

THE CHURCH OF ST. CHRISTOPHER  
AND ST. SYLVIA  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2016 - 2017



*saint Sylvia*



*Mother of St. Gregory the Great*

Dear Parent,

At your child's baptism the priest offered this prayer for you as fathers and mothers: "God is the giver of all life human and divine. May He bless the fathers of these children. With their wives they will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. May they also be the best teachers bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In addition to instructing your children in Christian truth, we welcome the opportunity to assist you in fulfilling your primary obligation to help you teach your children to walk in ways of faith. This can only be done when each family places Jesus Christ and His teachings at the center of their lives through Sunday worship, family prayer and daily living of the Christian message. Regular attendance at Sunday Mass with your children is an essential part of their religious education.

We look forward to genuine cooperation with you in communicating Catholic Christian values to your children. We need to pray, talk and plan together. In that way we can draw fully from sacred scripture and church teachings and work to support each other in instilling them in our children who so greatly need these values.

May God bless us in the work of Christian Education which we carry on in his name.

Faithfully Yours in Christ,



Ellen Farina, CRE



Fr. Pat Buckley, Pastor

## ***QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE***

### **Contacts**

Coordinator	Ellen Farina	758-5506
Asst. Coordinator	Helen O'Connell Moore	758-5506
Pastor	Fr. Patrick Buckley	758-3732
Parish Office	Diana Calio	758-3732

E-mail: [education@stchrisredhook.org](mailto:education@stchrisredhook.org)

Mailing address: Office of Religious Education  
The Church of St. Christopher and St. Sylvia  
30 Benner Rd.  
Red Hook, NY 12571

Website: [www.stchrisredhook.org](http://www.stchrisredhook.org)

### **Religious Education Office Schedule**

School year: Monday – Thursday 10:00 am – 4:00 pm or by appointment.

Summer: Monday – Thursday, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

### **Class Schedule**

Grades 1-6: Wednesday or Thursday 4:30-5:45pm

Youth Alive: depending on courses selected

Confirmation: October 28<sup>th</sup> & October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### **Tuition & Sacramental Fees**

For the 2016-2017 school year, the tuition for grades 1-6 is:

<b><u>AFTER 6/1</u></b>		<b>(Pymt. &amp; Reg. MUST BE IN by 6/1)</b>	
1 child:	\$110	<b>EARLY BIRD:</b>	\$100
2 children:	\$130		\$130
3 children:	\$160		\$150

Tuition for Youth Alive students is dependent upon the courses for which the student is registered.

The First Communion fee is \$55.

The Confirmation tuition/fee is \$125 (\$110 if you do not need to purchase a robe).

**Fees/Payments:** No child is ever turned away from St. Christopher and St. Sylvia Religious Education Program due to financial constraints. Contact the Religious Education Office to make arrangements for a payment plan, reduced tuition/fees, etc. Please do not postpone registration due to financial concerns.

### Mandatory Parent Meetings

Confirmation: TBA

All Grades: First Day of Classes

Youth Alive: TBA

Sacramental: TBA

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Arrival/Dismissal:** Students should arrive no earlier than **10 minutes** before the beginning of class; prior to that supervision may not be available. Students in grades 1-6 must be signed out and picked up at their classroom door by an authorized adult, as specified by the parent on the registration form. **No one will be allowed to go to the classrooms until 5:45 pm.** If an adult not listed on the registration form will be picking up your child, the CRE must be informed, in writing. If you need to pick your child up early, please inform us with a written note delivered to the Coordinator before the beginning of class. Unsupervised children are not permitted on the grounds at any time. Children should report to the Coordinator in the unforeseen event of not being picked up on time.

**Attendance:** You must ensure your child(ren)s attendance at *all* Religious Education classes/events unless prevented by illness/family emergencies. *Greater than 3 absences may result in your child having to repeat the grade.*

**Behavior:** All of our students are expected to display behavior in accordance with the Christian value to treat others as we wish to be treated. This includes a respectful attitude towards staff and other students, basic manners (yes, we expect to hear “please” and “thank you”!), and attention to task. You, as a parent, can help reinforce the expected behavior by modeling it at home and by emphasizing the importance of religious education.

