***St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish***

***P.R.E.P Parent/Student Policy Handbook***

***2021-2022***

***St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Church***

***P.O. Box 709, 8910 Gap Newport Pike***

***Avondale, PA 19311***

***610-268-0296***

THIS HANDBOOK CONTAINS CERTAIN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ***ST. GABRIEL OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER*** RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM (HEREIN KNOWN AS **THE PROGRAM**). THE PROGRAM MAY CHANGE ANY OF ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NEEDED AND APPLY THEM AS CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE.

IN THE EVENT OF SUCH A CHANGE PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN PROMPT NOTIFICATION AND PROVIDED WITH AN ADDENDUM IF NECESSARY.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT A PARTICULAR POLICY OR PROCEDURE PLEASE CONTACT THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR.

STUDENTS AND PARENTS MUST ACCEPT AND ABIDE BY THE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN THIS HANDBOOK IN ORDER FOR THE STUDENT TO ATTEND THE PROGRAM.

*Last revised March 2021*

**UNIVERSAL STATEMENT OF CATHOLICITY**

"Catechesis describes the essential ministry of the (Catholic) Church through which the teachings of Christ have been passed on to believers throughout the ages…Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes the teaching of Christian doctrine” of the Roman Catholic Church*. (National Directory for Catechesis*, no.1, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) Keeping in mind that all the baptized have a right to catechesis, every person, however limited, is capable of growth in holiness (*General Directory for Catechesis*, no. 189). Catechetical and sacramental programs are inclusive of parishioners with disabilities and may need to be adapted for some parishioners with disabilities

**1.**

***Saint Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother***

***Parish Mission Statement***

***We, the people of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, recognize our call: to grow as brothers and sisters in Christ; to edify the Christian family; to reflect the risen Christ; and to build a center of nourishment, community, education and service proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Light of the World to all those who would follow Him.***

***Baptized into Christ Jesus, confirmed by the Holy Spirit,***

***empowered by His gifts of Grace, we are***

***unified by faith into one body, the Presence of Christ in***

***the world today***.

***Let us grow in enlightenment by participation in***

***service and prayer.***

***Let us grow in stature through Worship and***

***celebration of the Sacraments.***

***Let us grow in humility by sacrificial acts and***

***giving.***

***Let us grow in Spirit by leading an exemplary life***

***in word and deed.***

***Let us grow in wisdom through reading the Word***

***of God, in the Holy Bible and in the***

***Sacred Tradition of Christ’s Church.***

**We pray to God in communion with Our Blessed Mother and with St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother, to guide us on our path to show the light of Jesus Christ to all the world until we reach our heavenly home.**

**2.**

**P.R.E.P.**

Our parish religious education and faith formation program is for all children not enrolled in Catholic schools. The program also provides opportunities for adults to advance in their knowledge and growth in faith.

Our parish has provided classes since September 1989. Thus far we have relied upon the generous service of volunteer catechists, substitutes, and aides, to whom we are very grateful.

Besides providing formal religious instructions for students in a full time non-Catholic school, which is paramount, we also include prayer and the proclaiming and explaining of the Holy Scriptures during class which are important components of our program. Formation in our Catholic faith along with information about our beliefs is our mission.

Since the formal religious education that we provide is dependent upon family co-operation, **we expect that the children and family celebrate the Mass each week at our parish Church.** We also expect that parents take an active interest in the program by seeing that the children attend classes regularly, punctually, and are prepared for them. Some parental input in the lessons is also requested when the students bring home the “Family and Faith” papers. These papers are a summary of what was taught in your child’s class.

We also ask that each family having a child in the program consider helping by way of serving as a catechist, substitute, aide, monitor, or assistant for a special occasion.

**3.**

**Policies and Procedures**

**Session Times and Appointments**

Our Program is held every Monday from 4:30pm-5:50pm from September to April, with the exception of major holidays and major parish events. While the Program recognizes the difficulty in scheduling various appointments, the scheduling of doctor and other appointments should not be made during program hours except for cases of emergency, in which case the parent agrees to complete any missed work and lessons at home. See **Student Absences** for details on parental expectations with regard to missed class work and assignments.

Late arrivals or early dismissals due to medical appointments and early dismissals due to extracurricular or sports related activities are strongly discouraged.

**Arrival and Pick-Up Procedures**

There are no early drop off for students as the catechists and aides are not required to be in the classrooms until ten minutes before the start of class. Occasional early pick-up needs to be pre-arranged. Please call office at 610-268-0296. If weekly requests for early dismissal are needed other arrangements may be made. Please notify Mr. Schurr. Early dismissals are very disruptive to the continuity of the classroom environment.

Please note, for the Safety of our students and staff, and to comply with the Safe Environment Policy of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, parents are not permitted to enter the hall building during arrival time unless on official business with the program, in which case a visitor’s pass must be obtained.

