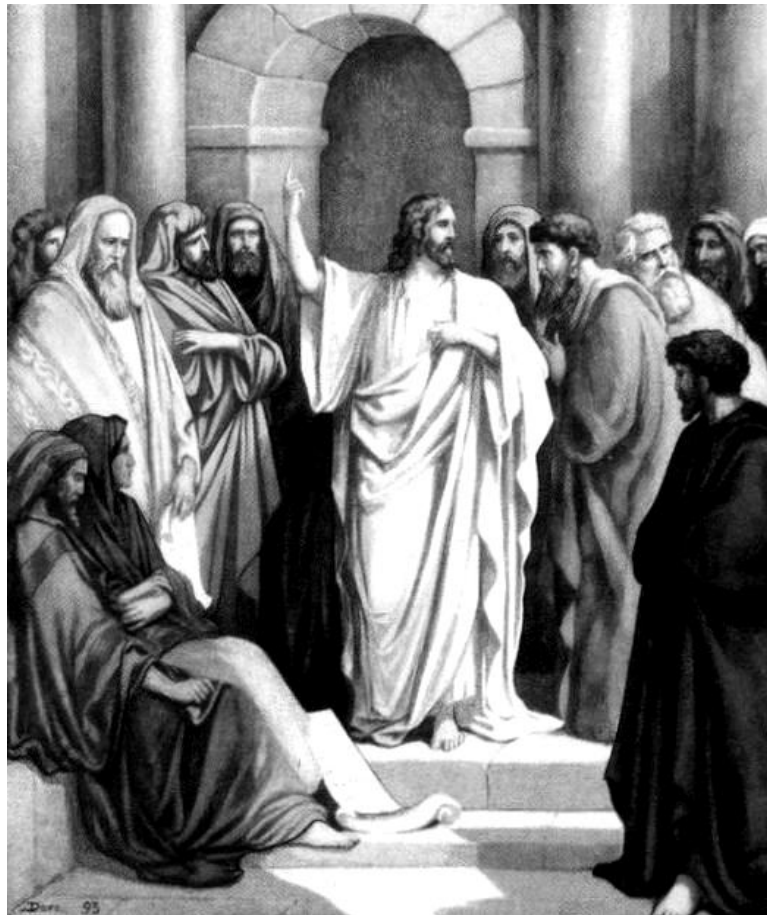


St. Raymond of Peñafort Catholic Church

Religious Education Program



Parent/Student Handbook for Academic Year 2016-2017

Dear Parents:

Welcome back to St. Raymond's Religious Education Program (CCD)! I can't tell you how excited I am about this year's program. We've had a very good program for years, but this year it will be one of the best in the Diocese!

When I first came here 6 years ago I was troubled that we didn't have a parish school to teach our faith to our children. So my attention turned increasingly to our CCD program, and I began to ask, are we doing enough? are we doing our best? what can we do better? We've tried a few improvements over the years, but this year I think we will take a huge step forward.

A few years ago when I made some changes in the in CCD program some parents said it made CCD "too hard." Frankly, I think this reflects the fact that for the last 50 or so years we just haven't taken CCD very seriously. And by "we" I mean all of us: priests, parents, catechists, and kids. That's got to change. That doesn't mean we have to make it hard (although it's a cakewalk compared to their math or science classes!), but we can make it more challenging, and a lot more informative, interesting, and productive!

The Church teaches us that parents are the primary educators of their children. CCD is only a supplement, an aid, to the religious education parents give to their children. My goal is to make it the most helpful aid possible. In return, I encourage you and your children to take advantage of what we offer, and make the best possible use of it, especially by coming to class on time every week, and completing the homework and extracurricular work we present. For example, many parents have asked for guidance in what they might do to at home to enhance their children's Catholic education, so we've proposed simple things like helping them to memorize important prayers and lists, things that don't require a lot of time or preparation but yield great rewards in the long term.