Students are also responsible for:

- Proper preparation for class instruction ... have a snack and use the restroom **prior to class**;
- Completion of homework, including preparation for exams;

- Participation in class discussions and activities;
- Satisfactory completion of special assignments;
- Knowledge of prayers required at each grade level;
- Doing the very best work possible.

Inappropriate behavior that may result in disciplinary procedures includes but is not limited to: fighting, defiance of staff, use of profanity, refusal to prepare assignments or to participate in class, possession of dangerous objects, possession or use of tobacco or a controlled substance, damage to property/ vandalism (repair will be paid for by the parent), lewd behavior, leaving the building/premises during the class without permission, habitual tardiness & absenteeism, intimidating fellow students, cheating, throwing snowballs, and gum chewing.

The Catechetical Program reserves the right to remove a child from the group sessions for one or more reasons as outlined below (one or more of these reasons may apply to a given case):

- If it is believed that the child would benefit significantly from an individual or smaller group situation;
- If the child's behavior is seriously inhibiting the learning of others in the group;
- As a disciplinary measure for serious and/or persistent disruptive behavior.

**Cancellation of Classes and Events:** Please note that we follow the Red Hook School schedule, including for weather related cancellations. If Red Hook Schools are closed, dismiss early or cancel after school activities on a given day, Religious Education classes scheduled for that afternoon and evening are also canceled.

Whenever a decision is made to cancel, reschedule or delay classes or events pertaining to the Religious Education program, the office will, when possible,:

- Post a message on Flocknotes.
- Email all those families who have provided us with current email addresses.

**Communications**: Communications between the parent, the Catechist and the Coordinator are crucial for a successful program. Parents are asked to introduce themselves to their child's catechist early in the school year and are invited to contact the catechist or the Coordinator of Religious Education anytime during the year with questions they may have. Catechists and the Coordinator will communicate with the parents via:

- Published calendar
- Letters mailed or sent home with your child(ren)
- E-mail
- Notices in the parish bulletin
- Website
- Your child's catechist
- Flocknotes

**Documentation**: Parents are asked to provide the RE Office with all required documentation including:

1. annual Registration Form with updated contact/medical information
2. copy of child's Baptismal Certificate
3. copy of child's First Eucharist Certificate if received in another parish
4. provide previous records if child attended a Religious Education program in another parish
5. copies of custodial agreements if either of the biological parents do not share custody (to clarify who is able to make decisions regarding the child(ren)s religious education)

**Dress Code**: In the interest of safety and maintaining order, the following guidelines for dress and conduct are to be followed:

- No pajama bottoms (or tops), shoes/sneakers with cleats or rollers, flip-flops, hats, or clothing with inappropriate wording/pictures may be worn while at any RE class or event.
- Clothing should be appropriate and modest. Tops should not be not be low cut or bare the midriff. Shorts should fall most of the way to the knee.

- If the Coordinator deems a student's clothing to be unacceptable, he/she will call the parent to pick up the child or bring appropriate clothing for the student to change.

**Electronics and Valuables:** Cellphones, MP3 players, game consoles and all valuables should be left at home. If a child accidentally brings one to class they should give it to the teacher for safekeeping, and it will be returned to the parent at the end of class. For children in Youth Alive, using an electronic device during class will result in the child's parent being called to pick them up from the class and credit for that class will **not** be given.

**Field Trips:** If a field trip is planned, the *Parish-Sponsored Trip Form* must be completed by the parent of every minor who will participate. Telephone calls **will not** be accepted in lieu of written permission forms. **Parents/guardians who accompany the class on a field trip will be asked to submit to a background check and attend a Safer Spaces information/awareness session.**

**Homework and Testing:** Homework reinforces classroom learning and can provide opportunities for independent study and creative thinking. Each catechist will give homework at his/her discretion. Children will be tested regularly, with written and/or oral tests. If a child does not fulfill grade level requirements in classroom work, homework, and testing, he/she may be required to repeat the grade level, as determined by the Coordinator.

**Mass attendance:** Sunday and Holy Day Mass attendance is **required** as part of the Religious Education catechetical requirements.

