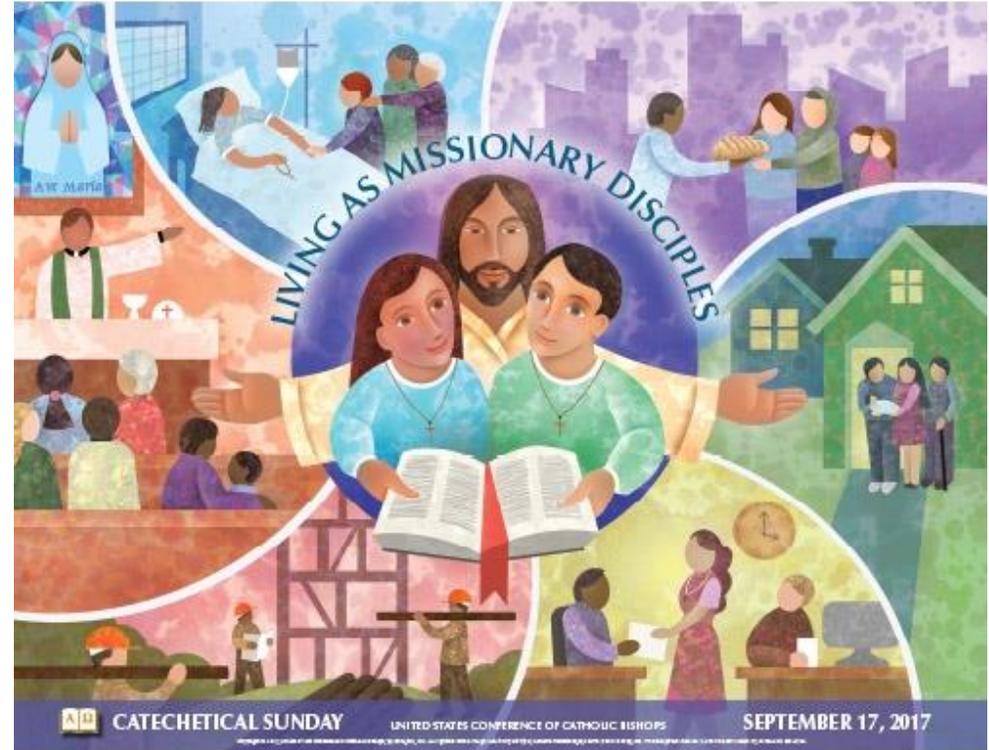


Parent/Guardian: Please carefully review this handbook with your child. Please sign and return the form at the end of the handbook acknowledging that you and your child have read and understand the information contained in this handbook. Thank you.

Saint Agnes Parish
Sellersville, PA
Religious Education Program
2017-2018



1.

We celebrate the theme for our Catechetical Year:

This year, the Church will **celebrate Catechetical Sunday on September 17, 2017**. The 2017 theme will be "Living as Missionary Disciples." Those who the Community has designated to serve as catechists will be called forth to be commissioned for their ministry. Catechetical Sunday is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the role that each person plays, by virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. Catechetical Sunday is an opportunity for all to rededicate themselves to this mission as a community of faith.

Parent / Child / Family Handbook

PHILOSOPHY

The Religious Education Program of Saint Agnes Parish functions under a philosophy which has the beauty and traditions of the Catholic Faith both as its heritage and its springboard into the realms of religious growth and educational excellence. We wish to participate in the transmission of Christian values and encourage the development of a vibrant faith in each child through the implementation of the Parish Mission Statement.

1.

Parish Mission Statement of Saint Agnes Parish

We, the people of Saint Agnes Parish, Sellersville, in communion with the Holy Father, Shepherd of the Universal Church and our Archbishop, Shepherd of the Church in Philadelphia, proclaim to everyone the Good News that Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, offers to all who follow Him the light of life.

2.

Baptized into the Christ Jesus and confirmed by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we desire to share this Light with all by proclaiming the Gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation to every person.

We recognize our call to grow as a faith community. We accept the privilege and the challenge of this call.

We are a community that worships God by:

- 1) Fostering a more active participation in the Sunday liturgy by emphasizing the Liturgy of the Word as well as the Liturgy of the Eucharist by emphasizing the celebration of Liturgy leading to living the Christian life every day.
- 2) Fostering a more intense personal religious life through prayer groups, private devotions, recitation of the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, and prayerful reading of the Scriptures.

