



Dear Families,

It's time to register for the s time to transition to the 2026/2027 program for your child. Make it seamless by completing your registration today to help ensure the continuity of your child's faith journey. We know how busy everyone is but we also know how important it is in today's world to make time for God.

Just a few hours each week in unity with God helps provide the foundation our youth needs to hear and follow his word. I of course, hope and encourage you to make the most of this time with your children. Modeling your own faith by joining us in the liturgy each weekend helps your own child's faith grow. Our children learn by example and having your family together at church is one of the most meaningful and visible ways to demonstrate your faith not only to your children, but of course, to God as well.

We thank you for entrusting your children with us and know that our catechists and CCD director will continue to work diligently, kindly and with dedication to ensure your child's success in discovering more about their Catholic faith each week. Our CCD program will resume Sunday, Sept. 20, 2026.

Thank you, for joining us.

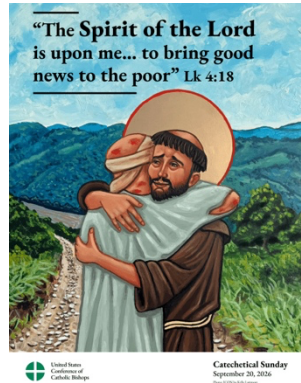
May God Bless You,
Cheryl Moritz,
CCD Director, St. Francis

ST. FRANCIS CHURCH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FAMILY HANDBOOK 2026/2027

Grades 1 — 8



CATECHETICAL SUNDAY 2026



Catechetical Sunday, a national day to celebrate the ministry of passing on the faith, is September 20, 2026. This year's theme, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...to bring good news to the poor." Luke 4:18. The theme reveals Jesus' mission and identity. Anointed by the Holy Spirit, he is sent to bring hope, healing, and freedom—especially to the poor, the brokenhearted, and the forgotten. This passage shows that the Messiah comes not with power or status, but with compassion, restoring dignity and proclaiming God's mercy. It also becomes a model for the Church, us, which is called to continue Christ's work by sharing the Good News and caring for those most in need. We are called to be eucharist by word and action to our brothers and sisters in Christ. Our times cry out for this kind of holiness, one inflamed by the ardent determination to bring as many of our brothers and sisters as possible to Christ.

About Catechetical Sunday

The ministry of the Word is a fundamental element of evangelization through all its stages because it involves the proclamation of Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God. "The word of God nourishes both evangelizers and those who are being evangelized so that each one may continue to grow in his or her Christian life" (*National Directory for Catechesis* [NDC] [Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005], no. 17).

Why do we celebrate Catechetical Sunday?

In 1935, the Vatican published *On the Better Care and Promotion of Catechetical Education*, a document that asks every country to acknowledge the importance of the

Church's teaching ministry and to honor those who serve the Christian community as catechists. For many years after Catechetical Sunday was established, national catechetical congresses were held in conjunction with the celebration. Beginning in 1971, the USCCB's Department of Education began producing materials to help parishes celebrate the event at the local level. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has designated the third Sunday of September as Catechetical Sunday.

Those whom 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.

What Does the Word "Catechetical" Mean?

The word might be more familiar than you think. Many Catholics have used the word "catechism" for years, and they know it has something to do with the compendium of the Church's teachings. The root word, "catechesis," is from a Greek word meaning "to echo, or resound." Catechesis is the act of resounding or bringing the Church's teachings to the world. A catechist is one who teaches in the name of the Church.

Why do we have a special day set aside to commission catechists?

Catechesis is a distinct and special ministry in the Church. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church makes clear, "Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life . . . her inner growth and correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on catechesis" (no. 7). This ministry of teaching in the name of the Church has a profound dignity, which is why catechists are formally commissioned by the Church. It is only fitting that we set aside a day to highlight this ministry and invite the entire church community to think about our responsibility to share our faith with others.

How are parents, the primary catechists of their children recognized on Catechetical Sunday?

Parents are truly the primary catechists of their children. They prepare the soil and plant the first seeds of faith. On Catechetical Sunday, we not only highlight the work of catechists in parishes and schools, but we also commend parents and guardians and encourage them to take seriously their role of making their Catholic households a place where faith is passed on to the next generation. This is why the rite of blessing of catechists used on Catechetical Sunday includes an optional blessing of parents and guardians.