At the same time, we want to be attentive to the individual needs of your children. We can't tailor-make every class to meet the specific needs of each child, but we do want to work with you, in true Christian charity, to make sure your child gets the best we can offer. So, please, don't hesitate to tell us of any special needs, situations or concerns we should be aware of.

It is very difficult to be a faithful Catholic nowadays, but where would we be without our Catholic faith, this most special relationship with Jesus? Which is why we need to prioritize giving our kids a solid foundation in their faith. What can be more important than making sure that our kids know and love Jesus, are open to the fullness of His grace and love in this world, and share in His happiness forever in heaven?

Again, I'm very excited about the coming CCD year, and I'm committed to doing all in my power to making it the best year ever. I'm sure you are, too.

St. Raymond of Peñafort, pray for us.

In the love of Christ,

Fr. De Celles

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**St. Raymond of Peñafort
Catholic Church
Religious Education Program**

The mission of St. Raymond's Religious Education Program is to teach the truths of the Faith, as taught by the one teacher, Jesus Christ, handed down by the Apostles, and reiterated through the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

We acknowledge that each child is created in the image and likeness of God and each child's dignity as a unique child of God is to be nurtured and developed. An understanding of Jesus' command to love God with your whole heart, soul, mind and strength and to love your neighbor as yourself is central to our Religious Education program.

The Religious Education Program at St. Raymond's is dedicated to providing the catechists and assistant catechists with the tools necessary to communicate the Faith clearly and accurately. Each class is assigned a catechist and assistant catechist to meet the students' needs. The Program is designed to keep class sizes at a reasonable level so that teachers are able to convey the Catholic faith to the students in a systematic and orderly manner.

The core elements listed below form the foundation and strength of St. Raymond's Religious Education Program. The Parents are recognized and respected as the primary educators of their children.

- ✠ The Catholic faith is presented in its fullness and entirety as both knowledge to be learned and a life to be lived.
- ✠ Our Blessed Mother, as the first disciple of Jesus, is our model.
- ✠ The Sacramental life is central to developing and sustaining the Catholic Faith.
- ✠ The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist is the "source and summit" of our Faith.
- ✠ Frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist for the entire family is encouraged.
- ✠ The Gospel values as expressed in the Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are professed, cultivated and practiced.
- ✠ The Word of God is revered.
- ✠ The virtues are fostered and practiced in everyday life.
- ✠ Studying the lives of the saints as examples for our lives is promoted.
- ✠ The practice of prayer for growth in the spiritual life is stressed. Family participation in Holy Hours, Rosaries, Novenas, personal prayers, and Mass attendance are stressed and encouraged.

Parents' Role

Parents are the primary religious educators of their children. The home is the domestic Church and the place where a child first experiences the Catholic faith. Parents teach primarily by the example they set. The Religious Education program should merely complement, *not replace*, the catechesis children receive in the home. The Religious Education Program assists parents in their God-given role as educators of the Faith by:

- ✠ Providing weekly religious education classes for children in a classroom setting and spending time in the presence of Our Lord in the Tabernacle in the Church.
- ✠ Providing weekly homework that students and parents should work on together. Parents should review homework for completion and accuracy and should sign the completed homework.
- ✠ Providing the truth of the Roman Catholic Faith as handed down by Jesus Christ through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Magisterium (teaching authority) of the Church, and the Church Fathers.

Students' Role

Students are expected to be punctual and prepared for class. Students should arrive no earlier than 15 minutes prior to the start of class, but should make every effort to be in class at least five (5) minutes before class begins. If there is no teacher in the classroom, please wait with your child in the hallway until the teacher or assistant arrives. In addition:

- ✠ Each week, students should bring their textbooks, writing utensils, and completed homework assignments signed by a parent or guardian.
- ✠ Students should come ready to learn and to participate in class.
- ✠ Students should exhibit Christian behavior at all times.
- ✠ Christian love of neighbor demands that every student has the right to learn in a classroom where students are well behaved. Similarly, every catechist and assistant catechist has the right to teach in such an environment. In the event that a student finds it difficult to exhibit proper behavior, the catechist will call upon the Religious Education Office for assistance. Every attempt will be made to integrate the child into the classroom prior to contacting his/her parents.
- ✠ Students may not bring ELECTRONIC GADGETS to class. Students may have cell phones, however phones MAY NEVER be used during class for texting or calls.
- ✠ All students in grades K-8 must have a parent or guardian escort them to and from the classrooms.