**Parent Meetings:** Parents must attend meetings according to their child(ren)s placement in the program. Parent meetings include:

1. Grades 1-6 Start of Year Meeting for all families
2. **ALL** Youth Alive Prayer Meetings (4 per year)
3. Sacramental Preparation Meetings for Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation

**Progress Reports:** Religious formation of the child takes place in the home, as parents are the primary educators, in church, and in the class setting. Progress Reports for the Religious Education Program only reflect class performance (participation and testing) and homework. They are issued twice yearly to indicate the strengths and weaknesses that the children are demonstrating.

**Safe Environment Program:** In 2002, the United States Bishops approved *The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* in an effort to protect children and youth from sexual abuse at all levels of church life and to restore trust in a Church scarred by the scandal of clergy sexual abuse. Article 12 of the charter directs all dioceses to create programs and processes to teach children and youth about sexual abuse and its prevention. In the Archdiocese of New York, lessons on sexual abuse awareness for children in the parish religious education programs and schools will be integrated into the religious education program each year. Information will be offered at the beginning of the catechetical year which will describe for you this sexual abuse awareness training and how it is being implemented in our parish.

**Snacks:** Snacks will be at the discretion of the catechist. If a catechist decides to provide a snack during class for a special occasion, the catechist should be aware of any and all food allergies. It should also be noted on the registration form.

**Textbooks:** Textbooks are provided to all children enrolled in grades 2 through 6. If a textbook is lost, stolen, or damaged, the parent will be asked to purchase a new one.



## ***PROGRAM DESCRIPTION***

St. Christopher's/St. Sylvia's family parish provides religious education for children in grades 1 through 9, as well as older teenagers. Parish Religious Education Programs are preparation for life. Children are expected to attend Religious Education classes continuously from grade 1 through 9.

Registration takes place each spring for classes that begin the following September; families must reregister their children each year. To register a child in the program, a family must be registered in the parish or have written permission from the pastor of the parish you are registered in.

The parent/guardian has the primary and sacred responsibility to educate his/her children in the Catholic faith. St. Christopher and St. Sylvia's Parish Religious Education Program is established to assist parents and families in fulfilling this responsibility.

### **Primary Grades (First through Sixth)**

Children in grades one through six are expected to attend weekly faith formation classes at their grade level throughout the school year.

### **Youth Alive**

The Youth Alive program builds on the basics learned in the primary grades, expanding into greater depth and exploring how to put our faith into action. The program is typically completed over the seventh and eighth grade years. The Youth Alive student will receive a course list and registration form in July for the upcoming year. The student may select those courses he/she wishes to take from those which will fulfill his/her curriculum requirements.

The program requires the student to:

- attend eight Prayer meetings and complete at least fifteen courses over a minimum of two years;
- attend the Prayer meetings and a minimum of seven courses per year. If less than seven are taken or are full, the student will get first preference in 8<sup>th</sup> grade so they can meet the requirements

needed before Confirmation. If **all** Youth Alive requirements are not met, it could delay Confirmation for another year.

- must complete at least the following number of courses in each category: 4 Personal Growth/ Morality, 1 Sexuality, 2 Church History, 4 Sacramental Life, and 4 Jesus and the Gospel Message;
- complete all aspects of each course to receive credit, including attending all sessions, completing all homework, and returning all borrowed materials. No partial credit will be given;
- know the Four Pillars of our Catholic Faith and be able to recite them (the Ten Commandments, the Sacraments, the Our Father and the Nicene Creed) they will be tested at the end of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade. If a student does not know the Four Pillars of our Faith and fails the test, Confirmation may be delayed until the next year;
- track their own progress using the participation record and be responsible for completing all requirements in a timely manner;

The program requires parents of Youth Alive students to:

- attend **all** Prayer meetings with their child;
- participate in at least one course per year as an assistant or leader.
- attend all parent, sacramental or informational meetings

Fees are set based on the individual course and are listed on the course list. Refunds will not be given if the office is not notified within **ten days** from the date of the course for on-site courses. Refunds for off-site courses will not be given less than **one month** from the date of the course, or as specified in the course description.

