Church of St. Luke

Parish Religious Education Program

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2018-2019

PREP Handbook

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St. Luke Church

Parish Religious Education Program

Dear Parents,

In the rite of Baptism, you were told to “make it your constant care to bring up your child in the practice of your faith.” Just as your child looks to you for food, shelter and love in order to grow strong and healthy, your child also needs you for spiritual growth – to nourish their faith, offer guidance and provide moral training. The St. Luke Parish Religious Education Program is here to help you fulfill this duty.

Through Mass participation, religious education studies, prayer instruction, service projects and family activities, our goal is to pass on the rich teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith so that our children will learn to live and love the Gospel message.

We look forward to working together with you and your children.

May God’s blessings be upon all of us as we begin this school year!

 Fr. Bob Grodnicki Teri Frassetto

 Pastor Coordinator of Religious Education

Maureen Mc Mahon

Administrative Assistant

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The St. Luke Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) is dedicated to educating our students in their faith; teaching them to grow as knowledgeable, spiritual and practicing Catholics who have developed a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

**The Church of St. Luke**

1674 Old Freehold Road

Toms River, NJ 08755

Parish Office Phone: 732-286-2222

Parish Office Hours: Monday – Thursday: 9 am - 4 pm, Fridays: 9 am – 12 pm

Parish Website: www.stlukestomsriver.org

**Parish Religious Education Program Staff**

Teri Frassetto, Coordinator of Religious Education

Maureen Mc Mahon, Administrative Assistant

Alice Worth, Communion Coordinator

PREP Office Phone: 732-505-0108

FAX: 732-914-1080

Email: tfrassetto@stlukestomsriver.org

PREP Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

 Summer Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.

PREP Office Closed: Friday, Saturday and Sunday

**Youth Group**

Ron Heitman, Youth Minister

The St. Luke Church Pax Christi Youth Group is open to teens in Grades 7- 9. Meetings are held in the Parish Center on certain Friday evenings from 7- 9 pm.

For more info and current schedule, go to their website: [www.paxteens.com](http://www.paxteens.com).

**Right to Amend**

This PREP handbook is first and foremost a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information concerning the policies and procedures of the St. Luke Parish Religious Education Program. We reserve the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.

**Diocese of Trenton**

**Safe Environment Program**

**For Children, Youth, and their Parents**

The Diocese of Trenton is committed to compliance with the U.S. Bishops’ **Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.** Article 12 of the Charter mandates that each diocese establish and maintain ‘safe environment’ programs for children, youth, and parents, as well as, maintain a training program for ministers, educators, and parish volunteers.

In light of this, the program *RCL Benziger – Family Life* has been adopted by our diocese. This series will be incorporated into the St. Luke Parish Religious Education Program in 2017 for Grade Levels 1 - 8. This replaces the *“Protecting God’s Children - Teaching Touching Safety”* program used since 2006.

As a parent, if you want to familiarize yourself with the subject matter offered to your children, you may come to the St. Luke PREP office and look at the workbooks. In order to keep costs down, the Family Life books will be used year after year; and, therefore will remain in the classroom. Please refer to your child’s Lesson Schedule (inside cover of CCD book for Levels 1 - 7 or in student folders for Level 8) as to when a Family Life chapter will be covered in class.

In addition, you will receive Grade Level Parent Connections each year. It is our hope that you will find these booklets to be a valuable teaching tool for your family. The first five sections in the Parent Connection correspond to the five themes covered in the student’s book. You will find ideas to help you better understand and communicate with your child/ren and simple explanations of the Church’s teachings with regards to living a healthy and holy family life.

**CHILD ABUSE**

Following diocesan policy, and pursuant to state law, St. Luke PREP is required to report suspected child abuse to the proper authorities.

**ST. LUKE PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Diocese of Trenton has established both Religious Education Curriculum guidelines and Sacrament Preparation guidelines which all parishes must follow; however, the way we implement those guidelines may differ from parish to parish.

**SACRAMENT PREPARATION**

Children preparing for the sacraments of First Eucharist and/or Confirmation are required to participate in a two year preparation program. At the mandatory Parent Meetings, the sacrament preparation programs are explained.