Dress Code

It is requested that shorts not be worn to class. If shorts are worn to class, they must be of appropriate length (no more than two inches above the knee). Articles of clothing which depict drugs, alcohol, profanity, weapons, and/or sexual innuendo are forbidden. No student is permitted to wear excessively baggy pants, or pants with rips. All pants must be worn at the waist. Hats, for gentlemen, must be removed upon entering the building.

Tight-fitting clothing including leggings (unless worn under a dress), halter tops, tank tops, midriff shirts, spaghetti straps, or clothing that may be considered immodest dress should not be worn. Boys should not wear tank tops or any other articles of immodest dress. Students will be made aware of dress code violations and will be expected to dress appropriately going forward.

Attendance /Early Dismissal/Absence

All parents should park their vehicle and escort their child(ren) in grades K-8 to and from the classrooms each week.

Your child should be in his/her seat and ready to begin class at the starting time, as we will be going up to the church after class attendance is taken. These students must be picked up from the classroom at dismissal.

Consistent and faithful attendance is vital for understanding the material presented. Please inform the Religious Education Office if your child(ren) will be absent.

IMPORTANT: If a parent or guardian must pick up a child early, he/she must check in with the Religious Education Office and someone from the office will get the student from class. This is extremely important for the safety of our children.

IF A STUDENT ENROLLED IN A SACRAMENTAL YEAR (Grades 2, 7 or 8) MISSES ONE–FOURTH (25%) OR MORE OF THE SCHEDULED CLASSES, THEY MAY BE REQUIRED TO RETAKE THE COURSE WORK FOR THAT YEAR IN THE FOLLOWING YEAR’S PROGRAM.

Tardiness

Out of Christian charity and respect for the teacher and classmates, please arrive for class on time; tardiness can be a serious distraction. There is such limited time each week for classes, so please help us to make the best use of the time we have by getting your child(ren) to class ON TIME each week. If a student arrives after opening prayers have begun in the classroom, please have them wait outside the classroom until prayer is concluded, then he/she may enter. If a student arrives after the class has left the classroom for time in the church, please have the student report to the Religious Education Office until their class returns. Please DO NOT take the student directly to the church as this will only interrupt the meditation time of the students who are already seated.

Class Cancellations

Please note that Religious Education classes follow Fairfax County School closings for inclement weather.

If classes or after school activities/programs in Fairfax County Schools are cancelled due to inclement weather, the religious education classes at our parish are also cancelled. If Fairfax County schools dismiss early due to inclement weather, religious education classes are cancelled. On bad weather days, please use your best judgment in bringing your child to class if the roads in your neighborhood seem unsafe.

When in doubt, contact the Religious Education Office (703-440-0537) or the Religious Education page on the website www.straymonds.org for closing information.

Learning Disabilities/Health Related Issues

If your child has a learning disability or health related issues that would necessitate special consideration while attending religious education classes, please notify the Religious Education Office in writing by sending us a letter, email, or by entering the information on the registration form. All information will remain confidential, but may be passed on to the catechist or assistant catechist to assist them in teaching your child.

Textbooks

The textbooks used in our Religious Education Program are the following: “*Image of God*” series for Kindergarten, the “*Faith and Life*” series for first through eighth grades along with a supplemental “*Basic Study Questions*” booklet. High School texts include the Didache series in Grades 9 and 10 and *Catholicism and Ethics* in the Grades 11 and 12.