We create and nourish Christian community by recognizing and respecting the individual gifts and needs of one another, thereby building a family of Christian families: The Parish.

We are a community that proclaims the Good News by our actions as well as our words, which expresses our faith in Our Lord, Jesus Christ, to all whose lives we touch.

We are a community that teaches the message of Christ by continuing to expand and improve our religious education programs for all age groups through Scripture, Church History, Liturgy, Sacraments, and Christian Morality.

We are a community that serves those in need by ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of the members of our local community and the Universal family.

3.

We pray to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of God, and Saint Agnes, our patroness, to guide us in advancing the mission of Christ and His Church on earth.

4.

Need for Systematic Catechesis

“In his closing speech at the fourth general assembly of the synod, Pope Paul VI rejoiced “to see how everyone drew attention to the absolute need for systematic catechesis, precisely because it is this reflective study of the Christian mystery that fundamentally distinguishes catechesis from all other ways of presenting the word of God.”

In view of practical difficulties, attention must be drawn to some of the characteristics of this instruction:

-It must be systematic, not improvised but programmed to reach a precise goal;

-It must deal with essentials, without any claim to tackle all disputed questions or to transform itself into theological research or scientific exegesis;

-It must nevertheless be sufficiently complete, not stopping short at the initial proclamation of the Christian mystery such as we have in the *kerygma*;

-It must be an integral Christian initiation, open to all the other factors of Christian life.

I am not forgetting the interest of the many different occasions for catechesis connected with personal, family, social and ecclesial life-but I am stressing the need for organic and systematic Christian instruction, because of the tendency in various quarters to minimize its importance.”

Pope John Paul II
Catechesi Tradendae

In order to achieve this end, we ask parents to join us in stressing the importance of the following:

1) **SPIRITUAL**

. . . Attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy days

. . . Frequent reception of Holy Communion

. . . Regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

. . . Development of a rich personal prayer life

. . . Use of collection envelopes at Mass

2) **RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY**

. . . For themselves:
behavior
personal appearance

. . . For their work:
class participation
assignments

. . . For their possessions:
careful use of materials provided for their use – text book, activity book, pencils, crayons

3) **JUSTICE**

- . . . Cheating:
violates the law of honesty and
cannot be tolerated

- . . . Vandalism:
any deliberate destruction of
property demands restitution

4) **CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR / DISCIPLINE**

St. Agnes Parish Religious Education Program is designed to assist parents with the faith formation of their children, as well as foster values and behaviors that are in accord with Catholic teaching. Our program has NO TOLERANCE for behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including, but not limited to ongoing acts of obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional or psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behaviors such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment. In the event a child engages in any of the listed behaviors or any other inappropriate conduct, and has failed to respond to a catechist's request to stop or correct the behavior, the catechist will report the inappropriate behaviors to the DRE who will first speak with the catechist and child, followed by a call to parents with the possibility of removing the child from class.

No refund of tuition or materials will be made.

5.

GENERAL POLICIES

TIME / PLACE:

Levels 1 – 7

Parents may choose the Monday or Wednesday evening sessions for their children.

Classes on both Monday and Wednesday begin at 6:30 PM and end at 8:00 PM.

Level 8

Parish children in grade level 8-12 are encouraged to participate in the St. Agnes Parish Youth Group. Information can be found in the parish Sunday bulletin and on Youth Group website at:

www.youth.stagneschuch.org.

6.

APPROPRIATE DRESS

All children attending PREP classes are expected to a dress appropriately for class.

Children may not wear shirts with offensive or inappropriate logos, language or messages.

Children may not wear shoes that are potentially harmful to themselves or other children such as beach footwear, sandals/ clogs or other open-toed shoes. Children may not wear shoes that are potentially harmful to the floors in the building such as baseball or football shoes with “cleats” or shoes with rollers / “heelies.”

Inappropriate dress is determined by the pastor and DRE.

7.

ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL:

Levels 1 – 7

Orange cones and wooden horses are put up as protective barriers in the parking lot near the classroom building to avoid accidents. Please view the MAP on the web site for safe arrival and dismissal procedures and areas. We ask that you observe these safety procedures by not dropping off your children outside the barrier nor in the lot, but by WALKING them to the door **or** pulling into the drop off line of cars. Wait for assistance from one of the adults to ensure a safe crossing area for your child.

At dismissal time, children in grades 1 through 5 will wait at the classroom to be picked up by an adult. An adult must come to the building personally to pick up your child/children. Older siblings MAY NOT pick up younger children from their classes. Children in grades 1 through 5 will be released only to an

adult. We also ask that you wait until 8:00 PM to approach the classrooms.

Children in grades 6 and 7 will be dismissed from their classrooms with written permission from a parent. Parents may choose for their child to wait at the classroom for pick up by an adult.

Do not park your car in the driveway leading to the building. This could cause a serious accident which could also involve the traffic on Main Street. Our main concern is always for the safety of the children.

8.

ATTENDANCE:

Lateness and irregular attendance interferes greatly with a child’s progress in any learning environment. Your cooperation and support is essential for your child’s spiritual development.

Archdiocesan policy encourages parents to maintain consistent attendance for their children. Policy requires a minimum of thirty hours of instruction for children who attend parish religious education programs. It is suggested that children miss no more than three classes throughout the year. St. Agnes PREP abides by this diocesan recommendation and will notify parents when children have excessive absences.

We request that once an evening is chosen for your child you maintain that schedule for the calendar year. We do not switch evenings mid-year. We do not practice change of parish for PREP attendance to accommodate sports related conflicts.

Requirements for Perfect Attendance are met when a child has not been absent for any of the scheduled classes nor has the child been late in arrival for any scheduled classes.

8a.

St. Agnes PREP is structured around incremental learning. That is, each year builds upon the learning of the previous year. Therefore, it is essential that participants remain enrolled in the program consistently from year-to-year.

Any student who does not re-enroll in the program for a period of one year or more and who does not enroll in another CCD, PREP, or Catholic School during that period will be placed in the grade level they were scheduled to attend prior to their leaving the program. (e.g., after completing 3rd level a student does not re-enroll in any program until 5th level. The student has missed a year of formation and will therefore be placed into a 4th level class upon re-enrollment).

Any student who does not complete the program year by voluntarily withdrawing from the program, by being dismissed from the program due to a disciplinary incident, or failing to meet the program requirements will be required to repeat the grade level upon re-enrollment.

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia REQUIRES a minimum of two consecutive years of formation prior to a child receiving a sacrament. Students who leave the program following First Holy Communion in level 3 and re-enroll in level 7 in order to receive Confirmation Do Not meet this requirement. Therefore, their reception of Confirmation will be deferred.

9.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Home assignments will be given each week. Parents are expected to assist with and supervise these assignments. These assignments are given to reinforce the concepts discussed in class. Absence does not excuse a child from homework. The assignment is usually the next lesson.

10.

TESTING / PROGRESS REPORTS:

Progress Reports will be issued twice a year. Parents are expected to cooperate with catechists concerning testing procedures for each grade level.

Grade level cumulative assessments/tests will be given in each class twice a year... Mid-Year and End-of-Year. Ample time will be given for review and parents will be notified prior to the testing.

11.

PREPARED FOR CLASS:

Prepared includes bringing the necessary materials:

Text Books Note Paper Pencil Folder

Lost or severely damaged books must be replaced. Parents will be required to pay the cost for replacing their child's text book.

12.

FIRE DRILLS:

Fire safety and emergency procedures are explained to catechists and children. Fire drills are held once a year.

13.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

PREP SNOW ALERT – Our snow closing policy is

If the Pennridge School District dismisses early or school is closed because of inclement weather, then PREP classes will be canceled. If roads become icy, or if heavy snow starts after school hours, or if roads are hazardous, we will automatically cancel PREP classes. If PREP classes are canceled for weather or other emergencies, there will be a “closed” announcement on the PREP voice mail system/ phone line and on the website. Families will receive an email at the primary email address as listed on the registration form through the Blackboard connect System.

14.

REGISTRATION:

Please fill in all requested information. If a child is new to the program, namely, we must have a record of his/her baptism. Please bring the completed registration form and your child's baptismal certificate to the Religious Education Office. If you do not have the certificate on hand, please obtain it as soon as possible from the church of baptism and make it available to us in person or by mail.

