

St. Teresa of Calcutta Faith Formation Parent Information 2025-2026

K-8 Arrival

Children should arrive using the Atlantic Ave. door of Good Shepherd School. They will directly report to their classroom.

K-8 Dismissal

Children will begin to be dismissed at 10:35 AM in Sundays and 5:00 PM on Tuesdays using the Lees Ave door (school parking lot). Catechists will accompany the children to the Lees Avenue sidewalk and meet parents there. **PLEASE WAIT FOR YOUR CHILDREN ON THE SIDEWALK. DO NOT ASK THEM TO WALK ACROSS THE PARKING LOT TO MEET YOU.**

Attendance

Our catechists partner with parents to help them form faith in their children. We encourage parents to embrace their responsibility to ensure children attend classes, weekly liturgies, and other parish events.

Grades K-8 are allowed 3 absences between September and May. Absences beyond this allotment will require the submission of additional homework.

Early Dismissal

We **strongly discourage** early dismissal as it can be disruptive to the other children and can diminish your own child's formation experience. However, on occasion, we know that this is necessary. Students should provide a note explaining the need for early dismissal. Parents should report to the school office to pick up their child. If early dismissal becomes a regular occurrence, we will not allow the child to attend on that day. Alternate means of formation (homeschooling or separate meetings with the catechists) will be arranged.

Absences

Attendance will be monitored each week. If absent, please email

DLim@stteresaofcalcuttaparish.org

Class Cancellations

If inclement weather or other emergencies require cancellation of Faith Formation classes, we will communicate via email.

Homework

All students will be required to complete any homework assigned by their catechist and return it to the catechist the following week. We encourage parents to participate with children in these assignments. Other classroom supplies will be provided by the catechist.

Communication:

The primary means of communication will be email and the parish bulletin. Various handouts will also be sent home via the child's Faith Formation folder. Please check that you have given us an updated email address.

Intergenerational Events:

The parish offers a multitude of opportunities for families to grow in their faith via special events throughout the year. It is a good way for children to understand that faith formation extends beyond the classroom. Please watch the bulletin, the take-home flyers, and emails regarding these events. **Homeschool families/students are required to attend six intergenerational events.**

Discipline:

Our catechists are volunteers who are giving their time and effort for the benefit of your children. They will deal with normal minor issues that occur in any classroom setting. Parents will be asked to intervene if any of these issues become problematic for the rest of the class. We will operate on a "3 strike policy" — parents will be asked to pick up their child after the third warning of the day. Parents will be notified if their child presents with a continual behavior judged to be of a more serious nature. These may include:

- Actions perceived as deliberate injury or threat.
- Deliberately damaging property
- Possession of any weapons e.g. any type of knife or penknife, gun (including water pistols, cap guns, starter pistols, etc.). Incidents involving firearms or suspected firearms as listed above are police matters. (Cf. N.S.A.2C:39-1f.)
- Deliberately pulling fire alarms
- Making bomb threats are police matters
- Possession of drugs or alcohol.

Dress Code:

Students should remember that they are in a place of worship. They should dress neatly and modestly. Tops must cover shoulders and midsection; no crop tops or strapless shirts. Clothing must be free of inappropriate graphics.

Phone Policy:

Cell phones should remain off and put away. Phones may not be used for texting, games, photos, or social media. If a phone becomes a distraction, the teacher may hold it until the end of class. Respectful attention helps everyone learn and pray together.

Safe Environment:

In compliance with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, every catechist and adult aide (18 years and older) must submit to a criminal history and background check. After the initial fingerprinting process, the fingerprints of individuals are rechecked every three years while on assignment. In addition, every adult who will interact with children is required to attend Virtus Training.

The Camden Diocese Policy also requires that scheduled class time be dedicated to Safe Environment Lessons. This lesson reinforces strategies children may use to guarantee their safety. The date of the lesson will be provided, and parents will be offered the opportunity to opt out of the lesson or to discuss the material with their children themselves.

Sacramental Preparation

General Guidelines:

Preparation for the sacraments is an ongoing process and is primarily the responsibility of the parents. By word, and is primarily the responsibility of the parents. By word and example, the children learn about their Catholic faith from their parents. Our Faith Formation program will assist parents in meeting this responsibility.

The sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are usually celebrated in the 2nd grade and, in most cases, Confirmation is in the spring of 8th grade. Diocesan policy requires 2 years of sacramental preparation before receiving the sacraments. Parents should contact the Faith Formation office if their children, 3rd grade or older, have not yet received Reconciliation or First Communion.

Sacramental preparation meetings for parents will be scheduled at various times. One parent or guardian must attend the required sessions.

Sacramental preparation for the child involves sessions and retreats beyond the weekly classroom. These dates will be given at the first parent meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Daniela Lim at DLim@stteresaofcalcuttanj.org or call 856-858-0298.