

**FAMILY HANDBOOK
2011-2012 School Year**

**STAR OF THE SEA PARISH
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

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WELCOME

August 14, 2011

Dear Religious Education Families,

Thank you for entrusting your children to the Teachers and Staff of the Star of the Sea Religious Education Program.

We are providing every family with this Family Handbook. The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information on the Policies and Procedures for Star of the Sea Religious Education Program. Please read and discuss it with your family and keep this handbook in a convenient place and refer to it when needed.

As a confirmation that you have read and received this handbook, parents/guardians please sign the Family Handbook Acknowledgement and return it to my attention.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Evie Fong at (415) 713-5624 (cell).

Sincerely,

Evie Fong
Director of Religious Education

CATECHETICAL OFFICE INFORMATION

Director:	Evie Fong – (415) 713-5624 evieDRE@staroftheseachurch.com
Assistant Director:	Lisa Dea – (415) 794-6058 Ldea12684@yahoo.com
Religious Education Chaplain:	Father Brian Costello - (415) 751-0450
Address:	Star of the Sea Religious Education Program 4420 Geary Boulevard San Francisco, CA 94118
Emergency Number:	(415) 751-0450

TEACHER AND STAFF

Director of Religious Education	Evie Fong
Assistant Director of Religious Education	Lisa Dea
First Grade Teacher	Marlene Castro
Reconciliation & First Communion Teacher	Sarah Sebers
Third Grade Teacher	Lilibeth (Beth) Birog
Fourth Grade Teacher	Gabriela Maturano
Fifth Grade Teachers	Leonardo (Leo) Birog
Sixth Grade Teacher	Angel Feria
First Year Confirmation Teacher	Ryan Sebers
Second Year Confirmation Teacher	Lorna Feria
Religious Education Chaplain	Father Brian Costello

PHILOSOPHY

Catechesis is a life-long process for each individual as well as the work of the entire Catholic Christian community.

The Church teaches that the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of the children rests first and foremost with the parents. Parents may share the responsibility with others, but they do not relinquish it. The Church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the ministry of catechesis.

The root meaning of the word, **Catechist**, is “one who echoes.” Using catechetical process, the catechist’s role is to echo and re-echo the message of Jesus and the story of the Christian community to those, whom they teach. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that those being catechized can understand.

Catechist must do more than merely teach about their faith. They help children/youth/adults build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the Word, building a sense of community, leading to prayer and worship, and encouraging loving service to others. Catechists also lead others to faith through their example and by living a life consistent with the teachings of the Church.

Our catechists come from many walks of life. They are people who have answered a call to minister to our children and who have prepared themselves in a variety of ways to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is important enough to share.

We seek to show children the goodness and beauty of God in their world and help them experience this world within the Catholic Christian community. We seek to help children and their families grow further in their faith, their understanding of our Catholic tradition, our unity in Christ and the many gifts of the Holy Spirit.

GOALS

- To proclaim Christ’s message.
- To participate in efforts to develop and maintain the Christian Community.
- To lead people to worship and prayer.
- To motivate our students and their families to serve others.

PARENT’S ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Our teachers and staff members are here to help support parents fulfill this responsibility. We request each parent’s cooperation in the following ways:

- Celebrate Sunday Mass regularly with your family. The schedule is as follows:

Saturday: 4:30 pm

Sunday: 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:00 am (Chinese), and 12:15 pm

- Actively participate in the sacramental and community life of the parish.
- Share your faith and what it means to you with your children.
- Pray with your children and help them memorize the traditional prayers of the Church. These prayers are found at the back of every student text book.
- Attend all parent meetings.
- Familiarize yourself with scheduled catechetical sessions and events for your children.
- Read and act promptly on all communications from the Religious Education Office.
- Assure your children's punctual and regular attendance at all Religious Education classes. Remind your children to come to class prepared with textbooks and help them with their homework assignments.

CHILD'S ROLE

In order to benefit from the catechetical sessions at Star of the Sea Religious Education program, children are expected to:

- Be respectful of their teachers, adults and other children.
- Listen carefully, follow directions and participate in the session activities
- Complete homework assignments.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures, and discipline policies.
- Participate in community service projects or ministries for children.
- Share what they have learned and experienced in class with their parents and families.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM

Star of the Sea Parish welcomes all children, baptized or not, to participate in the Religious Education Program.

At the beginning of every school year, a schedule is delivered to the families and posted on the church website. If you need an additional copy of the schedule please see Evie Fong or Lisa Dea.