Each child in the program must re-register each year.

Registration begins in spring of the current year. We do not honor requests to place children in class based on friendships with other children, or to accommodate carpooling. All of our classroom Catechists promote a faith-filled friendly environment between classmates, and dismissal happens at the same time in each classroom. If you are carpooling with another family, you will simply go to the rooms where each of the children in your carpool are located.

15.

TUITION:

There is an annual fee to cover the cost of books and materials. Fees for 2015-2016 are:

\$160.00 – 1 child \$265.00 – 2 children

\$345.00 – 3 or more children

16.

CALENDAR:

A yearly calendar may be downloaded from the PREP web site – www.stagnesprep.com. Any necessary changes to the calendar will

be posted on the web site and will be printed in the parish Sunday bulletin. Parents may request a hard copy of the yearly calendar.

17.

BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS / WEB SITE:

Information concerning the Parish Religious Education Program can be found in the parish Sunday bulletin.

Information for the current year may be obtained from the PREP web site. www.stagnesprep.com

18.

VOLUNTEER CATECHISTS:

The actual teaching of the classes is done by volunteer catechists. These catechists include parents of students and other interested parishioners. Each year, for various reasons, we have a turnover of volunteer catechists. If you are willing to assist us as a catechist or helper, we certainly would appreciate your help. The success of our program depends on the dedication of many willing volunteers. We offer catechist training and many opportunities for our teachers to attend workshops and conferences.

We are blessed at Saint Agnes with a faithful, dedicated and well-trained catechetical staff. Volunteers are also used as class aides and hall monitors.

We have provided a space on the registration form for you to designate how you can help us to help your children. Please consider joining us and encounter the joy of sharing your faith.

19.

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

GRADES 1 –6

Our PREP classes in levels 1-6 use the *We Believe* text book series, published by Sadlier Company and Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, which feature the biblical, liturgical, ecclesial, and natural signs of the Christian message.

The text for these grade level has a “Project Disciple” section at the conclusion of each unit. This feature is prepared for follow-up to the lesson presented in the class. The desire is for parents to encourage their children to make practical and daily use of what they have discussed in class.

Level 7 uses *Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation* by Ascension Press. It is an engaging and effective series that uses video, text and classroom experiences to guide the students in our Confirmation class.

20.

YOUTH FORUM

In conjunction with the Youth Forum Ministry of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Youth Forum has been established at St. Agnes to assist the young people of the parish in using their time and talents to witness the presence of God in our Community.

This goal can be reached by the visible participation of our youth in activities organized by the Youth Forum Adult Advisors. In developing programs of service, the youth will grow in the understanding of the Good News through service to the Lord and develop a sense of mature responsibility.

St. Agnes Parish children who have been confirmed and are in grades 8 through 12 are invited to participate in the parish youth programs. Please call Deacon Lyle Benner at 215-257-2128 X160 for more information about the parish Youth Group.

21.

**GENERAL INFORMATION FOR
PARENTS AND CHILDREN**

Parents, please review these simple rules with your children. They do not automatically know what is expected of them.

- 1) Children are to walk when entering and leaving the school building.
- 2) Please be on time for class. Late arrivals disrupt the class.
- 3) Parents are asked to walk their children to the front door of the school and children will go directly to class or parents may use the “drop-off” lane. Parents may not enter the building at arrival. Children may not enter the classroom until their catechist arrives.
- 4) Toys or other personal belongings not deemed necessary for religious education classes are not permitted in the classroom and will be placed on the catechist’s desk until the end of class.
- 5) There is to be no eating, drinking, or chewing gum in the school.
- 6) Bathrooms should be used only when necessary, as it is a distraction to others and wastes valuable time. Children should be reminded to use bathrooms before leaving home or entering class.
- 7) No student is to push, shove, grab or in any other way touch another child or physically or verbally intimidate another child. Such behaviors will be reported to the DRE and parents will be notified.