Catechists

“The Catechist is the instructor of religion who is committed to participation in the ministry of the Word. Through religious instruction of others, the Catechist strives toward a mutual fulfillment of faith which is living, conscious and active. The Catechist part in mission and ministry is harmonious with the role of the Church as a whole, i.e. to lead people to renewed conversion and toward growth in likeness to Jesus” (Catechetical Administrative Manual-Archdiocese of Newark). St. Francis is grateful to the faithfulness and dedication of these catechists to our parish family.

St. Francis Church Vision Statement

To grow in the spirit of charity, serving the poor, the needy and the suffering.

Mission Statement

The mission of St. Francis Catholic Church is to encounter the love of Christ through worship, service, and charity.

Religious Education Mission Statement

As we minister to the families of St. Francis Catholic Church, it is the mission of the Religious Education Department to support and assist parents in the formation of their children in their Catholic Faith along with striving to instill an everlasting love of God and neighbor, using St. Francis as our model and guide. We strive to impact to each child doctrines of our faith in its fullness, as both the knowledge to be learned and to be lived.

Goals

- To support parents in their roles as primary educators of their children
- To develop a strong sense of belonging to a parish family, by participation in Sunday Mass and other parish celebrations.

- To prepare children and their families for reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- To work with our youth in preparing them for the Sacrament of Confirmation both spiritually and doctrinally, developing a habit of service to others and commitment to worship and community.
- To offer opportunities for adult development through Parish Ministry and other adult education.

Registration

All registrants should contact Cheryl Moritz at the Rectory 201-659-1772 or ccd@stfrancishoboken.net. St. Francis does follow the Archdiocese of Newark policy that families must be registered in the parish in order to register for the Religious Education Program. If your family is not a member of our parish and would like to enroll in our program, please provide a letter from your parish. A copy of your child's Baptismal certificate along with any other sacramental certificates that your child has received must be submitted to complete the registration. If your child has received their sacraments here at St. Francis you are not required to submit their certificates.

Mass participation

The importance of participation with your children in the Holy Mass. Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” Mt.19:14. The Mass is a vital part of the religious education of our children. When we bring our children to Holy Mass, we are bringing our children (as well as ourselves) directly to Jesus; Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity, in the Eucharist! Our children are our gifts from God. As parents/guardians, it our responsibility to bring them to God to teach to know Him, to Love Him, and to Serve Him in the world. We live and grow in the parish family. Attendance at Sunday Mass is mandatory whether class is in session or not.

Attendance

Each course of study at each grade level is done sequentially. Only 3 absences will be allowed, and the work missed must be made up. If your child is going to be absent, please email your child's teacher before class begins or call the rectory at 201.659.1772. The Sunday missed after the first day of class are considered absences. Frequent absences make it impossible for your child to grasp concepts. Developing a sense of community and an identity with the parish are important aspects of our program.

Children's Liturgies

Once a month, all CCD participants will have the opportunity to participate actively during the liturgy.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) Adapted for Children

Children (over the age of 7) and youth desiring Baptism and inquiring about the Roman Catholic faith. If you would like your child to journey with your family and the parish team in reflection, growth, community, prayer and instruction, contact Cheryl Moritz at 201-659-1772 for information and registration.

Amendments to Handbook

This Handbook is subject to change at anytime when determined to be necessary by the Pastor and /or Parish Catechetical Leader of Religious Education. Parent(s) guardian(s) will be notified in a timely manner if changes are made.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Students must be 7 years of age or older, be baptized, have had at least one year of religious education IMMEDIATELY PRIOR to the year of reception, be currently enrolled and participating in religious education class either in the Parish Religious Education classes or

Catholic school, and be participating in Sunday liturgies and Holy days. This is a parish and family centered process. Parent(s) participation is required.

Confirmation

To receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, students must be in the 8th grade or above, registered as parish members, Baptized and have received First Eucharist, have had at least one year of religious education IMMEDIATELY PRIOR to the year of reception, enrolled in religious education class at the parish school, and participating in Sunday liturgies and Holy days.

Drugs

Drugs are not allowed on Church property. If a student is found to be in possession, the student will be detained until the police are notified. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified.

