

Parish of St. Therese
Religious Education Program
Grades 1 – 8



FAMILY HANDBOOK

151 Main Street
Succasunna, NJ 07876
973-584-9444
Fax: 973-584-9492
Email: RelEdOffice@verizon.net
Parish Website: www.StThereseRoxbury.org

Office hours: Monday through Thursday, 9 AM – 3 PM
Other hours by appointment

Mrs. Catherine McGuire, *Director of Religious Education*
Email: RelEdOffice@verizon.net

Michelle Danielson, *Administrative Assistant*
Email: red-assistant@verizon.net

The religious education office is located in the back corner of the church building. We have a mail slot in the office door that may be used to drop off forms, etc. when you attend mass, or at any other time outside of office hours when the building is open.

Religious Education class times:
Sundays 8:45 – 10:15 am
Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 4:30 – 6:00 pm and 6:30 - 8 pm
Please consult calendar on page 4 for specific class days

Our main phone line (973-584-9444) is also answered from the school while Religious Education classes are in session for emergencies related to current classes.



Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2011-2012 Religious Education year!

The Religious Education program at St. Therese is dedicated to educating every student in the faith of Jesus Christ and His Body, the Catholic Church. We firmly believe in union with the Church that children "...because they are called by God to maturity of faith, need and have, therefore, a right to adequate catechesis." (General Catechetical Directory, 167) We strive to provide both an education and an environment in which to foster and nurture the faith of our children. The Church teaches us that this education begins in the family: "This childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable." (General Catechetical Directory, 226) It is this religious awakening in the family that we seek to bring to maturity through our Religious Education program.

Our Church also teaches us that parents are called through the Sacrament of Matrimony to "the grace and ministry of the Christian education of their children..." (General Catechetical Directory, 227). We believe in the primacy of the parental responsibility stated first during the Rite of Marriage: "Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and His Church?" And again during the Rite of Baptism: "You have asked to have your child baptized. In so doing, you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us by loving God and our neighbor." Here in St. Therese Religious Education program our goal is to assist parents in this most sacred duty of the religious education of their children. Our efforts are bound to the larger task of faith formation as a parish. As parents and parishioners we strive to draw our children into our faith tradition and community.

Our catechetical efforts participate in the mission of Jesus handed down to us from the Apostles by teaching:

- ❖ What we believe as church,
- ❖ What we say in prayer,
- ❖ What we celebrate in worship and
- ❖ How we live in witness

The Catechetical Ministry of the Parish of St. Therese supports families in cultivating and sustaining a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to living the values of His Gospel by:

- Providing formal classroom catechesis on a graded level
- Providing information sessions for learning and teaching during special gatherings, liturgical celebrations and retreat experiences
- Providing parents with opportunities for adult enrichment focusing on faith development, parenting, values formation and family spirituality

- Providing our community of believer's parish celebrations that foster support of our candidates who are preparing for the sacraments of First Eucharist and Reconciliation.

The Parish of St. Therese provides catechetical formation classes bi-weekly for those children of registered parishioners who attend public and private non-Catholic schools. This instruction begins in grade 1 and continues through grade 8. In the second grade our children in the Religious Education Sacramental Program and our Parochial school students come together as one community for the Rite of Enrollment Prayer Service and as well as all rehearsals, retreats and Celebrations.

When registering your child to participate in the Religious Education Program at St. Therese, we ask you to take an active role in your child's faith formation. We encourage you to ask your child what they are studying in class! Look through their folders and textbooks often. Discuss the topics as a family. We also ask that you help your child develop an active prayer life, which includes regular participation at the Sunday Liturgy.

For our part, the Religious Education staff will provide regularly scheduled catechetical sessions for your child to attend, led by volunteers who have been cleared through the diocesan's Protecting God's Children program. Working in partnership with you, we will strive to introduce your child to important faith concepts, doctrine and faith practices appropriate for various age levels.

