCH OF EPIPHANY
615 Thiele Road
Brick, NJ 08724
732-458-0220



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
PARENT HANDBOOK

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Religious Education process will provide programs that foster worship and service for people of all ages. Our hope is to assist our members in obtaining a lasting, loving relationship with Jesus Christ and foster an active participation in the Liturgical and Apostolic life of the Church.

The Church of Epiphany

615 Thiele Rd.

Brick, NJ 08724

732-458-0220

Fax 732-458-0855

www.churchofepiphany.org or

Kelly@churchofepiphany.org

Main Office Hours - Mon. – Thurs. 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

Fri. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Summer Hours: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Religious Education Office Hours - Mon. – Thurs. 8:30AM – 4:30PM

Fri. 9:00 AM - 3:00PM

Summer Hours: 9:00 AM - 3:00PM

PARISH STAFF

Rev. Michael Santangelo, Pastor

Rev. James Redstone, Weekend Assistant

Louis V. Commisso, Deacon

Michael Mullarkey, Deacon

Ronald Nowak, Deacon

Kim Lorentzen, Director – Religious Education

Kelly Curcione, Administrative Assistant - Religious Education

Daniel Dantoni, Director of Music

Donna Woodley, Parish Associate

Carol Lore, Financial Secretary

Mike & Amy Novak, Junior Youth Group

Brian & Barbara Favretto, Senior Youth Group

Messages for above staff can be left with the Church Office at

732-458-0220.

Aims and Objectives of Our Parish Religious Education Program

Our Parish Religious Education Program encompasses grades 1 through 8 and is designed to support parents who are the first teachers of their children in the way of faith. Parents are called to serve as role models of inspiration for their children through their own prayer life, education in faith and in support of our Church of Epiphany. Our parish family, through volunteer catechists and aides as well as our staff and pastor work as a team with the parents so that together we can provide our children with a sound program to help them become disciples of Jesus Christ. As such, we ask you to:

1. You, their parents, must show them the way to God by your example. It is therefore, expected that all children enrolled in our Religious Education Program and their family attend Mass every week. The central act of worship is key in religious education formation along with classroom community.

2. Pray with your child and teach them to pray.

3. Encourage your child to discuss his/her thoughts on Religious Education lessons with you.

**Ask your child questions about their weekly lesson.*

**Help your child prepare for the next lesson.*

**Read the Family Faith section of your child's text.*

4. Your child's Catechist will appreciate your interest. Contact them to check progress and to discuss any special problems or questions you may have.

5. You can be of assistance to your child's Catechist if you:

**Are conscientious about your child's attendance;*

**See that your child is on time for class and picked up on time;*

**See that your child comes prepared to take an active part in his/her class;*

**Look and take time to read special notices sent home with your child.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEDULE
GRADES 1-8

Time: 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM - Church of Epiphany

Class Schedules, Masses, Community Service, and other events are conveniently located on the calendar on our church's website under the Faith Formation tab—<http://churchofepiphany.org/index.php/faith-formation/faith-formation-calendar>

RECONCILIATION SERVICE - TO BE HELD AT CHURCH – 5:30PM-6:30PM

Please see the schedule on our website under the Faith Formation tab / Faith Formation Calendar.

All Reconciliation Services are mandatory and there are no makeup dates

*** Grades 2nd & 8th cannot be made up at another time. This is a Diocese Requirement in order for your child to receive the Sacraments of First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.**

Mass Attendance

Our Church teaches that it is our obligation to worship God and participate in the Eucharistic Celebration every Saturday or Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation. **Therefore it is expected that every child enrolled in The Church of Epiphany's Religious Ed Program attend Liturgy every week and on Holy Days of Obligation.**

Homily Reflection Requirement

All Students in grades 1 through 8 are required to attend the assigned class masses. Students will sit with their families in the church and may leave once Mass is over. In addition to 3 class masses, each student is required to attend 9 Masses throughout the school year. Also, every student must attend a Christmas Mass and an Easter Mass preferably at Church of Epiphany. Each student will write a Homily Reflection (a few notes) based on the Priest/Deacon's homily which will be stamped after Mass. **All students must submit a minimum of 14 Homily Reflections for the year.**

Parish Religious Education Staff

Each class is staffed by a **Catechists and a Class Aide**. Our Catechists and Class Aides are volunteers who give generously of themselves and their time. Most are not teachers by profession; however, all have a willingness to share their faith to help our children grow in the love of Jesus. All our Catechists/Aides are required to:

- Be in good standing with the Catholic Church.
- Attend Catechetical meetings.
- Comply with the Diocesan requirements which include a **Criminal History**

Background Check and Sexual Abuse Awareness Training.