At the completion of this program, the student is ready to enter the Confirmation Program. Students having completed two years, eight prayer sessions, and all fifteen classes by June 1<sup>st</sup> can register for the Confirmation program starting July 1<sup>st</sup> of that same year.

### **Confirmation Program**

Students having completed the Youth Alive program can register for the Confirmation program starting July 1<sup>st</sup> of that same year. To enter the Confirmation program, the student must also:

- Attend **all** mandatory Confirmation Preparation classes held in the spring of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year (March-May)
- Choose a Saint name for their Confirmation name, and write a report on that Saint; (outline provided)
- Select a Confirmation sponsor and submit their name and address to have the form mailed;
- Write a letter to the Bishop requesting the Sacrament; (outline provided)
- Complete and document 20 hours of community service (completed in the fourteen months between July 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year and August 1<sup>st</sup> of the Confirmation year).
- Attend the mandatory Confirmation retreat
- Attend the mandatory NYC Confirmation Trip

More than one absence from Confirmation classes, missing the retreat or missing the NYC Confirmation trip may result in the student having to repeat the program the following year before receiving the sacrament.

### **Special Religious Education**

Special religious education is a ministry that responds to the religious and spiritual needs of persons with a physical, mental, or emotional disability which impairs their functioning in a regular classroom. Because of that disability the child may require individualized instruction in a small group, in a one-on-one setting, or, if assistance is available, may be mainstreamed into the regular catechetical program. In consultation with the parent, the Coordinator will appropriately place each child in a program that will address his/her special needs and encourage further spiritual growth.

### **Children who are missing Religious Instruction**

A parent/guardian who would like to enroll an older child in the program who has had no previous formal religious education classes should plan to meet with the Coordinator so an individual plan of study can be drawn up. This is especially important if the parent/guardian

would like the child to eventually prepare to receive one or more of the sacraments.

Any child who leaves the Religious Education Program after receiving First Communion will (upon reentering the program) be required to complete the grade level(s) of curriculum missed. The placement of the child is determined by the Coordinator after consultation with the pastor and the parent.

For students who have missed the opportunity to get caught up and rejoin their peers, Sts. Christopher and Sylvia also offers an RCIT program (Rite of Christian Initiation for Teens).

### **Sacramental Preparation**

In almost all cases, children must have completed the first two years of the Religious Education program and received the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is typically received in the fall of ninth grade, after completion of the Youth Alive program and the Confirmation preparation program scheduled in the Spring of 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Preparation for all sacraments include class attendance, class work, parent meetings, student retreats, and may include work outside of class time.

## ***PROGRAM CURRICULUM***

### **Curriculum for Primary Grades**

St. Christopher's Religious Education follows the 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculums set by the Archdiocese of New York.

***Grade One: God the Father loves us, God the Son saves us, and God the Holy Spirit helps us***

**Objective:** To develop an awareness of God the Creator who gives us life and grace and promises us eternal life through Jesus.

**Prayers:** Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

**Grade Two: *Jesus nourishes us and strengthens God's life and grace within us***

**Objective:** To present Jesus as the model for Christian living, and to introduce the sacraments of Baptism, Penance and Eucharist.

**Prayers:** All prayers taught in grade 1, Act of Contrition, Simple responses at Mass, Apostles Creed to "...He will come again to judge the living and the dead."

**Act of Contrition:** My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do to good, I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us. In his name, My God, have mercy. Amen

**Grade Three: *Jesus continues his life and work through the Church***

**Objective:** To deepen the child's understanding of the Church and to help the child experience the church as a Christian community.

**Prayers:** All prayers taught in grades 1 and 2, The Apostles' Creed (in its entirety) and the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary

**Apostles Creed:** I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen

***Grade Four : Morality(Ten Commandments)***

Theme: As God's people we are called to live as Jesus did, choosing a life of love, characterized by obedience to God and service to others.

**Objective:** To help the children form their consciences according to the teachings of the Catholic Church and to learn the basis of Christian morality as taught in the Old and New Testament, especially the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments.

**Prayers:** All prayers taught in grades 1, 2 and 3, Holy, Holy, Holy, Act of Faith and the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary

***Grade Five: The Seven Sacraments***

Theme: Through the sacraments, the Church celebrates Christ's saving actions in our lives.