**First Holy Communion**

* Level 1 is the first year of preparation for First Eucharist. Children are required to learn their basic prayers (see pg. 14), complete the Level 1 book and attend Mass regularly.
* In Level 2, students are required to learn the Act of Contrition and the Form of Confession. In the course of the year, students will also complete the Level 2 book. At the first of three (3) required meetings, important dates for the year are given. These include a retreat and two (2) additional sessions (held on Saturdays) which are designed to be both instructional and spiritual for parent and child. Regular Mass attendance is also required.

 **Confirmation**

* Level 7 is the first year of preparation for Confirmation. The year begins with a Parent/Student Meeting where the requirements for Level 7 are presented. Students will receive a folder containing work to be completed before entering Level 8. Requirements include regular Mass and class attendance, earning 20 hours of Christian service, choosing a worthy sponsor and completing sponsor paperwork, choosing a Confirmation name (that is a saint’s name) and writing a report on that saint, and completing the workbook “One Faith, One Lord” on which the Level 7 Confirmation Test is based.
* Level 8 is the second year of preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Requirements include the Level 8 Parent/Student Meeting, Confirmation retreat and regular Mass and PREP class attendance, participation in the Level 8 Class Service Project and completion of all required assignments. The sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in the Spring of Level 8. There will be one class after Confirmation to wrap-up the year.

**ADMISSIONS**

Admission is based upon full registration within St. Luke Parish and PREP. Children are required to attend religious education classes, consecutively, completing Levels 1 through 8. Children entering First Grade in school should also begin religious education instruction. PREP students will be placed in a Grade Level appropriate for their learning needs, following diocesan guidelines. St. Luke PREP registration requirements are:

1. **New Student Form (one time only for new students)**

for children entering PREP for first time (Level 1 students, transferring students, or those with no prior religious education instruction.)

* Attach a copy of the child’s birth certificate, and
* Attach a copy of the baptismal certificate.
* If child previously attended another religious education program, a transfer form is required from that parish.
1. **Family Registration Form (One per family)**

Supply current address, phone number and email address; also student information such as grade level, session choice, etc.

1. **Emergency Contact and Information Form (One per child)**

Provide name and phone number of who to call in case you cannot be reached. Medical concerns, learning disabilities, custodial issues, etc. should be brought to the attention of the PREP office on this form.

1. **Registration Fee**

 **RE-REGISTRATION**

PREP registration packets are mailed to the families registered in the program. At St. Luke Church, consecutive years of formal religious education are required for Grade Levels 1 through 8. The Family Registration and Emergency Contact/Information Forms need to be updated every year. Please note any changes from the previous year.

For those students who do not re-register for St. Luke PREP, please be advised that if you do not attend consecutive years of formal religious education classes, grade levels will have to be made up upon your return to the St. Luke PREP and the reception of sacraments may be delayed. Home Study may only be done in cooperation with an approved parish religious education program, following diocesan guidelines.

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

Children with special needs will be placed in an inclusive classroom setting, and treated with patience, kindness and compassion. Our teachers are all volunteers and are not all properly trained in special education. Religious education will be presented to the children to the best of our ability. Keep in mind that each year, we will evaluate how the child is progressing in their religious education studies and will make changes accordingly. Communication between the PREP Coordinator, parents and teachers is key for the well-being of our children.

**TRANSFERS**

If a family relocates to another parish, or a student will be attending religious education classes (or home study) at another parish, you must notify us. We will make note of it and a transfer form will be supplied to the new PREP office.

For those students who transfer out of St. Luke PREP to another parish religious education program, requirements may not be the same. Therefore, if you decide to re-enroll at St. Luke PREP at a later date, additional requirements may be needed to meet our program requirements or the level may have to be repeated.

St. Luke PREP does not make provision for home study for the preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation. We require two years of formal class instruction for the reception of said sacraments; therefore, home study preparation for sacraments done in another parish will not be accepted.

**ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES**

The Diocese of Trenton requires 35 hours of instruction a year. Consistent attendance is essential for effective learning. If a child must be absent over a long period of time (due to illness or accident), discuss this with the Coordinator. We will work out a suitable arrangement.

* Attendance will be taken at each session. Your child is expected to attend every class. Since children receive only 1¼ hours of formal religious instruction each week, it is imperative that absences not exceed four (4).
* If your child will be absent, please call the PREP office at 732-505-0108 and supply a note, dated and signed, upon the student’s return.