Encouraged to seek certification through the Diocese of Trenton and ongoing Formation supports them in their ministry to which they have been called.

Registration

Families with children participating in **Church of Epiphany Religious Education Program** **must be registered, supporting parishioners**. This means regular attendance at Sunday Mass and **using weekly offertory envelopes**. If you are **not** yet registered, please call **Donna** at **732-458-0220**.

Registration of new students

Requirements include:

1. Filling out a Registration Form
2. Presentation of a Baptismal Certificate for each child and a First Holy Communion Certificate for any child that has made his/her First Communion.

Re-registration of current students for children currently enrolled in the program who will be returning in the fall. You **do not need** to resubmit Baptismal and Communion Certificates.

Tuition

Our Religious Education Program is self-sufficient and supported mainly by Tuition.

*Please see the website for current registration dates and tuition cost. *

No child will be refused admission to the Religious Education Program because of inability to pay tuition. Parents for whom tuition would cause a severe financial burden should contact the Director to set up a payment plan.

A student text is included in the tuition fee; if lost or misplaced, a fee of \$30.00 will be charged for a new book.

**** In order to keep the cost of tuition down, the Family Life series which is required by the Diocese of Trenton is not a consumable text and must be returned to the Religious Education Department in its original condition on the date specified. If the book is not returned or has been written in, there will be a \$15.00 replacement fee.**

The Summer Religious Education Program

Summer Religious Education is for Epiphany families only. This is a split day program which runs from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM, please see the schedule for arrival/dismissal times. There are no makeup classes, therefore every session must be attended in its entirety.

Mass: Summer students are required to stay “connected” to the Epiphany Parish community throughout the year by their weekly attendance to Mass. Students are required to write fourteen (14) Homily reflections dated and signed by the Celebrant between July 1st and the time of registration.

Christmas & Easter: Every student is to attend a Christmas Mass and an Easter Mass preferably at Epiphany Church and have a signed Homily Reflection for each Mass. ***The Homily Reflections for Christmas and Easter are included in the 14 Reflections listed above.***

Liturgical Sessions: All Summer Program students and parents are required to attend a minimum of three (3) Liturgical Sessions offered at the Church of Epiphany. One (1) session for Advent/Christmas and two (2) for Lent/ Easter as follows. The dates will be listed on our website.

Please keep in mind there will be no makeup dates available, and this is a mandatory requirement to remain in the Summer Program.

Registration for Summer Religious Education will begin in early March. Please note that our summer program fills up quickly and is on a first come basis for those have met all requirements.

Transfers In and Out

Students in grades 2-7 who are transferring into the program from another parish should obtain transfer papers from their former parish indicating that the child has been regularly attending religious education. Parents should request these records as soon as possible from the previous parish as they are necessary for the appropriate placement of the child in the program. It is important to have these records prior to the start of the school year since any child in **grades 2-7** who has had no previous religious education or who has missed a year will be assessed to determine and receive remedial instruction in addition to current grade.

Classroom Behavior/Disciplinary Action

We require that all students behave in an appropriate manner in order to create a productive learning environment. Disrespect towards teachers, fighting, using foul language, defacement of church property, carrying harmful objects, and stealing are considered unacceptable behavior. Additionally, we have a zero-tolerance policy on bullying. Any child caught in the act of bullying, either physically or verbally will be asked to leave the program. In order to provide an environment that promotes maximum learning, good discipline in the classroom is a necessity. Though Catechists are in-serviced in skills that help promote an orderly and structured atmosphere, nevertheless discipline problems may still arise. It is the practice of the Religious Education Program to attempt to solve them using a Christian Reconciliation Model. Catechists are encouraged to solve the problems themselves with the help of suggestions from the Director. The following guidelines are noted.

- 1. First Offense – verbal warning to student by the Catechist who, with the help of the Class Aide and possible referral to Director/Coordinator.***
- 2. Second Offense - Continuing behavioral problems will be referred to the Director/ Coordinator, who with the cooperation of the Catechist and the parents involved will take whatever action is necessary to insure both 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 reserves the right to remove the child from the Parish Religious Education Program if cooperation is not evident by the child or parent.***

Conduct/Expectations of Behavior

The following are minimal behavior expectations in the classrooms:

1. Pay attention
2. Listen to who is speaking
3. Speak when it is your turn
4. Keep hands to yourself
5. Show your love for God and Others
6. Do your best
7. Respect your Catechist and Aides

Child Abuse – Safe Environment Program

Our Religious Education Program Staff as well as our children are required by the Trenton diocese to complete the Protecting God's Children – Teaching Touching Safety Program. This program is powerful in content. The goal is to educate all those who work with children to recognize abuse/abusers and address the protection of children by following established guidelines as noted below:

Step 1 – Know the Warning Signs

Step 2 - Control Access

Step 3 – Monitor All Programs

Step 4 – Be Aware

Step 5 – Communicate Your Concerns

Catechists, Aides and parents who observe actual or suspected child abuse are required by law to report the matter in confidence to the proper authorities:

The Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-792-8610

The Local Police: 732-477-8300

Textbooks

Our textbook series for grades 1 through 6 is entitled, "Alive in Christ" published by Our Sunday Visitor. The textbook for grades 7 & 8 is Chosen. Grades 1 through 8 will also have a Family Life book.

