

# St. Cecilia Church

Office of Faith Formation

*2018 – 2019*

Religious Education  
Student Handbook



St. Cecilia Church  
90 Church St  
Rockaway, NJ 07866

April 2018

Dear Parents,

Thank you for registering your child with our parish faith formation program. It is a great joy for us to assist you in your child's faith formation. Many generations of children have come to St. Cecilia's for religious education and sacrament preparation classes. We are excited to continue this rich tradition of faith, hope, and charity.

Religious education classes are offered for students in Kindergarten through 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion are traditionally received in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and the sacrament of Confirmation is received in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The process of catechesis is not limited to simply our parish program. Our program here at St. Cecilia's is a supplement to the 'domestic church'. The primary responsibility to teach and hand on the truths of our faith falls to the parents. Our role as a religious education program is to offer structure, consistency, support, and most importantly, sacrament preparation. The effectiveness of our program is directly linked to a family's faithfulness and participation in the sacramental and spiritual life of the Church.

The purpose of this handbook is to outline our program's general policies and structure. If you have any questions or concerns about our parish religious education program, please do not hesitate to contact the parish office.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you and your children. Please keep us in your prayers, as we will be sure to pray for you.

Sincerely in Christ,

Jim Clancy  
Director of Faith Formation

# Faith Formation Staff

<b><u>Pastor:</u></b>	Rev. Sigmund Peplowski
<b><u>Parochial Vicars:</u></b>	Rev. Pawel Bala Rev. Cerilo Javinez
<b><u>Director of Faith Formation:</u></b>	Jim Clancy
<b><u>Catechists / Aides:</u></b>	over 45 full time volunteers

Thank you to all those who volunteer and support our parish religious education program. Particularly, thank you to our many wonderful catechists and aides. Your hard work and dedication is very much appreciated, and our program does not exist without you.

If you are interested in helping as a catechist or aide, please contact the parish office. Student registration discounts are available to those who volunteer their time and talents.

## Contact Information

<b><u>Office Hours:</u></b>	The parish office is open Mon. - Thurs. 8:30 - 4:30 and Fridays from 8:30 - 2:30
<b><u>Office Phone:</u></b>	973-627-0313 (Jim Clancy, ext 17)
<b><u>Email:</u></b>	<a href="mailto:stcecilia.faithformation@gmail.com">stcecilia.faithformation@gmail.com</a>
<b><u>Website:</u></b>	<a href="http://www.st-cecilia.org">www.st-cecilia.org</a>

Email is the preferred method of communication from the parish to families. Please ensure that you provide a working email address at the time of registration.

# Class Schedule

All classes are held at Divine Mercy Academy on:

Sunday	10:30 – 11:30	K - 8 <sup>th</sup>
Tuesday	7:00 – 8:00	9 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup>
Friday (Generations of Faith)	6:30 – 8:15	All ages

## Policies and Procedures

### **Safety:**

The safety of the children in our program is our first and most important responsibility. All efforts will be made to ensure that students are free to participate in all classes, events, and activities without risk or fear of danger or harm. All staff members are responsible to keep vigilant watch over the safety of the children entrusted to us.

All staff members are also required to undergo criminal background checks before they can work with students, and they are also required to attend a diocesan mandated 'Protecting God's Children' training. All staff members are to be interviewed by the director and approved to work with children.

Parents are welcome and invited to participate in the classroom. However, no parents or outside persons should be in the school building during class time without the director's knowledge. Students are not permitted to leave class early without a written note from a parent.

### **Importance of Prayer:**

Catechesis is not simply an academic exercise. Students, staff, and parents should all actively engage in a personal and communal faith life. Regular prayer and reception of the sacraments, particularly Sunday mass, is the most important part of our program. Participation in the Sunday liturgy is the first precept of the Church as outlined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (see no. 2042). Without Christ, all that we do here is wasted.

### **Special Needs / Medical Issues:**

Please let us know of any special needs your child might have. We will do everything possible to accommodate children in need of extra help. Please also let us know of any allergies or medical issues. No staff member is allowed to administer medication to a student at any time.

### **Adaptive CCD:**

Classes are offered for children with special needs. Children that may require special attention or extra help are welcomed to join this individually modified formation program. Our staff will do their best to work with families to customize a program that will fit a child's particular learning style and ability. Please use the particular registration form to join this program.

### **Parent Session:**

Families enrolled in the traditional CCD classes on Sunday mornings will be required to have a parent / guardian attend at least 2 of the 4 scheduled 'Parent Sessions'. These sessions will be held in October, December, February, and April (exact dates are TBD). Each session will begin with the 8:00 am mass, followed by a light breakfast, and finally a 20-30 presentation. Topics presented will vary each time. Parents who miss more than 2 of the session will no longer have their child registered in the CCD program.