Please take a few moments to carefully read through the handbook now. Don't hesitate to call me if there is anything you would like to discuss further.

We pray for the success of this important ministry at St. Therese Parish, and for the Lord's blessing on all of the St. Therese families, catechists and staff.

Wishing you grace and peace,

Catherine McGuire
Director of Religious Education

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Parish Website

Important information regarding Parish life and the Religious Education ministry may be found at www.stthereserobury.org. Bookmark it and check it often! For information specific to the Catechetical ministry, click *Religious Education* on the home page, then *grades 1 - 8*.

Admission Policy

The Religious Education Office serves parish children in grades one through eight and is open to all registered parishioners of the Parish of St. Therese who attend both public and private school. We serve our catholic schools students who are registered parishioners of the parish during their immediate preparation of the Sacraments in 2nd grade.

The sacraments of First Holy Communion and First Reconciliation require a two year preparation program. For your child to be fully prepared for our Confirmation program your child is required to attend grades 3 - 8 of continued faith formation. The Confirmation program begins in the freshman year of high school. Families with children who have missed years of religious instruction are encouraged to contact the Director of Religious Education to discuss an appropriate way to make up the missed curriculum.

The Confirmation program is under the direction of *Mr. Michael Harding*, Youth Minister. Additional information is available by calling the rectory at 973-584-8271 or clicking on the Confirmation tab under Religious Education.

Adult education programs are also available; please contact the parish main office for more information (973-584-8271).

We will never turn away a child because of financial or other family issues. Please call the Director to discuss your special needs. All information shared is kept confidential.

Volunteer Staff

Our Catechists and support volunteer pool is made up of a wonderful group of dedicated parishioners. Who all volunteer their time for the very important task of planting and nurturing seeds of faith in your children. All of our volunteers are in compliance with the diocesan "Protecting God's Children" policies. This means that they have (1) submitted to a criminal background check, (2) have agreed to abide by the Pastoral Code of Conduct, and (3) have attended an intensive abuse awareness session.

Many of them are not professional teachers. They spend countless hours preparing for each and every lesson in addition to having full-time jobs added to their volunteer responsibilities with the program.

There are many opportunities for parishioners to be involved in this vibrant ministry. Below you will find a list of the volunteer opportunities you can choose from. If you want more information or would like to volunteer contact the Religious Education Office. Please keep our volunteers in your prayers throughout the year, and ask the Holy Spirit to truly guide them in their ministry.

<i>Catechist</i>	Lead teacher for assigned classes; training and guidance provided. Commitment to full program year (15 sessions) is required.
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<i>Classroom Aides</i>	Assist Catechist with activities in classroom in 1 st & 2 nd grade. Commitment to full program year (15 sessions) is required.
<i>Children's Liturgy of the Word K - 3</i>	We celebrate Liturgy of the Word with Children beginning late September through April, for children in Kindergarten through 2nd grade at our regularly scheduled 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass. Children are called to the front of the Sanctuary then process out in to the Church's Atrium, where the readings are presented and explaining on their level of understanding by trained docent. For more information or to volunteer to be a docent please contact the Religious Education office.
<i>Event Help</i>	Called upon periodically during the year to help with special events i.e. hanging of First Eucharist banners, set up of lunches for staff between the Sacramental celebration and meetings.
<i>Hallway Duty</i>	Building security while classes are in session is of paramount concern to us. Volunteer hall monitors are stationed in the hallway/office at all times while classes are in session.
<i>Mission Committee</i>	Assist with Advent and Lenten collections i.e. Operation Rice Bowl
<i>Parent Advisory Board</i>	The Board meets 4 times a year. Parents with children registered in Religious Education are encouraged to join the board. To share ideas and thoughts on how to better our ministry for all the children in the program.
<i>Private Tutors</i>	Needed to work one-on-one with children needing catch-up on missed years of Religious Education. Very flexible schedule and time commitment. Training and guidance provided.
<i>Substitutes</i>	Called upon periodically during the year to lead a class when the catechist is unable to teach. Lesson plans are provided.
<i>Vacation Bible School</i>	Parents interested in volunteer or help organize this event are requested to contact the RE office.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility of Religious Education