Star of the Sea Religious Education program uses the following Catechetical series:

Grades 1-6: ***We Believe with Project Disciple***, Sadlier Publishing Company

- Grade 1-God Loves Us
- Grade 2-Jesus Shares God's Life

- Grade 3-We are the Church
- Grade 4-God's Law Guides Us
- Grade 5-We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments
- Grade 6-We are God's People

First Reconciliation: ***First Reconciliation Sadlier Sacrament Program***, Sadlier Publishing Company

First Communion: ***First Eucharist Sadlier Sacrament Program***, Sadlier Publishing Company

Confirmation: ***We Live Our Faith***, Sadlier Publishing Company

- ...As Disciples of Jesus (First Year Confirmation)
- ...As Members of the Church (Second Year Confirmation)
- Confirmation: Inspired By the Spirit (Second Year Confirmation)

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

A. Registration

Registration will begin on the Last Sunday of July. The first day of instruction is August 14, 2011.

Returning Students:

All returning students do not have to re-register for Religious Education.

New Students:

Parents please fill out registration cards for each new student you enroll into the program.

B. Fees

Tuition is \$60.00 per student. Scholarships are available to students who require financial assistance only. Application forms for financial aid are available for families to fill out. Please see Evie Fong to obtain a scholarship application.

C. Baptismal Information

Please provide a copy of each student's baptismal certificate and submit them to Evie Fong or Lisa Dea.

D. Change of Address/Phone Number/Email/ Emergency Contacts

Please notify Evie Fong or Lisa Dea of any change of address, phone number, email address or emergency contact information.

E. Emergency Cards

Each student must have an emergency card on file in the office. Failure to submit an emergency card within the first two weeks of instruction is cause for dismissal.

F. Custody Arrangements.

The primary responsibility for seeing that custody arrangements are carried out rest with the parents. The Religious Education teachers and staff wishes to cooperate with special custody arrangements of families to the best of their ability and will do so by following the Archdiocesan policy below:

- a. A copy of the decree of dissolution which defines the custody rights of the parents or a copy of any other pertinent legal document must be on file in the Religious Education Office.
- b. The person who drops off the child for class must pick up the child. Upon arrival, the parent/guardian or person designated by him or her in writing must bring the child to the office and sign the student in. At dismissal time the same parent/guardian or designated person must sign the student out. **The child will not be released to anyone except the person who has dropped the child off.**

G. Confidentiality

When you register in our Religious Education program, your family will be added to our data base. We will not release any information about you or your family to an individual or special interest group inside or outside the parish without your permission.

ATTENDANCE

Arrival and Dismissal

Class begins at approximately 10:45 a.m. following the 9:30 a.m. mass and will end at 11:45a.m. This is an hour of instruction. Students will not be released until 11:45a.m. Please insure that you pick up your student no later than noon since there will be no adult supervision on site.

Absences

Students are required to attend classes regularly. We will make every effort to accommodate our families when special circumstances arise. Arrangements can be made between the students, parents/guardians and teachers to insure that the students are making satisfactory progress in class to the best of their abilities.

Absence Exceptions:

Students in Sacramental Preparation Classes are required to have no more than **three unexcused absences** per year. (Read more under Sacramental Preparation Courses)

Cancellation of Class:

In the event that none of the students have reported to class by 11:00 a.m., instruction will be cancelled. The Assistant DRE or DRE will post a note outside of the classroom door to direct students who arrive after 11:00 a.m. to the Religious Education Office or to an assigned classroom.

Early Dismissal:

We will never allow a child to leave the classroom on his/her own. Arrangements should be made by the parent, the Assistant DRE or DRE to pick up the student from the classroom.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Please attend the Family Mass on Sundays at 9:30 am. Children's Liturgy of the Word is held during this mass twice a month and we invite all children of the parish to join in, parents too. The purpose of Children's Liturgy of the Word is to help our students hear and understand scripture at a child's level.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

You may communicate with teachers, Evie Fong or Lisa Dea by phone, mail, e-mail, or by sending notes to us with your child.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

We encourage our families to serve others through their participation in community service projects and ministries at the parish. The Religious Education Program sponsors food drives during Thanksgiving, feeds the homeless, hosts the annual Easter Egg Hunt and volunteers during the Parish Festival or Parish Dinners. Student's 5th grade and above are encouraged to volunteer as Altar Servers or as lectors during Children's Liturgy of the Word. There are various community service organizations that families can join such as the Chinese American Association, FAAStar, Holy Name Society and the Holy Rosary Sodality. Community Service is not limited to service sponsored or situated within the Parish.

DISCIPLINE

We strive to create a Catholic Christian learning environment for the children. Students are expected to comply with the following:

- Behave respectfully and courteously toward all teachers, adults and classmates.