### **Homework / Assessments:**

Each month families will be sent simple and easy study materials for parents to review with their child. Materials will range from basic Catholic prayers to questions and answers from the Baltimore Catechism. Children in the traditional CCD will be given short assessments each month to ensure that material is being reviewed and studied at home.

### **Electronic Devices:**

Students are not allowed to use cell phones or other electronic devices while in the school building for CCD or Confirmation classes. This includes before and after classes. If a student must have a phone or other devices for a particular reason, they will need to turn it off as they enter the building. Students that use a phone or device during these times will first be asked to turn it off and put it away. If a student is seen using it again they will be asked to put their phone or device in plain sight on the teacher's desk until the end of class. Teachers and staff will not confiscate, collect or touch a student's phone or device. Students that refuse to turn off or put phones away will be asked to have a parent pick them up from class.

Cell phones and other devices have become a normal part of our daily lives. However, these electronics prove to be not only a distraction for students and teachers, but also potential safety hazards. Our goal is the safety of our children entrusted to us. Far too often these devices can be used in a dangerous way, and we want to do our best to reduce these dangers.

**Parent / Student / Priest Conferences:**

All students and parents in 10th grade will be required meet with at least one of the priests of the parish to discuss and determine the eligibility of the child to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Conferences will be scheduled for late winter and will be only 15 minutes long. At least one parent will need to be present along with the student.

**Drop Offs / Pick Ups:**

On any given day there are over 100 students coming and going in our parish school and parking lot. Please be extremely careful when dropping off and picking up your child. Parking or idling is permitted only in designated parking spots. Please do not double park, and please do not block the driveways of our neighbors on the street.

Students in Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will not be allowed to leave the building by themselves. A parent or guardian will need to come to the door to pick them up. Please do not call for a young child to run across the parking lot or across the street by themselves.

All students will enter and be dismissed through the double glass doors on the side of the school building that faces the parking lot.

**Privacy:**

All sensitive data and information that is collected is considered private and not to be shared. Staff members are to appreciate the privacy of their students and their individual needs and abilities.

**Attendance:**

Classroom attendance is a requirement for all students. Students are allowed 5 unexcused absences for the year. Students that are chronically absent from class may not be considered eligible for progression in the program.

### **Behavior / Disciple:**

All students are expected to live up to the Christian values taught by the Catholic Church. All staff and families are freely choosing to participate in this program as a way to live out their call to holiness. First and foremost, all students are called to be respectful and courteous to all teachers, staff, fellow students, and to themselves. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. If a student demonstrates actions contrary to the mission of this program, the parents will need to become involved.

Our program borrows space from Divine Mercy Academy. The school building and property are to be respected by all students and staff. Any person that willfully and maliciously damages school property or other personal property will be dismissed from the program entirely.

Any student that comes to class under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be dismissed from the program entirely.

### **Generations of Faith**

The role of parents in the faith formation process is irreplaceable. We are happy to offer total family catechesis at St. Cecilia's. The Generations of Faith program is held once per month during the formation year. All members of the family, at all ages, are welcome to attend this program. At least one parent is required to attend with their child. There is no drop off service for children. Please use the particular registration form to join this program.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Sacrament Preparation Policies:**

Please see the parish website for more details about our 2<sup>nd</sup> grade program policies and requirements.

### **Confirmation Preparation Policies:**

Please see the parish website for more details about our confirmation program policies and requirements.

### **Calendar / Class Closures:**

The schedule of classes for the year is available on the parish website. All dates and times are subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen parish events. In the event of a class cancellation due to weather or other sudden events, an email will be sent as soon as possible to notify families. All efforts will be made to leave updated information on the office voicemail message. All CCD classes will be cancelled anytime the Rockaway Borough or Township schools are cancelled due to inclement weather.

**Testing:**

The Diocese of Paterson requires all 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students to annually be administered the ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education) standardized test. More details will be given to these students and families later in the year.

**Pictures / Photo Sharing:**

For promotional purposes photos may be taken throughout the year of individual or groups of children at different events or classes. These pictures may be used to help promote the parish or the parish programs. Photos may be shared on the parish website, bulletin, newsletter, official social media site, or any other similar platform.

All policies and procedures outlined in this Student Handbook are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the pastor or the director of faith formation.

**\*\*\* Updated as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 \*\*\***

## Student Handbook Agreement

*2018-2019*

By registering for classes, I acknowledge and agree with the policies and procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook. I understand that the registration fee is to be considered a donation to St. Cecilia Church and is non-refundable.

I acknowledge that I have made a promise to God to raise my child in the faith when I brought him / her to be baptized in the Church. This promise included the responsibility to train him / her in the practice of the faith, and to bring him / her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.

I acknowledge that I am the primary educator of the faith for my child. I understand that the greatest way to teach the faith to my child is by example. This example includes regular Sunday mass participation and regular prayer at home.

I am committed to the promises I made at my child's baptism and to lead my child by holy example of word and deed.