

Church of Saint Benedict

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Parish Religious Education Program – PREP

Catechetical Policy for Level 7 and Level 8 2026-2027

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“In Jesus we Live, Learn and Love”

Welcome to Saint Benedict's Parish Religious Education Program

GOAL

The goal of our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) is to strengthen one's faith and love of God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Students achieve a greater knowledge, appreciation, and acceptance of the Gospel message, as taught through the Sacred and Living Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. This program aims to assist parents, the primary educators, in fostering their children's growth in faith.

FAITH

"Faith is a gift of God which calls people to conversion". The faithful Christian is one who accepts Jesus' values and attitudes toward life as his attitudes, and Jesus' teachings as his norms in life. As a faithful Catholic, he accepts the Catholic Church as his home and as his teacher. Faith involves knowledge, but knowledge is not faith. The more we know what God did for us, the more we love Him and act upon our faith. Faith is a gift that needs to be nourished in order to grow and accompany us throughout our lifetime until one day we will fulfill our belief in eternity. Growth in faith is a dynamic process, which goes on throughout life. It does not reach fulfillment in a year or eight years or twelve years, but is a life-long process.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

We believe that religious education involves more than knowledge. The quality of religious education is a balance of information, formation, and transformation. Through it we can shape and change attitudes and behaviors to reflect the mind and mission of Jesus Christ. In our classes, we strive to inform our students about our faith. In our homes, we strive to form our students minds and hearts to share the Gospel message of being responsible for our brothers and sisters less fortunate than us. In our Church, we celebrate the Sacraments, Mass, Adoration, Prayer Services, Stations of the Cross, and the Rosary. All contributing towards the transformation of our children's mind and soul.

ADMISSION POLICY

PREP is open to all children in grades seven and eight registered with the Church of St. Benedict. Children ages three to grade six should register in our CGS program.

REGISTRATION

Registration forms are available online on our website, www.churchof saintbenedict.com, under the Religious Education tab. We will also be allowing registration online with payment via credit card or bank account. Parents must present a copy of each of their child's Baptismal Certificate. It is also required that all pertinent health information of any condition be brought to the attention of the DRE. If you are not a member of the Church of St. Benedict, you must submit a letter from your current Pastor which gives his permission to attend Religious Education here. All documentation must be presented at registration.

FINANCIAL

A PREP fee will be collected annually and is payable at registration. If you are unable to pay the registration fee, assistance can be obtained on an as needed basis. Please contact the Church if financial assistance is required.

SESSIONS

All PREP classes are scheduled only on Thursday evenings from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.

SUNDAY MASS

Sunday Mass is our central act of worship where we can join together as a community of faith. Our attendance nourishes us and gives us the strength to love and serve one another throughout the week. It is a privilege to be able to participate in Mass every Sunday.

A child acquires a sense of belonging to St. Benedict's Parish as a Roman Catholic community of faith by coming to Sunday Mass and by participating in parish activities. PREP attendance does not replace Mass attendance on Sunday or Saturday.

Youth who come to Church with their peers, by their presence and behavior, can be a wonderful example to young children and an inspiration to their parents and other adults.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Dress needs to be modest, neat, and in good taste. All extremes in attire should be avoided and good judgment should prevail. Cleats and muddy shoes/sneakers may not be worn.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We will follow the example of Jesus when we gather. Our expectation is that everyone gathers with a spirit of welcoming, caring, and cooperation.

The catechist oversees the session and is responsible for maintaining an orderly environment favorable to learning and each student is responsible for fostering a good learning environment by their own behavior.

Respect and courtesy are required by all students. In case of misbehavior or use of inappropriate or abusive language by any student, the director, catechist and parents will counsel the student to achieve a code of conduct conducive to a good learning situation.

PUNCTUALITY

Students are expected to arrive on time and parents/guardians are expected to retrieve their students on time. Due to the limited amount of time of each PREP session, catechists must begin promptly to cover the required material. Excessive tardiness will be brought to the attention of the parents/guardians and dealt with on an individual basis. Excessive tardiness may result in a student not advancing to the next level or not receiving a Sacrament when expected.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Arrival: We gather inside the Church at 6:00 PM where we will open the evening with a prayer. Families should use the front door to enter the building. Children will be directed to wait inside of the Church.

Dismissal: Families may wait in the gathering space of Church for their child. PREP students will walk toward the gathering space of our church and meet their families there or outside at the parking lot. Please note that we will not allow any child to exit from the educational wing door, unless in company of one of our PREP or CGS catechists.

ATTENDANCE

All children of the Parish grades seven and eight who do not attend La Salle are invited to participate in PREP. Regular attendance is important at each level since new material is introduced during each class. If a child is ill or unable to attend class, an e-mail to the catechist or the DRE is appreciated. If the child's illness causes excessive absences, please notify the Director so that alternative lessons may be implemented. If a student is absent excessively for "sports reason" then a PREP program at a different parish offered on a different night may be recommended. Please contact the DRE for the address of PREP programs offered from other Catholic Churches in our surrounding area.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No electronic devices are permitted in the building during PREP. If a student brings any devices to class, then the catechist or DRE will collect them at the beginning of class and the device will be returned to the parent at dismissal. This includes cell phones, iPads, and laptops. This is to ensure the integrity of the program, as well as the privacy of all students.

PRAYERS

Parents are the child's first and most consistent teacher. Therefore, the best way to ensure that children learn the required prayers is for the parents to pray with them daily. This will help with the memorization of prayers as well as cultivate a prayer life within the child and the family.

HOMEWORK

Children are expected to spend a reasonable amount of time reviewing the material covered in class. Parents are asked to ensure that the children complete all tasks required of them. Students should come to PREP prepared and ready to learn each week.

TEXTBOOKS

Each PREP student will receive a textbook and a book bag at the beginning of the school year. Each student should remember to bring their textbook and their Bible to class each week. Pencils will be provided.

RELIGIOUS CURRICULUM – BOOKS USED

Level 7 – Decision Point (Dynamic Catholic)

Level 8 – YOUCAT (Ignatius Press)

RECEPTION OF SACRAMENTS

Confirmation

Students in PREP eight will receive Confirmation. A student receives the proper formation by attending both PREP seven and PREP eight.

Confirmation takes place in the Fall at the discretion of the Bishop. PREP students from St. Benedict, LaSalle students, and PREP students from St. John de la Salle receive the sacrament together. The sacrament is celebrated either at the Church of St. Bendict or at St. John de la Salle Church in Shillington. The location alternates annually between the two Churches.

CANCELLATION/EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

Occasionally it becomes necessary to cancel classes due to the weather. In case of inclement weather, the following policy will be in effect:

- If public schools cancel or have an early dismissal, there will be no PREP that evening, unless the weather improves in the afternoon.
- Check your e-mail: Catechists will communicate with you about cancellations.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are welcome in the roles of teachers, teacher aides, substitute teachers, hall monitors, and for special projects. All volunteers must have completed all required clearances to work with the children. Please call the Religious Education Office if you wish to help in any way or if you have further questions. The Second Vatican Council Document Catechesis Tradendae express the Church's belief that the "aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ."

HANDBOOK REVISIONS

Saint Benedict's PREP Office reserves the right to amend this Handbook for just cause. Revisions were last made on April 22, 2026.

*This program voluntarily complies with the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Non-custodial parents will be given access to unofficial copies of student records, and catechists will be available to discuss the student's progress **unless** a court order providing otherwise is filed with the Director.*