Discipline

At St. Francis, we try to treat each other the way Jesus would want. Students are required to be polite and respectful to the Religious Education staff, catechists, their peers, themselves and St. Francis property. In the classroom the catechist is primarily responsible for discipline. The catechist will handle any minor discipline problems by a phone call to the student's parents to discuss the matter. However, if a student continues to be disruptive the matter will then be referred to the Parish Catechetical Leader. A meeting will be held the Parish Catechetical Leader, catechist, the parent(s)/guardian(s), and the student to reconcile any difficulties.

Student Code of Discipline

- Students are expected to show respect for all persons and their feelings in words and actions.
- Students are expected to comply with the classroom rules set out by the catechist in the interest of providing a **good** learning environment.
- Students are not allowed to bring snacks, gum or candy to class.
- Hats are not to be worn in the building.
- Toys and electronics are not to be brought to class.
- Cell phones are to be shut off and put away during class.

Pick Up/Drop Off Policy

We are very concerned about the safety of your children, so for that reason, please bring your child inside the Parish Center, no later than 10:30 am. Remember we do have classes going on in the Parish Center and parents are welcome to wait for their children in the back of the church. Not in the vestibule.

The front doors to the Parish Center will not be open for you to pick up your children at 12 Noon.

- All children should be picked up in the Parish Center no later than 12 Noon.
- We cannot release your child to another person without a written notice prior to class.
- If your child is able to self-dismiss, an email from the parent or guardian stating such is required.
- No child will be dismissed to Uber, Lyft, or taxi service without a parent or authorized guardian present.

Tardiness

Students arriving to class after 10:30 need to be escorted to the Parish Center or the Cry Room so that the CCD teacher is aware of their arrival.

Student Records

Every effort is made to keep detailed records of each child. These records contain sacrament information. If a family transfers to another parish, a copy of the record will be forwarded if a written request is made. Any child entering the program from another parish should present a copy of his/her record from that parish.

Communication/Change of Student Information

Communication is very important to the success of the Religious Education Program. Updates to the program will be sent electronically, posted on the parish websites, summarized in the parish bulletin and when necessary, by mail. Please notify the Religious Education office of any change of address, phone number or e-mail address.

Donation

This year Father Chris asks each family for an \$85.00 donation per family to help cover the expenses of the CCD materials.

Textbooks

Grades 1-8 will use the textbook series Alive in Christ. Grades 2 and 8 will also use Encounter with Christ in preparation for their sacraments. Lost books must be replaced. Lost book fee (\$20.00) will be charged.

Children's Choir

Mitchell Lane, our Children's Cantor will run some choir practices during CCD, as part of music ministry. We will also conduct formal choir practice for any child interested in joining the choir or being song leaders at mass. All are welcome to join. Practices will be held on Tuesday evenings from 6 PM – 7 PM in the church.

Empowering God's Children – Parish Implementation

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, mandates training for children on how to keep themselves safe from sexual abuse and exploitation. Cardinal Tobin's mandated implementation of the Virtus K-12 safe environment program, Empowering God's Children, continues to represent the commitment by the Archdiocese of Newark to protect the children in our care from all types of abuse and to be advocates for their safety. Beginning in September of 2022, parish catechetical programs for children attending public schools are required to implement this program. More information regarding this program will be made available through our religious education office.

ACRE Exam

The Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) is an integrated, multi-level survey instrument developed by the National Catholic Educational Association. It is designed to provide parish and diocesan religious education educators with valuable information on the students' religious knowledge, religious beliefs, attitudes and practices; and perceptions of themselves, their parish community and their parish religious education program. This exam may be administered to all 5th and 8th grade students during the spring.

Inclement Weather Policy

In case of inclement weather, your child's Catechist will notify you of cancellations via phone or email.

Fire Drills & Crisis Management

Students will be instructed on the proper procedures for any emergency situation. Fire/Lock Down Drills will be conducted during the year to ensure the safety of our students. In the event of a real emergency, children will be taken to an evacuation site as directed by

the police. Parents/guardians will be contacted using the contact information supplied on the registration form. Please report any changes to this information immediately.

Custody

In cases where the custody of our students has been restricted by the courts, a copy of the court document must be on file in our office.

Child Abuse Policy

New Jersey State Statutes requires that the Division of Child Protection and Permanency (formerly DYFS) be notified immediately if a catechist and/or Parish Catechetical Leader of Religious Education suspects child abuse or neglected.