Parents always have been and will remain the primary religious educators for their children. Our program is designed to aide parents and guardians in the task of laying a solid faith foundation, encouraging spiritual growth, fostering discipleship. We can only support and reinforce that which is practiced at home. We can give meaning to the rituals and symbols of our Catholic Church, but only the parents/guardians can give meaning to faith in how you live and worship every day. A large part of the success of this program depends on the staff and families working together as a team sharing a common goal: helping each and every one of the children to develop a lasting relationship with God.

Sunday Mass Attendance

Our celebration of Mass is a part of our responsibility in living a Catholic life. It is also a magnificent gift that we share with our children that demonstrates for them the rich traditions of our faith. The beautiful rhythm and flow of the mass cannot be properly taught in the classroom but rather is learned through experience. Regular and consistent attendance at Sunday mass is a part of the religious education of the children and is expected by all families.

We celebrate a Liturgy of the Word for Young Children, grades K-2, September - April at the 10:30 AM Sunday Liturgy. The young children are dismissed to the atrium area of the church where the day's scripture readings are presented and explained to them on their level by a trained volunteer docent. The children are returned to the main body of the church before the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Participation is voluntary; contact the Religious Education Office for more information.

Class Options

Our on campus classes meet twice per month for 90 minutes each session, approximately sessions each year from September through April, for a total of 22 ½ hours. In order to accommodate the large number of children enrolled in our program, we offer a "A/B" rotating schedule. This does not, however, always mean that the classes are "every other week." Please consult the current schedule of classes below for the specific class dates your child has been assigned.

We accept all registrations on good faith that ample volunteers will come forward to lead classes. Families registered for classes without teachers in place by August 1st may be moved to another open schedule.

For the 2011/2012 program year classes will be offered:

"A Schedule

Grades 1 – 8	Sundays	8:45 – 10:15 am
Grades 1 - 6	Tuesdays	4:30 – 6:00 pm
Grades 1 – 6	Wednesdays	4:30 – 6:00 pm

"B Schedule"

Grades 1 – 6	Tuesdays	4:30 – 6:00 pm
Grades 1 – 8	Tuesdays	6:30 – 8:00 pm
Grades 1 – 6	Wednesdays	4:30 – 6:00 pm
Grades 7 & 8	Wednesdays	6:30 – 8:00 pm

2011-2012 CLASS DATES

<p>Sunday A (Grades 1 – 8) 8:45 – 10:15 am</p> <p>September 18 October 2, 16 & 30 November 13, & 27 December 11 January 15 February 12 & 26 March 11, & 25 April 15</p>	<p>Sunday B (Grades 1 – 4) 8:45 – 10:15 am</p> <p>September 25 October 9 & 23 November 6 & 20 December 4 & 18 January 8 & 22 February 5 & 19 March 4, & 18 April 1 & 22</p>
<p>Tuesday A (Grades 1 – 6) 4:30 – 6:00 pm</p> <p>September 20 October 4 & 18 November 1, 15 & 29 December 13 January 3, 17 & 31 February 14 & 28 March 13, & 27 April 17</p>	<p>Tuesday B (Grades 1 – 6) 4:30 – 6:00 & (Grades 1 – 8) 6:30 – 8:00 pm</p> <p>September 27 October 11 & 25 November 8 & 22 December 6 & 20 January 10 & 24 February 7 & 21 March 6, & 20 April 3 & 24</p>
<p>Wednesday A (Grades 2, 3, 5 & 6) 4:30 – 6:00 pm</p> <p>September 21 October 5 & 19 November 2, 16 & 30 December 14 Jan. 4 & 18 February 1, 15 & 29 March 14 & 28 April 18</p>	<p>Wednesday B (Grades 1 – 6) 4:30 – 6:00 pm & (Grades 7 & 8) 6:30 – 8:00 pm</p> <p>September 28 October 12 & 26 November 9 & 23 December 7 & 21 January 11 & 25 February 8 & 22 March 7 & 21 April 4 & 25</p>

Home Study

We highly encourage families to register for class in the context of the classroom options offered in the school building. However we also understand that some families may experience unavoidable conflicts preventing their child from attending on the traditional class schedule. For those families we ask you to contact the Director to request a conference to discuss our home-study alternative.