- Participate and be attentive in class.
- Respect parish property and the property of others.
- Follow the rules of the program and the class.

At the start of the school year, each catechist should discuss classroom rules with their students. Please insure that your rules are short and to the point. Examples:

- Students must be on time and students may not leave class without the teacher's permission.
- No food or drinks in the classroom.
- Respect your teacher and classmates by listening and waiting a turn before speaking.
- No unchristian language will be used.

Teachers are encouraged to call the student's parent/guardian if their child repeatedly disrupts class. The Director of Religious Education, in consultation with the pastor, is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations.

EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURES

The safety of the students, teachers and staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well being of both students and staff members. In the case of emergency/natural disaster, an Emergency Procedure Plan will be followed.

A. Medical Emergency/Accident/Sudden Sickness

In case of accident or sudden illness, the Assistant Director of Religious Education, Director of Religious Education or a delegate will give appropriate and immediate care and notify parents/guardians.

B. Dangerous Materials

We will protect the health and welfare of all participants in the Religious Education Program. The Assistant Director of Religious Education, Director of Religious Education or designed person(s) has the right to inspect property of individuals suspected of possessing alcohol, drugs, weapons and other illegal materials. If alcohol, illegal drugs, weapons or other dangerous materials are found, the police, parents/ guardians, and pastor will be notified as appropriate.

C. Gangs

This is a gang free environment. Persons participating in any gang or gang related activity while on parish property or in conjunction with program-related

activities will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the program.

D. Child Abuse

As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

FIELD TRIPS AND OFF-SITE ACTIVITIES

Field trips of off-site activities such as service projects and retreats are occasionally scheduled with the permission of the Director of Religious Education, Evie Fong. A signed parental permission and student waiver must be received from every student participating in field trips. **Verbal permission given over the telephone or in person will not be accepted.** Separate permission forms and waivers are required for each field trip or off-site activity. Please refer to Appendix A for a sample permission slip and Appendix B for a sample waiver form.

Parents/guardians driving students to and from field trips or off-site activities are required to have a current California driver's license, proof of automobile insurance and a seat belt for every passenger in the car.

HARASSMENT

Star of the Sea Religious Education Program believes in the sanctity of all persons: that we are all created in God's image and are of inestimable value. Any form of harassment is completely contrary to this belief and we are committed to providing an environment free of harassment. A harassment policy is in place and may be examined upon request.

RECONCILIATION

Students are given two opportunities to go to reconciliation during the school year. Please refer to the Program Schedule for dates. **Important: Please insure that your students have been formally prepared to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION COURSES

First Reconciliation/First Communion: Students preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion are required to attend Religious Education program classes for at least two years. Exceptions may be made at the sole discretion of the

DRE. Children who are enrolled in Grades 3-6 and Confirmation will receive additional instruction for sacramental preparation by a designated teacher. Parents/guardians will be responsible for attending First Reconciliation/First Communion meetings and we will work with the parents to prepare the students. Please remember that instruction does not end after First Communion.

Confirmation: Students preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation are required to complete two years of study. Students are required to perform **30 hours of community service** and attend the Confirmation Retreat and meetings scheduled in preparation for Confirmation. Community service hours earned begins during First Year Confirmation Class. All Confirmation students are asked to volunteer and participate at the 9:30 am student mass scheduled monthly. Please remember that instruction does not end after Confirmation.

Being Supporting Members of the Church:

Fr. Brian Costello, our pastor at Star of the Sea, encourages all students, especially the sacramental Prep students, to show their dedication and commitment to God by attending mass every Sunday.

Sacramental Prep students are required to show proof that they and their families are registered and supporting members at this or another parish. Being a supporting member of a parish means using the giving envelopes for collections at mass. It also means volunteering time and energy to help with parish organizations and events.

Mandatory Attendance:

Students in Sacramental Preparation Classes are required to have no more than three unexcused absences per year An unexcused absence occurs when a student lacks a valid excuse for missing class and does not make up class work. The Religious Education program is responsible for vouching for student's preparedness and need to ensure that our students are committed to God and ready to receive the sacraments.

TEXTBOOKS AND BIBLES

Textbooks are to be written in and used by the children and may be sent home. Students are responsible to bring them back for class. There is a \$20 replacement fee for a lost book. Please have your student write their names inside their textbooks.

Students are encouraged to bring their Catholic Bibles from home. Bibles may be purchased for a fee of \$5.00 from the Religious Education Office. Please see Evie Fong or Lisa Dea if you would like to purchase a bible.