Testing

Midterm and final exams are given to all students in grades 1 through 8 in a multiple-choice, fill in the blank or short answer format. The tests are given to students who attend Religious Education and attend public school and those students who are home-schooled for religious education only. The midterm exams cover the first half of the Basic Study Questions booklet while the final exam covers the second half of the booklet. The Pre-Confirmation and Confirmation Exams are based on the Confirmation Study Questions given to students in the 7th grade.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents who homeschool their children in all subjects including Religion, **and have students in Sacramental preparation (Grades 1-2 and Grades 7-8)** are asked to administer the exams to their children or to have them come in and take the test during the exam week. These parents may alternatively administer a midterm and final exam using the tests from the particular homeschool program they are using. Please provide the Religious Education Office with the completed test.

Report Cards

Catechists will provide a standard written evaluation of a student's progress twice during the school year (January and May). These evaluations will communicate the grade earned on the midterm and final exams and may also contain comments from the Catechist.

Awards

Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards can be earned by students each year and are awarded at the End of Year Assembly on the last day of class. All family members are invited to attend this assembly.

The Gold Award is earned by students who have missed no more than one class and have earned 90% or better on both the midterm and final exams.

The Silver Award is earned by students having faithful attendance* and 90% or better on both the midterm and final exams.

The Bronze Award is earned by students having faithful attendance* and 90% or better on either the midterm or final exam.

* Faithful Attendance is defined as missing two (2) or fewer classes during the Religious Education calendar year. Please note: three late arrivals (tardy) and/or three early dismissals equal one absence.

Curriculum

The Religious Education Program Curriculum, in accord with the universal Catechism of the Catholic Church, centers on:

- The Creed and Scripture
- The Liturgy and the Seven Sacraments
- Faith and Morals
- Christian Prayer
- The Virtues
- Apologetics (How to defend the Faith)

The following is a brief outline of the essential elements for each grade level curriculum (source: Ignatius Press) :

Kindergarten

Theme: Introduction to God and creation, the dignity of each child made in God's image, God's plan for salvation, Christ's Church, Liturgical celebrations and prayer.

Aim: To introduce Kindergarten students to who they are in the eyes of God, to the importance of God in their lives and in the life of their families, to inspire them to want to know, love and serve God and His Church.

Grade One

Theme: Introduction to the Holy Trinity through presentations on God the Father, the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's plan of salvation and our part in that plan. Acquaints children with Mary, angels, and the saints. Children learn basic prayers.

Aim: To introduce first-grade students to the Church's faith regarding the Triune God, the life of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the life of prayer, with a special emphasis on growing to know, love, and trust God. Also: Sacramental preparation.

Grade 2

Theme: Preparation for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. The lesson emphasizes God's mercy and love. Covers Creation, the Covenant with Moses, the Ten Commandments, Redemption, Forgiveness of Sins, and the Mass

Aim: To prepare second-grade students for the sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion, and to help them appreciate God's love for them shown in these two sacraments. Students will learn how to receive the Sacrament of Confession, the order of the Mass, and the basics of prayer.

Grade 3

Theme: God's plan of salvation, from creation to the Incarnation and Redemption to the birth of the Church at Pentecost and our life in the Church. Special emphasis on the importance of Confession, Communion and the Mass.

Aim: To show third-grade students that they belong to God's chosen people and that the child's family is an important part of God's family, the Church. Also, to encourage prayer and love for God's law

Grade 4

Theme: God's plan to save his people from sin (Salvation History), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us in our pilgrimage on earth to Heaven through his word, his law, and his Church.

Aim: To help fourth-grade students understand their purpose and goal in life, and to see God's plan in history and society to lead us all to Heaven, our true, eternal home.

Grade 5

Theme: A thorough study of the articles of the Creed as the basic belief of our Catholic faith, with a special emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, and the prophets, and the prayers of the Church.

Aim: To engage parents directly in the religious formation of their children. The Family Guide provides the format and material, opening prayer, main points, questions with answers and life application for a parent or guardian to review each week's lessons in a concise setting. By discussing the weekly subject matter with their children, parents can enhance their role as primary educators of their children.

