

St. Bernard

Religious Education/CCD

Parent Handbook



Mission Statement

The catechetical program of St. Bernard Parish seeks to work in partnership with the parents of our elementary age students. Realizing that our parents are the BEST educators of the faith, our program offers guidance and direction for the fundamental task of catechesis: promoting knowledge of the faith, liturgical education, moral formation, prayerful experiences, community atmosphere, and a missionary spirit. Through these tasks, we attempt to help every child attain an intimate relationship with God: Father, Son & Holy Spirit, and the Catholic Church.

Basic Info

Religious Education Office.....412-561-0199

Fax.....412-561-1005

Mailing Address: 401 Washington Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15216

Physical Location: 2nd floor of Fontenay Center (see map on page 4)

Website: www.stbernardchurch.com , click on Religious Education link on left

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/StBernardRelEd>

Director of Religious Education (DRE).....Mrs. Darcy Osby

Email: dosby2@stbpgh.org

Administrative Assistant.....Mrs. Christy Fabus

Email: cfabus2@stbpgh.org

Program Fee

(checks to be made out to “St. Bernard”)

\$60 for one child

\$85 for two children

\$110 for three or more

Non Parishioner

\$110 for one child

\$210 for two or more children

Class Sessions

Tuesday 4:15-5:30 (grades K-8)

Wednesday 4:15-5:30 (grades K-8)

Wednesday 7:00-8:15 (grades 6-8)

Homeschool (one Saturday per month)



Your Role in Your Child's Religious Education

The Church recognizes that parents are the first and best catechists of their children. We are here to assist you as a team, but not to take your responsibility away from you. What we teach during CCD should supplement the faith life that children experience in their families, which are the “domestic church.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church states the following:

- CCC 2223: “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule... Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children.”
- CCC 2226: “Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith.”

Ways to take an active role:

- Attend Church every Sunday as a family. The liturgy itself teaches us how to live as Christians through the Word, Eucharist and Community. Talk about what you heard and saw at Mass.
- Model Christian values at home in how you care for your family, treat others, and respond to your children's questions.
- Pray regularly as a family: before meals, at bed time, and whenever anyone is scared, sick, struggling, thankful, etc.
- Serve others: Whether it is helping a younger sibling, taking the neighbor's paper to the door, or donating outgrown clothes, put it in the context of faith.
- Attend the parish Family Events with your children throughout the year.
- Ask your children what they did in class. Do not take “nothing” for an answer! Have a conversation about the topic, sharing your own experiences with the concept.
- Use and respond to any materials the catechist sends home.



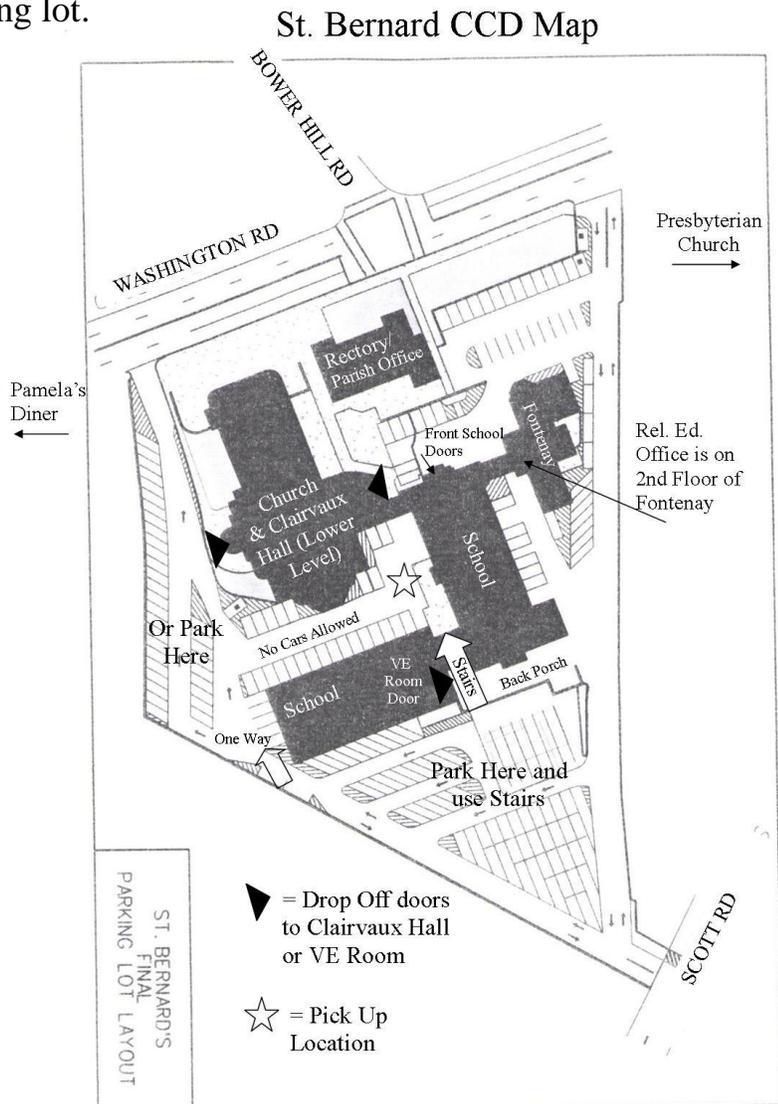
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Arrival: All Sessions