Assignment

Each student is required to attend weekly Mass and Holy Days of Obligation. They are also required to know their traditional prayers.

Class Attendance/Absence

Religious Education should be a priority. Given the amount of time in the Religious Education teaching schedule, attendance at all classes is mandatory for all students.

- 1. Students are responsible to make up all work for any classes missed. Please Contact your child(ren)'s catechist.*
- 2. If it is necessary for your child to be absent, please call the Catechist (prior to class time if possible) and discuss that week's lesson and any homework the student should complete in order to be prepared to take an active part in class when he/she returns. Parents must also call the Religious Education Office at 732-458-0220. Please leave a message if no one is available to answer the phone.*
- 3. If a child misses more than four (4) classes or is frequently tardy, the child may be asked to come for a review with the Director/Coordinator or to repeat that year or another resolution. A continuous disregard of these rules may result student having to repeat the year.*

Portable Electronic Devices

Gameboys, MP3 devices iPods and Cell Phones are NOT to be used during Class time. They are a distraction to the learning process. Students in need of contacting a parent or guardian may do so through Director or Administrative Assistant.

Dress Code

Children's attitudes and behaviors are affected by what they wear. We ask that children dress appropriately for religious education classes as well as Mass. Tank tops, halter tops of any sort, short skirts and blouses with spaghetti straps are NOT permitted. No midriff should be showing. High heeled shoes and flip-flops are inappropriate. Clothing that is torn, bears obscene or inappropriate messages will NOT be permitted. Good taste and proper, reasonable judgment should be utilized.

Medication

We do NOT administer prescription or non-prescription medication to any child in our Religious Education Program. Parents are asked to administer any medication before or after any religious education class and to make the catechist and the Director aware of any possible side-effects. Parents are permitted to come to our program and administer the medication to their children. If it is essential that a student receive prescription medication during class, the parents must first meet with the Director/ Coordinator, to discuss the guidelines to be followed.

Preparation for Celebrating Sacraments

Preparation for the Sacraments is an integral and important part of the Religious Education Program. They are celebrations that mark important phases in a child's faith journey and therefore, parental involvement in the Sacramental preparation of children is of the greatest importance. Parents are **expected** to take an active role in the faith journey of their child. It is the parents' responsibility to:

1. Nurture the spiritual life of the child
2. Encourage an active family life
3. Regularly attend Mass on Saturdays/Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
4. Participate/attend Parent Information Meetings
5. Read parent letters and review take home materials
6. Ensure that the child has completed any related requirements as assigned

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

At Church of Epiphany Religious Education Program, preparation for the **Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist** begins in the 1st grade. Here the children will learn and have basic knowledge and understanding of the following:

- ~ God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit;
- ~ God's personal love for each person
- ~ The Church as the People of God
- ~ The Sacrament of Baptism
- ~ Prayer as a response to God's Love
- ~ Traditional Prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Sign of the Cross.

Immediate and Formal preparation **begins in the 2nd grade** where the children will be provided with opportunities to include an understanding of the Christian way of life, our sinfulness, God's forgiveness and how that forgiveness is celebrated in the Church. Additionally, they will also come to an understanding of who Jesus is, and the main events in His life; to realize that Jesus is present in the Eucharistic Bread and

In keeping with the Trenton Diocese in communion with the See of Rome guideline for the preparation and reception of these Sacraments, of at least one (1) year, we at Church of Epiphany will administer both **Reconciliation and the Eucharist in the 2nd grade**. This will provide us with an additional year of sacramental preparation for each child. **Reconciliation** will be in **November** and First **Holy Communion in the spring**. The actual dates will be announced at a later time.

Confirmation

Confirmation is one of the three (3) Sacraments of Initiation along with Baptism and the Eucharist. Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism through an outpouring of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is a time where the child personally accepts and makes the commitment to Catholicism that was made for him/her by parents at Baptism. It is an initiation into a fuller and richer life.

The process of preparation for Confirmation takes place over a two (2) year period beginning in the 7th grade and culminating at the end of the 8th grade with reception of the Sacrament in Spring of 8th Grade. It is essential that your child attend all years in order to be eligible to receive the Sacrament.