- 8) Children must bring their religion text books to class each week. Lost books must be replaced by purchasing a new book. The cost of the replacement is \$25.00
- 9) In the event that a child is to be picked up early, the parent should report to the DRE or hall monitor to have the child dismissed from class. Parents are asked to send a note to the catechist and will be asked to sign an early dismissal form.
- 10) Parents are advised that children will be asked to turn off their cell phones (sound and vibration) when they enter their classrooms. Cell phones in use, any use, during class time will be placed, by the child, on the catechist's desk until the end of class. Cell phones will be returned to children at the end of class and parents will be notified.

11) Non-Custodial Parents

It is the responsibility of both biological parents to provide the Parish Religious Education Office with the latest, most up-to-date Custodial Order or Custody Agreement. If a court order prohibits our releasing a child into the custody of a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the program director with an official copy of the court order or custody section of the divorce decree.

12) Children with Special Needs:

Parents of children who experience physical, emotional or learning disabilities are asked to speak directly with the DRE so that we, as parents and religious educators, can plan for the best learning environment for each child.

22.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

“Parents have a right and a duty to be intimately involved in preparing their children for First Communion.”

National Catechetical Directory

The home is the most important learning environment; and parents are the most important teachers. Parents, by their vocation, have the primary obligation to develop the child given to them by God, physically, morally, intellectually, and spiritually. The role of the religious education program is primarily secondary and supportive.

Therefore, our sacramental program includes catechesis for both parents and children.

PENANCE and EUCHARIST

“The suitable age for the first reception of these sacraments is deemed to be that which in documents of the Church is called the age of reason for discretion. This age, both for Confession and for Communion, is that at which the child begins to reason, that is, about the seventh year, more or less.”

General Catechetical Directory

“Catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is to precede First Communion and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried separation.”

National Catechetical Directory

**ST AGNES PREP REQUIREMENTS for
RECEPTION of SACRAMENTS**

**SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION and
HOLY EUCHARIST:**

- CANDIDATES:** Must be Baptized.
- Must be in 3rd grade or higher.
- Must have successfully completed no less than two years of preparation.
- Must have a satisfactory attendance record.
- PARENTS:** Must be registered in their parish of residence.
- Must support the teachings of the Church.
- Must be personally involved in the preparation of their children including attending Mass regularly.
- Must attend the meetings planned to assist them in fulfilling their task of primary educators.

CONFIRMATION

“As the primary educators of their children, parents, along with sponsors, are to be intimately involved in Catechesis for Confirmation.”

National Catechetical Directory

REQUIREMENTS:

- CANDIDATES:** Must be Baptized.
- Must be in 7th grade or higher.
- Must have successfully completed no less than two years of preparation.
- Must have a satisfactory attendance record.
- Must have a sufficient knowledge of the faith and successfully completed the mission of service.

PARENTS:

- Must be registered in their parish of residence.
- Must support the teachings of the Church.
- Must be personally involved in the preparation of their child including attending Mass regularly.
- Must attend the meetings planned to assist them in fulfilling their task as primary educators.
- May not act as sponsor (or proxy for a sponsor) for their own child.

FAMILY LIFE

The Family,
School for Evangelizers

SPONSOR:

Must be a Roman Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Confirmation.

Must be recommended as a fit candidate by his/her pastor and obtain a Certificate of Eligibility.

Must be 16 years of age or older.

Desirable that this person be the same as the godparent for Baptism.

MAY NOT BE A PARENT of the candidate.

More specific information regarding the parish policy on reception of sacraments may be obtained from the office of the DRE.

The parish pastor has the final authority in determining readiness for reception of all sacraments.

“In our time, a time of new evangelization, it is urgent for Christian parents to take special care in educating their children to be courageous witnesses of the Savior in today’s world. By becoming the first catechists of their own children, they themselves can more easily instill in them a unique love for God’s word. By conforming their lives to the gospel each day, parents encourage children in the consistent and generous choices that belong to every true disciple of the Lord.

Let us pray that every Christian family may be a little missionary church and a school for evangelizers. Let us entrust this mission of all believing families, together with their joys and sufferings, to the Immaculate Virgin...May Mary be their example and their guide, especially an example and guide for families!”

Pope John Paul II

Please continue to complete form. Please return form to the PREP office.

Thank you.

Parent/ Child Parish Religious Education Program Handbook

I, parent/guardian of the following children:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

have read and understand the information contained in this handbook.

Parent Signature_____

Date_____

Please return to your child’s catechist. Thank you.