 **MISSED CLASS WORK FORM**

* All work from the day absent must be made up. Upon returning to class, the student will receive a **Missed Class Work form**, on which the teacher notes the necessary work to be done at home.
* Parents should work with child to complete the work, sign the Missed Class Work form and return it to the teacher. This form will be kept on file for the year in the PREP office.
* Unsatisfactory attendance (4 or more) with no completed Missed Class Work forms on file will result in an incomplete year that will need to be made up. Excessive absences could result in the repetition of said grade level.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE**

Please observe the parking lot procedures. They are in place for your child’s safety.

* Use only **Parish Center B entrance and exit.**
* All other doors will be locked, alarmed or in use by other organizations.

**ARRIVAL:** You have two choices when arriving for PREP class:

1. PARK in a parking space in the **Back Parking Lot** and walk your child into the building using the **Parish Center B entrance**.
2. DROP OFF your child at the designated point in the **Back Parking Lot**; you then follow traffic pattern around to exit. Your child must immediately go in **Parish Center B entrance** and upstairs to the Faith Formation Center.

***All students and parents must enter and exit the building using the Parish Center B entrance only! Emergency Exits are for emergency use only and will be alarmed!***

**DEPARTURE:**

* **Students in Levels 1 - 7:**

PARK in a parking space in the **Back Parking Lot** and enter building using the **Parish Center B entrance.** At dismissal time, when the teacher is ready, s/he will open the classroom door to allow the parents to enter and “pick up” their children. The teacher will keep your child in the classroom until your arrival. No child in Levels 1 – 6 (or Session E – Level 7) will be allowed to leave the Faith Formation Center and/or building unless accompanied by an adult or suitable representative.

* **Students in Levels 7 & 8 (not Session E - Level 7):**

will be dismissed in an orderly manner. Teachers will accompany them out of the building via the **Parish Center B entrance**. Please be parked in a parking space in the Back Parking Lot at 7:30 pm to receive your child. There will be no curbside pick-up.

**TARDINESS**

All students are expected to be on time for class. Classes begin at 4:30 or 6:15 PM. Tardy students, with a parent/guardian, must report to the Attendance Desk before going to class. Excessive lateness may require making up work or repeating the grade level.

**EARLY DISMISSAL**

In the event a child must leave class early, please advise the PREP OFFICE, FRONT DESK or COORDINATOR **before class with a written note.** At pick-up time, the parent/guardian must go to the Front Desk and sign their child out. The Desk Aide will retrieve the child from the classroom and bring him/her to the parent for dismissal.

**EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Emergency closings for inclement weather, other natural causes or problems with the building will be announced:

1. on the radio over WOBM (92.7 FM)

2. on the St. Luke Church website: [**stlukestomsriver.org**](http://www.wobm.com/stormwatch)

3. on [**www.wobm.com/stormwatch**](http://www.wobm.com/stormwatch)

4. e-mail notice to parents -- Please be sure we have your current email address on file.

**FYI:**

* If the Toms River Schools are closed due to the weather, PREP classes will be cancelled.
* If the Toms River Schools are dismissed early for inclement weather or after-school activities are cancelled due to the weather and road conditions, PREP classes will be cancelled.
* In the case of a Toms River Schools delayed opening, please call the PREP Office after 11:00 am as there usually will be class on that day.

**ST. LUKE PREP EXPECTATIONS OF CATECHISTS**

* Provide a loving Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that the children will be able to grow in their faith.
* Be a Christian role model.
* Attend Mass regularly.
* Arrive 15 minutes before class time.
* Prepare and teach the designated curriculum and Grade Level prayers (see pg. 14).
* Communicate with parents concerning absences and Missed Class Work forms.
* In compliance with diocesan regulations, catechists will be fingerprinted, have background checks done, attend VIRTUS training and complete catechist certification.

**ST. LUKE PREP EXPECTATIONS of STUDENTS**

* Behave in a Christian manner at all times showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students.
* Attend Mass regularly and turn in at least four (4) signed Church Bulletins each school year.
* Attend class regularly and complete any assignments.
* Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
* Actively participate in service projects initiated during the year.
* Show respect for others and for other’s property.
* Follow classroom rules.
* No cell phones or electronic devices may be used during class. There is absolutely NO TEXTING during class. If necessary, the phone will be collected and returned to student at the end of class. Students may only use their cell phone to call a parent if they have permission from their teacher or the coordinator.
* No use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs.
* No weapons on premises

**DISCIPLINE**

A spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority and mutual cooperation are essential elements of the learning environment at St. Luke Parish Religious Education Program. Students are expected to act with courtesy and respect towards all teachers, aides, and one another. A child who chooses to disrupt the good order of the class will have to accept the consequences of irresponsible choices.

