

***St. Anthony of Padua
Children's Faith Formation
Family Handbook 2016-17***

Edition August 2016

*Inspiring a
New Generation*



St. Anthony CFF Office

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Click on Children's Faith Formation Icon or Link

The contents of this Handbook may be updated with policy changes throughout the year in order to provide the best formation environment for your family.
Should a change occur you will be notified by email.



St. Anthony of Padua
Mission Statement

We, the parishioners of St. Anthony of Padua, believe that here the merciful heart of Christ speaks a loving word to our hearts, forging a communion of love. It is this grace which draws us to gather on the Lord's Day for Eucharist, proclaim his Good News and give ourselves in service to those in need.

We commit ourselves to share our faith in the Lord Jesus with all we meet and to hand on our Catholic faith to the next generation. In the spirit of Saint Anthony, we welcome any who have lost their way in life so that together we may hear Christ speak to our hearts.

Children's Faith Formation
Advisory Board

Brett Bercich Colleen Cemprola Beth Hornberger
Jennifer Locketto Joe Yackanicz

Agenda for CFF Advisory Board Meetings:

- Review CFF scheduled and proposed events
- Review curriculum additions
- Evaluate and modify any procedures or events when necessary
- Share thoughts and concerns expressed by parish families
- Offer suggestions to be put before staff regarding any of the above

Religion Guidelines

Below is a synopsis of the core content guidelines for each grade level as established by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and applicable to St. Anthony of Padua CFF Program.

Kindergarten

The Bible, Creation, The Holy Family, Mary, Christian Community, Prayer, Sacraments, Liturgical Year Prayers: Sign of the Cross, intro to Hail Mary and Our Father

Grade One

God the Father, Creation, Living in God's World, God the Son-Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit, Sacraments of Initiation, Mary, Liturgical Year, Prayer

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father

Grade Two

Holy Trinity, Sacraments of Initiation and Healing, The Mass: Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist, Topics related to Mass, Mary, Liturgical Year, Prayer (also review for sacraments of Reconciliation / Eucharist)

Prayers: Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition

Grade Three

The Trinity, Sacraments, God's Law, Christian Community, Mary, Liturgical Year Prayers: Grace at meals, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition

Grade Four

God the Father, Jesus Christ Our Redeemer, Holy Spirit, Creed, Commandments, Grace, Sin, Conscience, The Beatitudes, Mary, Liturgical Year Prayers: Grace, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition, Intro to Nicene Creed

Grade Five

Sacraments of Initiation, Sacraments of Healing, The Sacraments at the Service of Communion, Mary, Liturgical Year, Holy Spirit, the Bible

Prayers: Grace, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition, Nicene Creed, How to pray the Rosary

Grade Six

The Bible, Old Testament, New Testament (as well as preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation)

Archdiocesan Approved Textbook Series

Kindergarten uses *Stories of God's Love* which introduces our youngest children to basic tenets of our faith. Grades 1 thru 5 use the all new Our Sunday Visitor series *Alive in Christ*. A spiral approach to faith formation is employed where K-5th graders learn about the same theme of the week. Confirmation will use a variety of sources including Sadlier's Confirmation program and videos by Matthew Kelly to prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation as well as an experiential curriculum of applying their gifts and leadership skills to activities in the second semester. Gospel Gatherings, Church worship and Liturgical Seasons are also important elements of all programs.

Arrival and Dismissal

Drop Off

- Families choosing to drop off children in the front of the Education Center must do so in the designated Drop Off Zone on the Education Center side of the road only. Note: The Drop Off Zone is for DROP OFF ONLY there is NO WAITING or PARKING in this zone.
- Families may also choose to park in the Church lot and walk their children into the Education Center. For safety, families are asked to use the designated 'Pedestrian Crossing' crosswalk.
- Students/families may only enter the Education Center via the front main entrance door where a monitor will be posted ten minutes prior to and 10 minutes after the start of each session. Children/families who arrive after 4:40 or 6:40 may be asked their name and reason for entry prior to being buzzed in. Adults may also be asked to show identification to the security camera, please bring photo ID with you.
- If a parent wishes to escort his/her child into the building after classes have begun, he or she will be accompanied by the monitor. Parents/guardians may not remain in the hallways while classes are in session.

Early Pick-up Procedure (occasional only)

- Before class a signed note must be delivered to the class room catechist (who will send it to the CFF Office) stating the child's name, grade, time of pick-up, name of adult coming for the child and reason for early dismissal.
- The adult picking up the child must report to the Reception Office at the requested time for verification. An Office volunteer will then go to the classroom and bring the child to the lobby. **A catechist may never dismiss a child merely on the word of the child**

Pick Up

In compliance with the traffic safety request issued by the Ambler Borough Police Chief there is NO Pick Up Car Line. To insure safe pedestrian crossing there is also NO PARKING in the Drop off Zone!