- grades K-5 gather in Clairvaux Hall for opening prayer
- grades 6-8 gather in Bryson Hall/Cafeteria (enter from back porch door) for opening prayer

Dismissal:

- **4:15 Session** – All students will be dismissed into the side parking lot between the school and the church near Pamela's (see illustration). No cars will be allowed to access this lot at that time.
 - Parents will need to park their cars in the back and walk up the steps, or park in the slanted spaces on the side of the church and walk over to get their children.
 - Students in **grades K-1** will be in the pick-up zone at **5:20**
 - Students in **grades 2-4** will be in the pick-up zone at **5:25**
 - Students in **grades 5-8** will be in the pick-up zone at **5:30**
- **7:00 Wednesday Session** – Students will be dismissed into the back lower parking lot.





**EARLY
DISMISSAL**

Early Dismissals

If your child needs to leave their session early, parents **MUST** submit a written note to the catechist before the session begins.

Students will **NOT** be dismissed by student request alone! Students must then be picked up by a parent **at the front office of the school**. Use the doorbell to be let into the school building. Your child will meet you in the school office. Parent volunteers will be there to assist you and your child.

- It is extremely important that you do not arrange to meet your child elsewhere so that we know where each student is at all times.

Attendance Policy

Each year in Religious Education, the children are learning a particular core component of our faith. The students gather for 26 sessions or 32 hours out of a year. Each of these sessions builds off of the scripture, doctrine or tradition that was presented the week before. Since this is such a brief time, every session is vital to a well-rounded formation in the faith. Therefore, we expect that all of our young disciples make every effort to attend each session. If a child must miss due to illness or extreme circumstances, the parent should call or e-mail the catechist to inquire about the lesson that was missed so that they can help their son/daughter to complete it at home. Work should be submitted to the catechist upon returning to class. If a child has inconsistent attendance or chronic lack of attendance, they will not be given credit for that grade level. Extraordinary circumstances will be left to the discretion of the pastor.



Cancellation of Classes



In the event of inclement weather, please check KDKA, WTAE, or WPXI TV stations. We will send out an email blast to all valid email addresses in our database. You may call the Religious Ed. Center and our voicemail recording will have information. Please do not call the rectory. If St. Bernard School closes, we will close also. School delays will not affect CCD.



Discipline

Every child and catechist in our program deserves respect and the opportunity to grow in their faith in a safe and cooperative atmosphere. Please impress upon your children the importance of respectful behavior towards their fellow classmates as well as the dedicated volunteer catechists. Inappropriate behavior will be brought to the attention of the DRE who will determine if parents need to be contacted.



Special Needs and Learning Differences

We make every effort to include all children in our Religious Education programs, and we have a variety of resources available to accommodate the specific needs of each child. If your child has a learning difference, disability, or any diagnosis which may impair his or her learning of the curriculum with the basic CCD materials, we invite you to contact the Religious Education Office or make a note on your registration form. Even if your child has a mild diagnosis or a slight disability, we appreciate your openness in sharing his or her needs with us so that our catechists can fully engage each child in their class.