**DISCIPLINE POLICY:**

1. Student receives warning from the teacher.

2. Student is sent to the PREP coordinator.

 PREP Coordinator speaks to student about their behavior.

 Student’s name is recorded in Discipline Book.

 Student has a “Time Out” and is brought back to class by the PREP coordinator.

The first time the student is sent to the PREP Coordinator they get a “pass.” If the student is sent out a second time in a school year, the parent will be called.

If the child's disruptive behavior continues, it may become necessary to have a parent meeting with the PREP Coordinator and the teacher (possibly the pastor, too). The parent/guardian may have to sit with the child in class or the child may be removed from the St. Luke Religious Education Program.

**DRESS CODE**

Clothing must be modest. Short-shorts, bare midriffs, bare shoulders and/or backs are not appropriate for church or classroom setting. Underwear of any kind should not be visible.

Sunglasses, hoods, baseball caps and/or hats are not permitted to be worn in the classroom or building. Parents will be called and students who are unsuitably dressed may be sent home.

**VANDALISM**

Students are expected to respect the property of the Parish and of each other. Students should not be kneeling or “rocking” on the chairs or writing on the tables. Anyone caught in this activity will be held responsible for any damages and will be required to reimburse the parish for its repair or replacement.

**GUM - FOOD - SNACKS**

Children are not permitted to chew gum or eat during class. Teachers are not to give food or snacks of any kind to their students during class without the permission of the PREP coordinator. There are far too many children with food allergies.

The Faith Formation Center is used by many different organizations throughout the week. We must maintain a proper level of cleanliness for everyone who uses this building. It is very time-consuming to clean up crumbs, chewed gum, candy wrappers, etc. Please be mindful to keep your room clean.

**FIRE SAFETY**

According to fire laws, each Parish Religious Education Program is required to hold fire drills. This is done so children will be alert and able to move quickly and without panic should something happen. The catechists, students and volunteers leave the Faith Formation Center and report to their designated location until the all clear is announced.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

It can’t be said often enough that education, especially religious education, is most effective when the parents are involved. Below are specific ways in which parents can fulfill their obligations as the PRIMARY AND PRINCIPLE EDUCATORS of their children:

* Attend Mass regularly with your children.
* Attend all Parent Meetings as required by the Parish Religious Education Program.
* Insist that your child take proper care of books and other materials and come to class prepared and on time.
* Review the lesson. Reinforcing what was presented in class each week is a wonderful learning experience for your child.
* Complete any missed class work with your child when they are absent from class and turn in signed Missed Class Work form upon child’s return to class (see pg. 10).
* Be sure your child knows the basic prayers. Catechists will introduce the prayer in class. The parents and children should work on the memorization at home:

 Level 1: Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be

 Level 2: Act of Contrition, Form of Confession

 Level 3: The Apostles Creed

 Level 4: Acts of Faith, Hope and Love

 Level 5: Hail Holy Queen

 Level 6: Nicene Creed

 Levels 7 & 8: Prayer to the Holy Spirit

* Read and follow Religious Education News in the parish bulletin. Read all notices that are sent home with your child, direct mailings, emails, and this PREP Handbook.
* Work with the Catechist and Coordinator in matters of discipline.
* Meet with your children’s teachers. Parents should know who is talking with their children about God.
* Volunteer your time and talents as a Catechist, Permanent Substitute, Desk Aide.

**WORSHIP**

Our Church teaches that it is our obligation to worship God and participate in the Eucharistic Celebration every Saturday evening or Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation. **Therefore, it is expected that every child enrolled in the St. Luke Parish Religious Education Program attend Mass every week and on Holy Days of Obligation.**

Four (4) times throughout the year, your child is required to get a church bulletin signed by someone in church ministry after attending Mass. This signed bulletin should then be handed in at the next class. If your child cannot attend the assigned masses, the masses will have to be made up. (This means that you choose another date to get a bulletin signed. Your child needs to turn in 4 signed bulletins by the end of the school year.) A new Mass Schedule will be provided to you each year.