Pick up procedure

- Designated pick up drivers are to park in the Church lot, use the marked 'Pedestrian Crosswalk' and enter the locked front doors of the Education Center with the assistance of staff.
- In order to facilitate the dismissal of approximately 100 children at once parents or designated drivers are to highlight or circle the names of the children they are taking home on **the list provided at the Reception Counter**. Volunteer staff will pull the list once 10-15 families have been circled. This list of children will be the first called to come to the Lobby for dismissal following Closing Prayer. **Catechists will be instructed to not allow a child to leave the classroom until their name has been called.**
- **After the first wave of families have exited the building, a general PA announcement** will be made inviting the remainder of the children to come to the Lobby. Catechists will escort any remaining children in their room to the front Lobby where the children will wait for their parent or designated driver to arrive.
- No child will be allowed to leave the building unaccompanied. (**Older children may walk home unaccompanied BUT only with a written note of permission from the parent.*)
- **Safety concerns demand that everyone MUST use the designated Pedestrian Crosswalk when crossing Forest Ave to the Church lot with a child.**
- **If special circumstances (younger siblings in car seats, etc) make it difficult for the designated driver to enter the Education Center please contact the CFF Office at 215.646.6150 x2 for an alternate plan.**

Session Days and Times

Kindergarten through Confirmation (Grade 6) meet at each of the following times:

Tuesday	4:30-6:00 PM
Tuesday	6:30-8:00 PM
Wednesday	4:30-6:00 PM

Attendance Policy

Archdiocesan Policy considers more than 3 absences in a year to be excessive. If necessary, the parents and Director of Religious Education will develop an educational plan to remedy excessive absences that are affecting their child's readiness to move to the next level of religious instruction.

Absentee Assignments Reminders will be emailed home. Along with the regular homework (Family and Faith Page and Chapter Review) parents with a child in Grades 1-5 who missed class will be asked to review the chapter with their child and complete the online eAssessment which will be forwarded to the Director of Religious Education. Completion of absentee homework will be noted on the Attendance Record.

Class Cancellations and Communications

- **Cancellation of classes due to weather will be at the discretion of parish staff.** Notification of cancellation will be forwarded via email. Be sure to keep the CFF Office informed of any changes to your email address. The CFF Office will also leave a voice mail message on the phone system regarding closings. You are to use your discretion if class has not been canceled and road conditions have deteriorated in your area.
- The CFF Office will send CFF Weekly Updates with pertinent information and on occasion attached flyers that are deemed valuable to your family in lieu of paper copies in children's take home folders.
- Classroom catechists may email 'class news' to families as well. These emails will be sent via an email address used only for CFF and will contain the class code and the letters CFF (e.g. 3A.cff@gmail.com). Email addresses along with family information is confidential and will not be distributed to parties outside of CFF/St. Anthony without permission.

Faith in Action and Chapter Review Home-work

Faith cannot be taught or caught in one and a half hours a week. It must be practiced and lived out in everyday life. Parents with children in Grades 1 thru 5 will be asked to share one component from the week's ***Family & Faith page and children will be asked to complete the Chapter Review in their textbook.*** Family & Faith and Chapter Review pages are noted on the sheet in the back cover pocket of your child's CFF folder. ***(Kindergartners will have a take home chapter for families to review.)*** Parents with multiple children may select one component from any of their children's Family & Faith pages to use as their 'faith in action' for the week. Please initial your child's record sheet after they complete the Chapter Review. Children who complete their Home-work' will earn a bonus coupon making them eligible for prizes drawn raffle style throughout the year.

Evaluations

The Archdiocese requests assessments and evaluations. Assessments will reflect the knowledge of the Key Concepts given to each grade level. First semester assessments will be mailed home for families to complete so that each child has one on one assistance. Assessment scores will be recorded on the Progress Report. Student Progress reports will be mailed home in January. Second semester assessments will be administered in class and mailed home at the end of the year.

Classroom Management

Our goal is to provide order, structure and discipline for our children until they grow into self-discipline which reflects honesty, respect and consideration for both self and others. Good discipline and order provide the best environment for learning and faith sharing.

Student Responsibilities include:

- Cooperate with the catechist in order to maintain a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Participate fully and appropriately in group activities.
- Treat others and the property with respect.
- Ask what would Jesus do?

Behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals may include, but are not limited to: obstinacy, improper language, fighting, physical, emotional or psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures and harassment.

The parish is responsible for determining what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, both in and out of CFF sessions, when such behavior affects the CFF /parish community. Conduct by children or parents/guardians or anyone acting on their behalf, incompatible with the educational and religious mission of St. Anthony's is grounds for disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Director of Religious Education and Pastor.