The Home Study option is opened to children in grades 3 – 8 only. The children are required to complete all assignments and also take part in special events and activities scheduled throughout the year with their peers. Families are required to return the students books at the end of the year for review by the Director.

Tuition Fees

Tuition is expected at the time of registration. Families experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to contact the Director of Religious Education to request a need based waiver or payment plan. A child *will never be turned away* due to financial difficulties.

2011-12 Tuition Fees are as follows:

Active Parishioner \$110 per year for one child (\$170 for 2 or more children)

Non-Active Parishioner \$150 per year for one child (\$250 for 2 or more children)

A Sacrament fee of \$25 per child is assessed in the second grade year in addition to the basic tuition fee for both active and non-active parishioners.

We affirm those families who have been consistently participating in the weekly life of our parish. It is through your regular presence and support that St. Therese is the strong Catholic community that it is.

For those families who are not participating regularly, we ask that you prayerfully consider making a renewed effort toward improvement in this area of your family's faith life in the upcoming year. Status is reviewed for every family on a yearly basis and adjustments are made to the tuition fees when necessary during spring registration.

The *criteria for Active parishioner status are determined by our pastor and is defined as a parishioner who is registered in the parish and uses their parish envelopes a minimum of 25 times during the year. As well as demonstrates the following participation at St. Therese:*

1. **Attends Sunday Mass** on a regular basis. In Exodus 20:20, the Lord commands us to keep holy the Sabbath. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, we gather together as the people of God to thank Him, praise Him and continue to ask Him for the grace we need as individuals, families and parishioners to live His gospel in our daily lives. One could not be considered an active member of a parish and not attend mass on a regular basis.
2. **Understands and supports the outreach programs** of our parish to help one another and those in our community less fortunate than ourselves. In John's gospel 13:14, we have Jesus giving a beautiful example to His apostles of service to others by washing their feet. Support is demonstrated most beautifully by volunteering time and talent to the various social, liturgical, and educational ministries of the parish; through prayer and financial support of these activities.
3. **Contributes regularly**, through the use of their Sunday offering envelopes, to the financial well-being and Christian mission of St. Therese. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see the initial Christian community taking root and beginning to spread the gospel of Jesus. In Acts 2:44, we see many active members of the early Christian community sharing generously of their financial resources so that the work of Christ could continue. We are encouraged to do the same. Through your financial support, we can demonstrate our gratitude for the blessings and graces bestowed on us by continuing His work.

These three qualities constitute an active member of St. Therese parish; an inactive parishioner would be someone who either is simply registered or resides in the territorial boundaries of our parish and does not participate in the life of the parish as outlined above.

Tuition Refunds

There are many fees associated with administration of our religious education ministry. A portion of all tuitions paid goes toward books, classroom supplies, teacher training, computers, office equipment, etc. Preparations to receive students begin in the spring preceding the start of a school year. Therefore, full tuition refund may not be available for student withdrawals after August 1st. Pro-rated refunds will be approved at the discretion of the pastor.