**Objective:** To help the child experience and understand the rites of the sacraments and so become a more conscious and active participant in the church's sacramental life.

**Prayers:** All prayers taught in grades 1, 2, 3 and 4, Gloria, Act of Love and the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

***Grade Six: Old Testament and Salvation History***

Theme: God's saving actions are found throughout history. The Holy Bible, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, records God's plan of salvation.

**Objective:** To understand the Old Testament as the revelation of God in history of a people, a revelation fulfilled in the New Testament.

**Prayers:** All prayers taught in grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, Act of Hope and the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary

## *Youth Alive Curriculum*

The St. Christopher and St. Sylvia's Youth Alive program follows the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum from the Archdiocese of New York.

### ***Personal Growth, Part I: The Human Person***

**Theme:** The growth and change experienced during adolescence are part of the unfolding of God's plan for our development as fully Christian persons.

**Objectives:** To develop in the young adolescent a sense of self-worth and self respect nurtured and strengthened by a knowledge of God's love. To acquaint the young adolescent with an understanding of the virtues necessary for a life of goodness and faith.

### ***Personal Growth, Part II: The Human Community***

**Theme:** Developing relationships with others and God is essential to becoming our true selves.

**Objectives:** To help the young adolescent understand the elements which are essential to developing positive relationships. To help the young adolescent understand that true community is built on honest, loving and respectful relationships.

### ***Jesus and the Gospel Message***

**Theme:** The gospels reveal Jesus as the Savior and Risen Lord who calls us to advance the kingdom of God through discipleship.

**Objectives:** To broaden the young adolescent's understanding of the gospels through a study of their formation, themes, message, and literary aspects. To help the young adolescent grow in a personal relationship with Jesus by encountering Him in the Gospels.

### ***Sacraments***

**Theme:** The mystery of Christ continues in the church through the sacraments which are visible signs of the love and saving action of Jesus.

**Objectives:** To help the young adolescent understand, appreciate and celebrate the continuing presence and saving action of Jesus in the church. To lead the young adolescent to a full and active participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

### ***Christian (Human) Sexuality***

Theme: Sexuality is a gift from God. It embraces psychological, spiritual and physical characteristics of men and women. We human beings need to integrate our sexuality into our total personality in order to develop into the persons God has called us to be.

**Objectives:** To help the young adolescent appreciate the gift of sexuality. To assist the young adolescent in developing correct and positive attitudes concerning sexuality. To clarify for the young adolescent how the gift of sexuality can be misused.

### ***Church History***

Theme: Jesus' life and mission continue through the Church, the community of believers called by God and empowered by the Spirit to be the sign of the Kingdom of God.

**Objectives:** To deepen the young adolescent's knowledge of the history of the Church. To lead the young adolescent to a fuller participation in the life and mission of the Church.

### ***Morality***

Theme: Through our relationship with Jesus, we grow in an ever-deepening awareness of who God is, who we are, and how God calls us to live. Catholic Christian morality gives direction to our response to God's call.

**Objectives:** To help the young adolescent grow in an understanding of the moral responsibilities arising from one's relationship with Jesus. To help the young adolescent understand what conscience is and how to form his or her conscience according to the Catholic faith. To help the young adolescent learn basic concepts of morality and develop skills for moral decision-making. To enable the young adolescent to recognize



the role of the Spirit and the witness and guidance of the Catholic Christian community in moral living.

### ***Prayer***

Theme: Prayer is an expression of our awareness of and response to God's presence, love, goodness, and saving power.

**Objectives:** To assist the young adolescent to grow in a desire for and appreciation of prayer as essential to the Christian life. To help the young adolescent, through the presentation and experience of a variety of prayer forms, including the luminous mysteries of the Rosary, to develop the ability to pray.

## ***Confirmation Curriculum***

Theme: The conference of grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit received from the sacrament of Confirmation aid us in living out our faith.

**Objectives:** To have the students explore what it means to live out what they've learned, to grow their understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in their ability to do so, to encourage them to consider their life as an ongoing relationship with God, and to find their role as an active member of the Church community.