Inappropriate behavior in the classroom by a student may result in any of the following actions:

- The catechist may write up an Incident Report.
- The catechist and director may review classroom management techniques.
- The catechist/director may notify the parent/Pastor about the specifics of inappropriate behavior.
- If a student continues to fail to respond to a catechist's request for appropriate behavior and is uncooperative on a specific night, the student may be directed to a 'time-out' in the CFF Office or a call may be placed to the parent for early pick up. If an assistant walks a child to the CFF Office for a 'time-out', an assignment from their book is to accompany him/her. The student will be asked to make up the missed class work and to improve their behavior upon returning to the classroom. When persistent inappropriate behavior is displayed by a student, parents and the DRE will discuss alternative options for the religious education of their child.

Safe Environment Program

The Archdiocese has established the Safe Environment Program. The mission of this Program is to oversee the training of and background checks for all Archdiocesan clergy, employees, and volunteers who have contact with children.

All St. Anthony CFF volunteers over 18 years of age have already or will be attending special training sessions and have supplied the parish with background checks and all clearance forms to meet this mandate which is in compliance with Pennsylvania Law Act 153.

The Archdiocese also mandates that religious education and school students must receive instruction based on **The Protection of God's Children: A Program for Students** during the course of their year long instruction. St. Anthony follows the suggested lesson plans posted on the Archdiocesan Office for Catechetical Formation's webpage. This program will be offered during session time in the Second Semester.

Education Center Crisis Response Procedures

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This section is subject to review by city police and fire safety officials and may therefore be revised. Until such possible revisions are made the following will be put in place regarding Shelter-in-place and Lockdown Procedures.

Cameras have been installed in both the church and rooms in the Education Center for security purposes.

Shelter-in-place

A shelter-in-place procedure may be implemented when a situation occurs that may be a hazard to health or is life threatening. It can be used when it is safer to keep the students inside the building rather than expose them to possible harm by allowing them to leave the building. Tornado warnings, hurricanes or release of hazardous materials may all trigger a shelter in place at schools securing the students while keeping the building open for entry only. Once the shelter in place is called the school should remain in that condition until the "All Clear" is given. A shelter in place may be called by emergency responders or weather agencies as well as the director of religious education or Preschool Child Care Administrators with knowledge of immediate danger. Shelter in place and lockdown are not synonymous terms. While both contain the students and staff, a shelter in place will allow individuals into the building to seek safety.

CFF Shelter-in-place Procedure

1. To initiate shelter in place an announcement will be made via the Public Address system to seek shelter-in-place. (Office staff will call any students and volunteers indoors and ask visitors to stay.)
2. All classes will report to the Multipurpose Room and will remain there until authorities deem it is safe to leave.
3. Steps will be taken to seal the exterior doors and hall doors. A land line will be available in the kitchen along with water and access to bathrooms.
4. If children have cell phones they will be allowed to call a parent or guardian to let them know they have been asked to remain until further notice and that they are safe.

Lockdown

'School' lockdown is the highest state of readiness that is activated when violence is occurring or is imminent in the area. any other situation deemed by the police or staff administrator to warrant a total lockdown of the Education Center.

Who may activate a 'school' lockdown?

1. An officer may notify or request parish staff to activate lockdown.
2. An administrator may, in an immediate, life threatening situation, activate a school lockdown.
3. Any member of the volunteer staff who observes or suspects a dangerous situation shall immediately notify the CFF Office staff or Director of Religious Education (DRE) via the Emergency call button located in each classroom.
4. The DRE shall immediately notify the Police Department by calling 911 from a land line if possible. If there is no response from the Office staff an immediate call to 911 should be placed.

Conditions in which to activate a school lockdown:

1. Someone has a gun
2. Someone with a gun is en route to Education Center.
3. Shots are heard.
4. The immediate pursuit of a dangerous suspect.
5. The execution of a high risk search or arrest warrant.
6. A large scale enforcement operation involving potentially dangerous suspects.

CFF Lockdown Procedures

External Threat

This is a threat that takes place outside the Education Center and does not place the children in imminent danger. The goal is to prevent the threat from entering the building. Because the building is already secure and locked, a Code Yellow Alert will be issued. The following steps should be taken:

- Notification of this type of lockdown will be via the intercom (Public Address) system. The broadcast message will be “Attention! This is a Code Yellow Alert. All students are to immediately report to their classrooms.”
- Once all classroom children are accounted for classroom doors should be secured (by removing magnets to allow automatic lock to engage or by hand locking), and curtains closed. All should stay clear of windows.
- Staff will secure the Office area and will be on heightened alert. Exterior doors are always locked but will be double checked.
- Depending on the threat level regular classroom activities may resume.