Attendance Policy

Students are required to attend a minimum 12 of the 15 scheduled Religious Education classes for the year. Regular attendance at class is vital for the child to progress in the program. *Absence from 3 classes during the year is considered a maximum limit.* A child who misses more than this number of classes is seriously hampered from getting a good grasp on the material. In addition, please do keep in mind that in religious education, we are not simply imparting facts about the Catholic Church. Each class becomes a small faith community. Class discussions help the students form a Catholic conscience and relate the church teachings to their everyday lives. Your child's presence in class is a vital part of the experience, both for your child and for his or her classmates. **We ask parents to contact the Religious Education Office and leave a message with your child's name and grade if your child will be absent.**

All work missed while absent must be made up and presented to the child's catechist at the beginning of class. In addition, excessive absences may require the child to complete additional work assigned by the Director, and/or may require a student interview with the Director, or may result in the child having to repeat the year. Families experiencing extenuating circumstances that cause long term absences are requested to notify the Religious Education office at the onset of situation (ex. serious student illness or family circumstance).

Arrival and Departure Policies

The parking lot is a busy and dangerous place for your child to be crossing alone. Please park your vehicle in a designated spot and walk to the sidewalk in front of the entrance at both drop-off and pick-up. Please do not encourage your child to meet you at the car. The extra few moments it takes to properly park is worth it for the safety of all the children. If you have a difficult circumstance (ex. infant in the car), please notify the staff ahead of time and we will gladly plan to escort your child to your car for you.

Please do not drop your children off more than 10 minutes before the scheduled class time. We have no provisions for supervision. Students arriving before the start of class may be asked to wait in the entrance way.

Please plan carefully to allow sufficient time for your child to be on time for class. We have such limited time with the children. Children arriving late miss out on a portion of the lesson and also cause a disruption to the rest of the class.

It is ***important that you are on time to pick up your children.*** If you are going to be late please call the Religious Education office to let us know.

Early Dismissal Requests

A ***note from the parent/guardian is required*** for any early dismissal request. At the requested time, the parent/guardian must come into the school office to sign the child out. To optimize the time the child

spends in the lesson, the child will be called down to the office when the parent/guardian arrives at the office.

Please give careful consideration before requesting an early dismissal for your child. While we try to be as accommodating as possible to the busy schedule of today's families, early dismissals cause a disruption and affect the lesson of the entire class. Excessive requests for early dismissals may prevent your child from advancing to the next grade level.

We are authorized to release children to parents/legal guardians only. If you will be **carpooling** with another family, **please send a written notice giving this permission**, or note same on your annual registration form.

Curriculum

Our curriculum for grades 1, 3, 4, 5 & 6 is the "We Believe with Project Disciple" series by Sadlier Publishing. Our 7th and 8th grades classes use the "We Live Our Faith" series, also by Sadlier Publishing. In the 2nd grade Sacramental program we use RCL Benzinger's - Reconciliation and Eucharist series. All of the curriculums have been approved by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops. The curriculum has been carefully developed to inform, encourage and guide the students. The catechists (teachers) also have at their disposal a library of additional resources, including DVDs, storybooks and games, which may be used to reinforce the topics in the curriculum. Knowledge of basic Catholic prayers is included in the curriculum.

Grades 1 through 6 are considered foundation years. Our curriculum is geared to teaching the basics of the Catholic faith. Beginning in grade 7 and continuing in grade 8, we strive to introduce a more in-depth concentration on the role of the students as members of the Body of Christ. Part of the curriculum at this level includes a series of mini-retreats held during their regularly scheduled class time. These large group activities are well received by the students and are a welcome change to the traditional classroom setting. Topics are varied and guest speakers from outside our parish are often brought in.

Progress reports noting your child's achievements are provided twice yearly for students in grades 3 through 8. First semester reports are sent home with the students in January. Second semester reports are mailed home in May.

Home Work

Homework is an necessary component of the Religious Education program. Catechist will give assignments based on the grade level and topics covered in class. Assignments must be returned on the date assigned by the catechist. The assignment will be reviewed by the catechist and be used to determine the child's grade for the year.