- If your child has an IEP, it would be helpful for us to make similar accommodations during CCD.
- You are welcome to view the materials and curriculum we use, as well as the adaptive materials we have available. We encourage your input so that we can better serve each child on his or her spiritual journey.
- We encourage you to have a TSS attend CCD with your child if Wrap-Around Services are something your family utilizes.



Homeschool Program

Parents may choose to educate their children in the faith in the setting of their home. We provide textbooks, resources, and guidance to these parents.

- Unit Tests will be due to the Religious Education Office on specific dates throughout the year to ensure all families are completing the curriculum.
- Students in grades K-5 are encouraged to attend Celebration Saturdays on the second Saturday of every month from 9:00am-10:30. This provides students with an opportunity to gather with their peers at the parish to learn from the community and celebrate feasts throughout the liturgical year.
- Students in grades 6-8 are encouraged to attend In the House! events (see below) to connect with their peers at the parish.
- A monthly email newsletter will keep all families informed of any special events in which the children are invited to participate in the parish.

Family Events

Each year we offer events during which families can connect with one another and share their faith through fun activities! Please join us for the following events:

- October: Family Rosary
- November: Family Volunteer Day
- December: Family Advent Retreat
- Feb/March: Mardi Gras Pancake Night
- March/April: Lenten Stations of the Cross



In the House! Middle School Youth Group

In Luke 2:48 Mary and Joseph find their 12 year-old son Jesus in the temple, reading and discussing the scriptures. His response is “Did you not know that I had to be in my Father’s house?” St. Bernard invites our students in grades 6-8 to come hang out in their Father’s house.

We gather 5 times per year on Saturday evenings from 6:00-8:00 for a social event or service project.



Follow us on Instagram @StBInTheHouse



Sacraments of Initiation

According to the Sacraments of Initiation Policies for the Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, the following needs to be noted:

- The sacraments of initiation are aspects of being a “parishioner” in a parish community, not a student in a catholic school or religious education program. As a result, parishes have primary responsibility for the initiation of their members.
- **The celebration of the sacraments of initiation will ordinarily take place in the parish community of the candidate, regardless of where the catechetical preparation occurs.**

First Reconciliation and First Communion

Intense preparation begins in second grade, *but students are expected to have the foundation of the first grade curriculum.* First Reconciliation will take place in December. First Communion will take place in the weeks after Easter.



- Parents of second grade students will receive information regarding a parent meeting in October to prepare for First Reconciliation, and a First Communion retreat for students and parents in January. All families are expected to participate in these two events.
- As initiation into the Eucharistic communion of the whole Church, the celebration of First Holy Communion most fittingly happens at the parish Sunday Mass.

Confirmation

Intense preparation for Confirmation begins in eighth grade, *but students are expected to have the foundation of the curriculum for grades one through seven.* The sacrament of Confirmation takes place in the Spring, according to the bishop’s schedule.



- Parents of eighth grade students will receive information regarding a meeting in October, which both parents and their eighth graders are expected to attend.
- Highlights of the Confirmation program include: A full-day retreat, parish involvement experiences, a weekly Mass journal, and sponsor interview.



WE BELIEVE

WITH PROJECT DISCIPLE, K-8

Kindergarten through 8th grade Curriculum Overview

(What your children learn about God & the Catholic Faith.....and when)

Our program uses a spiral curriculum that presents the Catholic faith in developmentally appropriate ways, incorporating the four pillars of the Catechism (prayer, morality, sacraments, creed) as they are to be lived and interwoven in the fullness of Christian life.

Scripture: Interwoven in every lesson, the children will be exposed to the Bible. Scripture stories and the teachings of Jesus are the basis of each lesson.

Prayers: Traditional prayers of the church are taught and reinforced throughout the elementary and middle school years: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, the Confiteor, Act of Contrition, the Rosary, Memorare, Morning & Evening prayer, Grace before meals, & Apostles Creed. Students are also encouraged to pray spontaneously.

