

THE LITURGICAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY

The Mass, the Eucharistic celebration, is the source and summit of our Catholic faith.

Regular family Mass attendance reinforces and puts into practice the faith and formal instruction presented in the classroom.

Religious Education classes are not meant to be a substitute for attendance at Mass.

The St. James Mass schedule offers ample opportunity for families to celebrate the Eucharist before or after the class meeting schedule.

St. James Mass Schedule:

Daily Mass: (Monday-Friday) 6:30am and 8:00am, Saturday: 8:00am

Sunday Mass:

- *Saturday: 5:30pm Vigil Mass*
- *Sunday: 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am(Children's Liturgy of the Word), 12:00noon, and 5:30pm*

In addition to the regular Mass schedule, there are many other opportunities to practice our faith such as Adoration and praying the Stations of the Cross during Lent.

We also encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide opportunities for their child to *frequent the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation once they have received this sacrament for the first time. **To assist families in this endeavor, a Family Penance Service is scheduled in the spring. Please check the REP Calendar for the specific date.***

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

Prayer is communicating with God. Therefore, an essential element of the program is teaching our students the need for prayer and how to pray. *It is also important for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid their child in learning common prayers of the Church so that the child will be able to participate in the prayers of the Catholic community.* We encourage the parents/guardians of our students to provide an opportunity for the students to pray together as a family in the home as well as in the larger faith community, which is the Catholic Church.

We also stress the importance of the Bible in the life of the followers of Jesus. Scripture, as well as the Tradition and Magisterium of the Church, is a source of revelation—God's self-communication. *We ask the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid our catechists by encouraging in their child a love and respect for the Sacred Scripture.*

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Grade 2 and Grade 8

PARENT/GUARDIAN WORKSHOPS

In order to aid parent(s)/guardian(s) as the primary teachers of the child, there will be scheduled parent meetings for those parents who have children registered in Grade 2 (Sacraments of Reconciliation (Penance) and First Holy Communion) and Grade 8 (Sacrament of Confirmation). The schedule for these workshops can be found in the REP Calendar.

These workshops are designed for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to increase their knowledge of the individual sacrament and to give information on how to assist their child in preparing for the sacraments. Important information regarding the theology of the sacrament, as well as guidelines and necessary forms, will be given during these workshops. ***At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend each workshop given prior to the child's reception of each sacrament.***

FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST (Grade 2)

In accordance with diocesan directives, the reception of First Penance precedes the celebration of First Eucharist. The reception of these two sacraments occurs in the second grade.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Trenton that, for a child to receive these sacraments, the child be enrolled in a religious education program for one year prior to entering the sacramental preparation class.

All students must have completed the first-grade level in an approved religious education program to be admitted to the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Eucharist. The celebration of the Sacrament of First Reconciliation takes place in the Fall and First Eucharist takes place in the Spring. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and catechists will take care that the students are properly instructed in the celebration of these sacraments.

Children are expected to attend all classes and activities in this sacramental year.

It is important that requests for additional forms, the fee and materials be returned by the requested date.

Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the preparation for these sacraments.

CONFIRMATION (Grade 8)

In preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, **students are expected to attend all classes and activities and complete all Confirmation assignments.**

Students who do not comply with expectations regarding attendance and completion of assignments will be reviewed to determine their readiness for Confirmation.

Confirmation Activities:

- Confirmation Ice Breaker (October)
- Confirmation Movie Night (February)
- The Confirmation Retreat, including Mass with Rite of Enrollment (April)
- Confirmation Candidates are expected to participate in the Family Penance Service (March)

Confirmation Assignments:

- Confirmation Candidate's Commitment Letter
- Letter Requesting Confirmation
- Saint Report (Two-to-three-page essay about the saint they have chosen for their Confirmation name)
- Confirmation Service Project and Essay:

Candidates are expected to complete a one-day (minimum 7 hours) service project related to one of the Corporal or Spiritual works of Mercy. Following their completion of service, candidates are to write a five-paragraph essay describing the service they completed, how it relates to the Work of Mercy chosen, what they learned from the experience, how it applies to Confirmation, and how they will apply what they learned to their life in the future.

All forms and fees required for the celebration of this sacrament must be returned on time and fully completed.

According to canon law and diocesan directives concerning the celebration of Confirmation, candidates are to choose a saint's name and a sponsor for Confirmation.

The date for Confirmation is provided by the bishop of the diocese and is celebrated in the Spring of Grade 8. Details concerning the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be provided at the Parent/Guardian meeting.

At least one parent or guardian is expected to attend the parent meeting, and the Mass with Rite of Enrollment.