Emergency Closing Policy

We follow the Roxbury Public School District for our weather related closings. On a given day, if:

If Roxbury Public Schools are close due to weather conditions - No Religious Education classes

If Roxbury Public Schools dismiss early due to weather conditions - No Religious Education classes

If Roxbury Public Schools stay open but after school activities are cancelled - No Religious Education classes

When Religious Education classes are cancelled, an alert will be posted on the parish website. If in doubt, call the office at 973-584-9444 before you leave your house. A message will be left on the answering machine.

Building Security during Class Times

St. Therese is a large and active parish. Our facilities are limited and many ministries share the facilities on the same afternoon/evening. Your child's safety while with us for religious education is a serious concern for us. The front entrance doors to the school building are locked once classes begin. Cameras are located throughout the building which can all be viewed from the office.

Anyone needing to enter the building once classes have begun should ring the buzzer on the left side of the doors, which rings in the office. Sometimes we are called away from the office to assist momentarily elsewhere in the building. If no one comes to the door after you ring the buzzer, please wait a minute and ring it again.

Administering Medication

If your child has a chronic health condition, such as asthma, diabetes, or anaphylactic allergies, you should notify the Religious Education Director at the beginning of the program year so that proper procedures can be developed to assist your child.

To request that medication, be administered to your child while in attendance of Religious Education you must complete a *Parent's Request to Administer Medication* form. This form includes stipulations and a signed order from a physician. The term medication refers to both prescription and non-prescription medication. Prescription medication must be brought in a pharmacy-labeled container; over the counter medication must be brought in the original, sealed container. Medication cannot be administered to students without this completed paperwork. For your child's safety, all medication must be brought to the school by an adult.

Food in the Classroom

Severe food allergies are a growing occurrence within our student body. Many of our students have serious and life-threatening food allergies and we do not have a nurse in the building during Religious Education classes, nor is our staff trained to administer medical attention other than an occasional Band-Aid. Therefore, no food or drink is allowed in the hallways or classrooms at any time. Please have your child finish any snacks before entering the building. Water fountains are located in the hallways for children who require a drink during classes.

Parents (and students!) sometimes approach us with requests for a classroom holiday party. Please understand that we do not have the time luxury that your child's public school has. We see the children for just 15 classes all year long and, though we love parties too, we cannot take time away from our studies for classroom parties.

A student coming to class hungry is a growing concern in today's hectic society. We understand that your family is likely to be coming to Religious Education class directly from school or another activity. Please consider a small snack on the car ride over. Hungry children do not focus well in the classroom setting. A cheese stick or small package of goldfish in the car is a great way to "tide them over."

Student Behavior

In addition to our policies on the behavior of all adults who volunteer in the religious education program, we must also maintain a safe environment program among the children in our programs. The following behavior code, issued by the Diocese of Paterson, will support that safe environment. All children and staff are expected to abide by this code.

A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CATHOLIC PROGRAMS Behavior Codes for Children and Young People

“Thou shall love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, thy whole mind and thy whole soul. Thou shall love neighbor as thyself for the love of God.” We are called to honor and respect ourselves as part of the Body of Christ. We are also called to honor and respect one another as brothers and sisters in God’s family. So it is that we will maintain the following regulations to ensure a safe environment for all parish and religious education programs.

1. Use of the Internet, computer, and video materials must fall strictly within the guidelines of the parish or religious education program.
2. Hand-held electronic devices including but not limited to cell phones, iPod’s, palm pilots, mp3 players, portable compact disc players, tape recorders, etc., should not be in use during any part of the parish or religious education program.
3. There will be zero tolerance for disrespect, violent, or abusive behavior of any type. Bullying in particular will not be tolerated.
4. There will be zero tolerance of harassment of any kind, including, but not limited to, verbal harassment, gender bias, threats, sexual harassment, or foul language.
5. There will be zero tolerance for substance abuse of any kind, including, but not limited to, drugs, inhalants, alcohol, and tobacco.