**4.**

**Dismissal**

Out of genuine concern for the safety of our students, we request that parents observe our parking regulations:

1. **When arriving, please see that the children enter the hall building. No running to class.**
2. **When picking up children at the end of classes, please come into the hall and sign out your children with the hall monitor. You will need to initial the pre-printed form next to your child’s name. (Initials and time of pick-up)**
3. **All students will be dismissed from their individual classrooms.**

**Attendance**

Regular and punctual attendance is required.

**Enrollment**

Students who have attended another program (P.R.E.P. or Catholic School) are required to submit documentation (a report card or a letter) concerning their attendance and level.

As P.R.E.P. levels do not always correspond to grades in school, if a student is enrolled who has not been enrolled in a program for a series of years, it will be up to the program coordinator and pastors discretion as to where the student will be placed. There may be a series of tests the student will need to complete to help determine their level of knowledge about the faith to help best determine their placement.

**5.**

If a student who was previously enrolled misses a year and does not attend another approved program, that student may be expected to make up the year they have missed.

If a student who is enrolled drops out at any point of the year and re-enrolls the next year, they may be expected to make up the entire year or portions of the year they have missed.

Students who miss the formative years before the sacraments of 1st Reconciliation, 1st Holy Communion, and Confirmation, may have to defer to a later point in time in which they are properly disposed to receive the sacrament. All decisions on this matter are up to the discretion of the program coordinator and pastor.

New students are requested to present an official record of Baptism and 1st Communion if applicable.

**Program Fees**

To help *partially* defray the costs of our program that includes textbooks, materials, utilities, building maintenance, etc. our fees for the current year are as follows:

1 student in a participating family: $ 235.00

2 or more students in the same participating family: $ 320.00

1 student in a non-participating family: $335.00

2 or more students in the same non-participating family: $420.00

**6.**

Registration and payment of fees for the following year's program is made in the preceding spring of each year to enable the staff to prepare and order texts and materials in advance. A discounted fee of $10 for single child and $20 for multiple children is granted for early registration by May 1st.

Being sensitive to the needs of our families, a deferred payment plan is available upon request. Anyone who cannot pay the fee in full at the time of registration or who has difficulty making payment due to hardship should contact the program coordinator to discuss other possible arrangements.

In the event that a student voluntarily leaves the Program during the program year, or is dismissed from the Program for any reason, no refund of tuition or material fees will be made to the family**.**

In addition, there may be certain material fees associated with sacramental preparation that are in addition to the Program fee. These material fees cover incidentals associated with sacramental preparation. These fees have separate due dates which will be provided to families of sacramental candidates separately.

**Student Absence and Inclement Weather**

When a student is absent, we request that parents send an explanatory note to his/her catechist. Lesson assignments for the class missed are to be made up. This letter does not excuse the student. Lateness is very disruptive to the classroom environment**. *Students who are either absent five or more times, or habitually late may be expected to either repeat the level or to make up the time in the summer****.* Thank you for your understanding and co-operation. In case of inclement winter weather, we will contact you to cancel class if warranted.

**7.**

**Snack Free Zone**

Out of Christian Charity and in response to those students who may have a food borne allergy, ***there is to be no food or drink inside the classrooms at any time***, with the exception of water.

**Safe Environment Guidelines**

Our dedicated catechists and aides are all volunteers. Some are currently or have been professional educators. All catechists have taken or are in the process of taking the courses required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

***All adults*** in the classrooms are required by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to have obtained Criminal and Child Abuse Clearances along with completion of a Safe Environment Class. Parents are invited to visit and sit-in their child’s classroom. Please contact Mr. Schurr to arrange this and to obtain a visitor badge for this **one-time** opportunity. All adults in the classroom will be required to wear an ID badge during class time.

Every year there is also a Safe Environment Lesson that is given to us by the Archdiocese for our catechists to go over with the children. These lessons are entitled Kid Talk and incorporate key child sexual abuse prevention concepts with theological themes from Sacred Scripture. As a result each lesson is taught by the catechists to help ensure your children remain safe. If you wish to opt out of these lessons it is strongly encouraged that you go over them with your child at home.

**8.**

**Formation and Academic Life**

**Assessments/Unit Review**

Students need to exhibit proficient mastery of the required material for their grade level to be considered for promotion at the end of the year.

The Program's goal is to help students not only come to know their faith and the teachings of Christ Jesus and his Church, but to also enable them to live their faith as a disciple of Christ Jesus.

To help achieve this goal catechists will administer various formative assessments to students over the course of each semester. Formative assessments are used to monitor student learning in order to provide ongoing feedback to catechists and students in order to improve learning. Specifically, formative assessments help students identify their strengths and weaknesses so that they and catechists can target areas that need work. Formative assessments also enable catechists to take immediate steps to address areas of student struggle once identified. The assessment process allows the Program to provide objective feedback on and evaluation of the students' mastery of the material presented.