Internal Threat

An internal threat exists when the cause of danger is inside the facility or directly attempting to gain access. An internal threat presents a situation that may be a hazard to health or is life threatening. An internal threat will result in a Code Red Alert being issued. The following steps should be taken:

- A message will be broadcast via the intercom (PA) that states: “Attention! This is a Code Red Alert. Lockdown now”.
- All volunteers should immediately implement lockdown procedures by first quickly checking the halls to get any students into classrooms or designated safe locations-even if they aren’t members of their own class. All Volunteers are to be aware of safe locations throughout the Second Floor and Multipurpose Room. (Please note that at this time the hall bathrooms do not have locking mechanisms and are not considered safe areas.)
- Once in classroom, secure door (new wing-pull magnet to engage automatic lock...old wing hand secure). Shut off light. Close curtains and take students to safe spot. (New wing-interior closets automatically lock when magnet is removed...Old wing-move children away from windows and doors staying out of sight.)
- Keep students quiet and do not allow use of cell phones.
- Doors are not to be opened for anyone until the all clear code is heard: “**Attention! Code Green. All is clear.**” (Should you believe that crisis responders have arrived at your door prior to the all clear code you have every right to ask for identification. Crisis responders will have access to room keys).
- When evacuated the catechist must take the Attendance Register. The Primary Evacuation Site will be Friendship Hall. Students should only be released from the designated “Reunion” site after proper accounting and out processing can be conducted by staff.

Sacrament/Liturgical Catechesis Information

First Reconciliation and First Communion

The expectation for children preparing for celebration of these sacraments is that each child:

- Be baptized
- Be participating regularly in Sunday Mass with their families
- Have an appreciation and understanding of the sacrament appropriate for the age level

Parents are the primary catechists of their children. It is through their catholic witness that children receive their first experiences of God and the community of faith called the Church. Recognizing this truth has influenced the way our parish children prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Parents are now taking a more active role in preparation and family workshops and activities are the preferred model for learning. The CFF Program will support the parent led preparation in the 'classroom' with review style lessons.

Parents of students in Grade 3 and above who have not received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and/or Eucharist should contact the Director for support in preparing their children for these sacraments.

Confirmation

It is the expectation that Confirmation candidates:

- Be baptized
- Be participating regularly in Sunday Mass with their families
- All candidates are asked to complete a Confirmation formation program, attend a retreat, offer service to the parish and community at large and work closely with their sponsor.

Sponsor

The role of the sponsor is to help the candidate throughout his/her life to fulfill his or her baptismal promises. The sponsor should be one whose positive influence on the candidate is permanent and strong; hence it is not just an honorary title, but a responsibility to set a good Catholic example. In conformity with the new Code of Canon Law:

- Parents may not be sponsors.
- Sponsors must be at least 16 years old.
- Sponsors must be a Catholic who has been confirmed, received Eucharist and practices the Faith. "Practicing" means, in the case of an adult, registered in a parish, frequenting the Sacraments, regularly attends Mass.
- Sponsors must have a Letter of Eligibility from the pastor of their present parish.

Extra catechetical moments...

Beyond the Liturgical Celebrations inclusive in CFF programming, children have the following 'extra' opportunities to spend time with God:

A new year of Mass extras begins in October

Little People Sunday Worship during 9:15 Mass offers our little ones Age 3 through Kindergarten the opportunity to gather in the Meeting Room on the lower level and enjoy activities designed just for them which reflect the Sunday's Gospel.

Children's Liturgy of the Word for children in Gr. K-5 is also available during the 9:15 Mass. Children are dismissed to Friendship Hall where they hear the Word of God proclaimed in their own language. Children return to the Church proper during the collection to participate in the remainder of the Mass. Grades 6+ may help 'shepherd' the children to and from this special liturgical moment.

Sacramental Retreats are held for Grades 2 and 6. Spirit Team will host a Retreat afternoon for Grades 3-6.

Registration Overview

CFF families must be registered as parishioners of St. Anthony. Under special circumstances families from other parishes may join our program but only with pastoral permission. Re-registration begins late summer. Class lists are developed as the registration forms are received. Early registration guarantees desired sessions and times. New registrations are accepted at any time.

Tuition: \$100– Kindergarten \$170 - 1 child \$295- 2 children \$400 – 3 or more children

- This fee helps defray the cost of each student’s text book, folder, classroom and art supplies, activity days, audiovisual purchases, resource materials, catechist/assistant training, Office supplies and equipment, building maintenance and other miscellaneous items during the year
- A replacement fee of \$15 will be charged for lost books.
- Additional fees of \$65 help defray materials and retreat costs for First Communion and Confirmation
- A financial concern will not prevent a child(ren)’s registration in the Program. If there is a difficulty, please contact the CFF Office.
- Children of full time adult volunteers are tuition free.