Arrival/Dismissal

All students should be in the building at least 5 minutes before the start of class. Time for instruction is limited so it's important that students be on time for classes. Classes are dismissed at the end of the period. We will NOT leave until ALL the children are picked up.

If a Catechist or Class Aide is not present at the time class begins, students are asked to wait in the hallway, in an orderly and quiet manner, until an adult arrives. Children are not to enter the classroom unattended for any reason.

Note: Please be extremely careful in the parking lot area as children are often distracted and not watching car movement.

Early Discharge: If your child is to be dismissed early, a note must be given to the Catechist at the beginning of class and a parent must sign the child out in the log in the lobby.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY

The parking lot is the drop off point for students. When you are dropping off your children please pull into a parking space. This is an act of courtesy to your neighbor and it will alleviate the traffic jams that tend to occur at arrival and dismissal times. If you have only one child in the Program, and they are in grades 1-6 you are responsible for bringing them into the school and escorting them to their Catechist, in the child's assigned classroom. The 7th and 8th grade students will be released on their own. If there is a younger sibling attending the Religious Education Program, the 7th or 8th grader may sign the sibling out of the class, using the sign out sheet.

At dismissal time your child will be released to you by their Catechist. Parents will only be allowed to go to the classroom for pick up at 6:30 PM.

Students in 7 and 8th grade will be allowed to be dropped off by their Parents where the parking lot monitor is located, at the front entrance. There will be NO curbside pickup.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Recent tragedies in our society and schools nationwide have prompted us to strengthen our policies and guidelines to ensure the protection of our children and adults who work in the religious education program.

BUILDING SECURITY

Please be aware that the classrooms are secured when classes are in session in order to provide a **SAFE ENVIRONMENT** for the children. The building will be locked when classes are in session. Visitors or persons picking up children early will enter the building through the main entrance only. No other door will be accessible to use as an exit door except the main entrance.

Class Cancellations

If the school districts are closed, or students are sent home early because of inclement weather, we will ***not*** have classes ***that day***. Catechists *may* contact students in the event of cancellation due to inclement weather, however ***parents should check by calling the parish 732-458-0220*** or by visiting the Parish Facebook page.

Special Notices

At times ***Special Notices*** are issued for the purpose of making announcements, changing procedures, or establishing new procedures. Since the notices will be sent home via your child (who may not always remember to give them to you), and online we ask you to please:

- 1. Read and study their contents***
- 2. Comply with them--if they need to be complied with***
- 3. File them for future use***
- 4. Review them with your child (children) when it affects them***
- 5. Check website frequently for notices and updates***

Traditional Prayers

The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit. Amen

The Our Father

Our Father, Who are in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespasses against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death.
Amen.

The Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Prayer Before Meals

Bless us O Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive,
from thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord.
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary.
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell;
On the third day He rose again. He ascended into Heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy
Spirit, the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You.
I detest all my sins because of your just punishments, but most of all because they of-
fend You, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with
the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance and to amend my life.
Amen

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon, Where there is doubt, faith, Where there is despair,
hope, Where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Mas-
ter, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; To be under-
stood, as to understand; To be loved, as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; It is
in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God
born of the Father before all ages,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures,
He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father,
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Oh, Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul. I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me. Tell me what I should do. Give me Your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that You desire of me and to accept all that You permit to happen to me.

Let me only know Your will.

Amen.

The Rosary

The Rosary is a devotion dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God. The rosary consists of twenty (20) decades. Each decade focuses and meditates upon a particular mystery in the life of Christ and his Blessed Mother. It is customary to say five decades at a time, while meditating upon a different mystery for each decade.

1. Make the **Sign of the Cross** and say the "**Apostles' Creed.**"

2. Say the "**Our Father.**"

3. Say three "**Hail Marys.**"

4. Say the "**Glory be to the Father.**"

5. Announce the First Mystery; then say the "**Our Father.**"

0. Say ten "**Hail Marys,**" while meditating on the Mystery.

0. Say the "**Glory be to the Father.**"

0. Announce the Second Mystery; then say the "**Our Father.**" Repeat 6 and 7 and continue with Third, Fourth and Fifth Mysteries in the same manner.

After the Rosary:

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope! To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. **O GOD**, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life, grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.

After each decade say the following prayer requested by the Blessed Virgin Mary at Fatima:

"O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who have most need of your mercy."

As suggested by the **Pope John Paul II** the **Joyful** mysteries are said on **Monday and Saturday**, the **Luminous** on **Thursday**, the **Sorrowful** on **Tuesday and Friday**, and the **Glorious** on **Wednesday and Sunday** (with this exception: Sundays of Christmas season - **The Joyful**; Sundays of Lent - Sorrowful)