The consequences for the forgoing behavior will be immediate. Parents will be called to remove their child. At the discretion of the Director of Religious Education local law enforcement will be notified. The Director will assess the incident and may then decide that the child will not be re-admitted to the program until that child has been evaluated by an appropriate health care professional and a letter is provided to the director stating that the child is not a danger to him/herself or others.

Dress Code

Please know that it is not our objective to make a student or parent feel uncomfortable. We understand that what a young person is wearing is less important than their participation in our sessions. But we are also obligated to create an appropriate learning environment for all of our religious education students.

Modesty is something we want to emphasize in all aspects of our sharing the Good News. Modesty is a virtue that we are called to practice in the way we treat ourselves and others, in the way we speak about others and to others, as well as the way we dress and present ourselves. Modesty in dress shows our respect for ourselves and for one another. The following guidelines closely follow the dress codes in place at the public schools.

- No shirts showing midribs or stomachs
- No thin (spaghetti style) straps (3 finger rule for width)

- No low cut shirts (including low scoop necks)
- Pants are not to be worn so low that undergarments are exposed
- No short skirts (fingertip rule)
- No “sneaker skates”
- No cleats
- No clothing with suggestive or inappropriate slogans, phrases, pictures, etc.
- No sweatshirt hoods are to be pulled up over the head during class
- All hats, including ball caps, are to be removed when entering the building

If a student arrives with inappropriate dress, the parent/guardian will be called and the student will be sent home.

Cell Phones

Texting during class times is a growing problem and one of great concern to the staff. All students are required to have their cell phones turned off and put away before they enter the building for class, and are to stay that way until they are outside the building after dismissal.

Cell phone usage (including texting) during class is disrespectful and will not be tolerated. Any cell phone that is not properly put away out of sight and touch will be confiscated by the staff and returned at dismissal. The ninety minutes of class is not an unreasonable amount of time to expect the children to do without phone calls and texting. Our office phone line (973-584-9444) is answered during class times so that parents/guardians can always reach us in the event of an emergency.

Sacramental Guidelines

The sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are normally received in the second year of religious instruction. Two years of formal preparation are required prior to the reception of the sacraments. Children with learning difficulties may require extra help and/or time. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to contact the Director of Religious Education to request special allowances for their child.

All second grade candidates and their families are expected to take part in the formal Enrollment Ceremony, held in the fall of each year. At this time the candidates and their families will give public witness of their intention in regard to the reception of these sacraments.

New 2011 2012 – All 2nd Sacramental Candidates will take part in St. Therese’s First Eucharist Retreat Day. The children will move from station to station activities that will help reinforce what they are learning in class as they prepare to receive Jesus. We will be looking for parents to help as activity hosts, group leaders, shoppers etc. More information will be shared at the first parent meeting scheduled in early October.

Parents/Guardians are required to attend two preparation meetings (see full calendar of dates on the website). This is a diocesan requirement and not up to individual parishes.

- Regular attendance at Sunday liturgy (mass) is expected by all families.
- Each child must be able to demonstrate readiness for each sacrament, as detailed below.

Reconciliation Readiness

1. The child must have an initial knowledge of

- a. the person of Jesus
 - b. the Gospel message of forgiveness
 - c. sin and its effects
 - d. understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness, and conversion
2. The child freely desires to receive the sacrament.
 3. The child must exhibit that personal prayer is a part of his/her life through knowledge of the basic prayers: The Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, The Glory Be (all taught in first grade), and the Act of Sorrow (taught in second grade).

Communion Readiness

A child according to his/her capacity:

1. Has celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Communion
2. Participates actively and consciously in Sunday Liturgy on a regular basis
3. Understands that (a) the Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of Christ under the appearance of bread and wine and (b) that the Eucharist is the commemoration of Christ's last meal with his disciples before he died, and a memorial of his sacrifice for our salvation
4. Understands that by sharing in this special meal, we become brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ on earth

** Detailed Sacramental Policies and Guidelines of the Diocese of Paterson are available online at www.stthereserobury.org home page under Parish/Sacraments.