Precepts: The following are generally introduced in the elementary grades and developed in more detail at varying grades: Creed, Ten Commandments, Corporal & Spiritual works of mercy, Stations of Cross, Beatitudes, Mysteries of the Rosary, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, precepts of the church.

Liturgical Year & Saints: The feasts and seasons of the church year, particularly Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Ordinary Time, and Holy Days of Obligation are covered during all grades. Saints are introduced in Kindergarten and lives of saints selected for each grade level. The Blessed Mother is treated by all grades in the context of Marian feasts and the Holy Family.

Kindergarten.....God Made the World

- Emphasis: Wonders of God’s Creation
- Features: God made all things; light, water, land, animals, people. God gives us our senses, families and friends. God gives us all these things

because of his great love and he wants us to return that love to each other and to him. God chooses Mary and gives us Jesus. Jesus teaches us to pray and to care for others.



First Grade.....God Loves Us

- Emphasis: the Trinity
- Features: God is our loving father & creator. Jesus is God’s Son. He taught us about God and about love. Jesus had many followers. Jesus sends us his Holy Spirit to help us as a church to grow closer to God. The Holy Spirit continues to be our helper and guide. We belong to a parish community. We remember Jesus at Mass & the Eucharist.



Second Grade.....Jesus Shares God’s Life



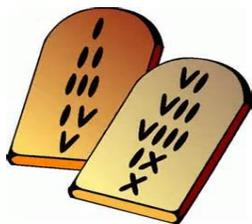
- Emphasis: Sacraments of Initiation & Healing
 - Features: Jesus welcomes us into the church through Baptism and seals us with his Holy Spirit at Confirmation. Jesus gives us the gift of himself in the Eucharist.
 - We explore the two parts of the Mass: Liturgy of the Word & Liturgy of the Eucharist. God gives us laws (commandments) to remind us how important it is to love Him and to love others. Jesus wants us to follow God’s laws but assures us of his forgiveness if we sin. (Sacrament of Penance)

Third Grade.....We are the Church

- Emphasis: Jesus, Holy Spirit & Church
- Features: As promised, after Jesus’ death, he does not leave us alone. He sends his Spirit and the Spirit guides Jesus’ followers in forming the Church. The Church has four distinct marks: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. The Church prays & worships together at Mass. The Church celebrates 7 Sacraments, which help us to experience God’s presence. The Church continues the work of Jesus.



Fourth Grade.....God’s Law Guides Us



- Emphasis: Morality
- Features: Jesus is the way, the truth & the life and he leads us to real happiness. (Beatitudes) Sin is in our world but our conscience is our guide. Each of the Ten Commandments is explored in detail and applied to our everyday lives. We are called to be disciples of Jesus, he is our model of holiness, and the church helps us to live up to our responsibilities as members of God’s family.

Fifth Grade.....We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments

- Emphasis: Sacraments
- Features: Through Jesus’ life and ministry we come to understand how he gives us these 7 special signs of his presence. Jesus welcomed-Sacraments of Initiation, Jesus healed-Sacraments of Healing, Jesus loved-Sacraments of Service. Jesus calls each of us to live as his disciples.



Sixth Grade.....We are God’s People



- Emphasis: Old Testament
- Features: God reveals himself through creation. God chooses a people to be his own and forms a Covenant. We meet the patriarchs and journey through slavery, freedom, the building of a nation, a divided nation, a nation in exile, prophets and predictions of the incarnation.

Seventh Grade.....We Live Our Faith as Disciples of Jesus

- Emphasis: Jesus’ life and his teachings
- Features: An examination of Jesus’ life and teachings, and the sacraments he instituted. Presentation of Jesus’ call to each person to become his disciple and the ways in which his teachings, his sacraments, and his Church nourish people for discipleship.



Eighth Grade.....CHOSEN

- Emphasis: A mature review of the faith focusing on the sacraments, in particular Confirmation and becoming an active disciple.
- Features: High-quality video presentations from some of the nation’s top youth ministers, discussions, journaling, and challenges to help the youth encounter Christ, understand the Catholic faith, and live their faith in their daily life.