Assessments will be administered at the discretion of the catechists, and may be formal (such as a quiz or a chapter/unit review) or informal (such as a classroom debate, review games, class/group discussion, etc.) In the event of a formal assessment, catechists will provide a minimum of one week's advanced notice to students.

Modified assessments may be provided to those students with documented learning challenges.

**9.**

**Curriculum**

Our textbook series, Alive in Christ, which is approved by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, is published by *Our Sunday Visitor.*

The textbook series is organized around key themes of Catholic teaching that repeat each year with a grade level focus, building on the child’s knowledge of the faith at each developmental stage.

The seven essential themes of the faith – Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Church, Morality, Sacraments and the Kingdom of God- provide the structural framework that organizes the content of the grade.

Sacred Scripture from both the Old and New Testament is at the heart of Alive in Christ. The students are invited to understand the importance of Sacred Scripture along with the basic and foundational doctrinal concepts of our Catholic faith as found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (C.C.C.)

The use of music in this series is both intentional and purposeful. The music has been chosen to form children in the lesson content and Catholic identity. It is age appropriate and includes children’s voices.

The “Family & Faith” page is an invaluable resource in providing adults the practical help they need to grow in faith themselves and to nurture the faith of their children. Please make use of it in your home.

**Discipline**

For education to be effective, rules regarding behavior are essential. Parents are asked to see that their children are dressed appropriately for class. Dress is casual but respectful. Students should not chew gum in class, nor wear hats in class. Students are expected to be respectful to catechists, aides, and other students. Parents with children who have special needs should inform the staff.

**10.**

* The 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, bullying, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment. Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and should not be tolerated in any form from students or their family members.
* If the adults behavior is incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the Parish it can be grounds for disciplinary action, including but not limited to, immediate dismissal of the participant, as well as reporting the incident to the appropriate legal authorities where appropriate
* If a student is found to be in repeated violation of these rules it may be grounds for dismissal from the program.
* If a student is found to be in violation of the rules against harassment (sexual or other forms), vandalism, any form of intimidation, or contraband, it may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program even on the first offence.

**Progress Report**

Progress reports are issued twice a year at the close of each semester (December and March). The progress report is an instrument designed to provide feedback on a student's mastery of the required material for their grade level as well as the student's conduct, effort, and attendance in the program.

**11.**

**Sacramental Preparation**

To be eligible to celebrate the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation, students must be in our program (or in another approved program) *un-interrupted for three years* (Reconciliation and Eucharist), and *for seven years* (Confirmation).

**Updating Contact Information**

The contact information that you provide at the time of registration will be used as the primary means of contacting you. Updating changes to this information, especially changes to email addresses, is your sole responsibility. In order to receive necessary and vital information pertaining to your child’s participation in our program it is imperative that you notify the program coordinator as to any changes in address, phone numbers, or email.

**Parent Orientation**

The first class of the school year will be a parent orientation to be held in the Church. Each family will be required to gather in the Church for the opening prayer of our P.R.E.P year. After the prayer the catechists will take the students and go to the hall and their individual classrooms for their opening session.

The parents will remain in the Church for the parent orientation. The Coordinator of Religious Education will inform the parents of all new and not so new policies. Dismissal of the students will be at the end of the session.

**12.**

**Hall Information**

With the construction of our new Parish Hall there are new guidelines and rules to be followed. There is to be no food or drink in any of the classrooms, with the exception of water. Each Level will be assigned a class room, with two levels being in the open hall space and 7th level being up in the loft. If for any reason it has been determined the 7th Level is not responsible enough to be trusted in the loft, they will be relocated to the open floor area. No student is permitted into the loft without adult supervision. Each classroom will always have two adults present and a child is to never be in a classroom unattended. The bathroom that is nearest to the entrance is reserved for the use of the students only, while the bathroom closet to the classrooms is reserved for the adults. No parent is permitted to go beyond the second double doors without a visitor badge. Students are to enter and exit the front doors only, unless directed by a catechist or the program coordinator to do otherwise. Students are to refrain from attempting to access any of the locked rooms and any student found to be attempting such or being in one unsupervised is liable to disciplinary action.

**Active Incident Information**

**Coming Soon!**

**13.**

**Contact Information**

Bennett Schurr CRE Office Number: 610-268-0296 ext. 102

Email: [Relbs@kennett.net](mailto:Relbs@kennett.net)

Website: stgabrielavondalepa.org

Additional Numbers to Know:

Parish Telephone: 610-268-0296, 610-268-3309

Fax Number: 610-268-5022

**Catechists Aides**

**Level 1: Karen Lyons**

**Level 2: TBD**

**Level 3: Melanie Villar Silvia Lawrence**

**Level 4: TBD**

**Level 5: TBD**

**Level 6: Debbie Bertz**

**Level 7: TBD**

**Hall supervisor: Patsy Vanderkratts**

**Pastor: Father Anthony DiGuglielmo**

**Coordinator of Religious Education: Bennett Schurr**