Grade 6

Theme: The blueprint for a life of love: the law of God, especially in the Ten Commandments, and the presence of Jesus in the Holy Mass. The interaction of the challenges of God's law and his gifts of grace that help us fulfill his law.

Aim: To help sixth-grade students learn to love the moral law as Christ did and to cherish and love the Mass as our best prayer to God, and especially to revere and adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Grade 7

Theme: Grace as our link with God, his gift to us to bring us to Himself and his eternal life, with an emphasis on transmission of grace through the seven sacraments and on God's loving gifts of revelation, of himself through the prophets, the Incarnation, and the Church. The role of grace in developing the virtues. Also, Confirmation preparation.

Aim: To help seventh-grade students treasure the sacraments as indispensable to a full Christian life of love and truth. To understand how grace works and its relation to practicing the virtues, and to appreciate our gifts of reason and faith.

Grade 8

Theme: The history of the Church — its founding by Christ, its birth in the Holy Spirit, the marks of the one, true Church, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the saints and the role of the religious and laity up to the present. The structure of the Church Jesus planned, the role of the Magisterium, the clergy, the religious and the laity and our own vocations. Also, Confirmation preparation.

Aim: To help eighth-grade students know and love the Church as Christ's Body, and respond to the teaching of the Magisterium as the sure voice of Jesus, so that young people may be strengthened through their lives in the Church to face the confusion and secularism of modern-day society.

Prayers and Lists

Each student is expected to master the prayers and lists introduced at the grade level indicated in the chart below, building on the previous year's requirements. The only way a student can master a prayer is through repetition, and the only way to master the required lists is by memorization. The parents are expected to teach these prayers and lists to their children at the indicated grade level. *Praying regularly at home* will help them to master the required prayers, and memorization drills will help with learning the lists. A booklet with all prayers and lists cited below will be provided to each student. The children will be evaluated in Religious Education class to measure success in this endeavor.

Grade	Prayers/Lists
K	The Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, Hail Mary, Our Father, Books of the Old and New Testament* *see Parish website for catchy tune by which the children can learn the books of the Bible
1	Previous Grade requirements plus Guardian Angel Prayer
2	Previous Grade requirements plus Act of Contrition, Prayer of Fatima, Prayer to St. Michael, The Ten Commandments (in order)
3	Previous Grade requirements plus Grace Before Meals, Grace After Meals, Seven Sacraments
4	Previous Grade requirements plus Hail Holy Queen, Morning Offering, Three Theological Virtues, Four Cardinal Virtues
5	Previous Grade requirements plus The Apostles' Creed, Anima Christi, Twelve Apostles, Mysteries of the Rosary
6	Previous Grade requirements plus Seven Deadly Sins, Nine Beatitudes, Prayer Before a Crucifix, Precepts of the Church
7	Previous Grade requirements plus the Pentateuch, Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, Holy Days of Obligation
8	Previous Grade requirement plus the Memorare, Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Why should your children learn these prayers and lists? Because the prayers cited above are a small part of the beautiful treasury of traditional prayers and devotions of our Catholic Faith. The lists above provide the children with a glimpse into the foundations of our Faith, as well as providing a base from which they can learn how to live their Faith.

September 2016

Dear Religious Education Family,

Welcome to the 2016-17 Religious Education year!

Article 12 of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops requires that safe environment training be provided for our children every year. The Diocese of Arlington uses the "Formation in Christian Chastity Program." The program will be presented during the week of October 2nd for grades 7 through 12; the week of October 16th for grades 5 and 6; and the week of October 23rd for grades 1 through 4 with make-up classes being held the week of November 6th.

Please go to the "*Formation in Christian Chastity*" link on the Diocesan website (http://arlingtondiocese.org/childprotection/opcyp_training.aspx) to review information pertaining to all grade levels. If you wish to opt your child out of this program, and you did not indicate such on the Registration form, please contact the Religious Education Office no later than **September 30, 2016**.

God bless you all,

Mary

Mary Salmon
Director of Religious Education