

Parish Catholic Education Program

Holy Trinity Parish

2220 Reed Street Erie PA 16503

www.holytrinityrc.org

(814) 456-0671

Parish Catholic Education Program

Holy Trinity Parish
2220 Reed Street Erie PA 16503
www.holytrinityrc.org
(814) 456-0671

Holy Trinity's Parish Catholic Education Program, commonly known as PCEP, is a program available exclusively to parishioners of Holy Trinity Parish. It is a program geared toward supporting Parish families with children attending Catholic Elementary and/or High Schools in our community. With the rising costs of tuition, Parish families have the opportunity, through a contractual arrangement with the Parish, to volunteer their time in a variety of ways, in exchange for tuition assistance paid directly to their children's schools.

In order to be considered eligible for the program, families must:

1. Currently be active, participating parishioners of Holy Trinity Parish or
2. Formally register and become active, participating members of Holy Trinity Parish, and
3. Successfully complete the "Good Faith Year"

Families who are not yet members of the Parish should contact the Parish office where they will be assisted in joining Holy Trinity. Families must also complete the "Good Faith Year" prior to receiving assistance. The "Good Faith Year" is a period of twelve months which serves as an opportunity for families to show their level of commitment through active participation in the Parish community and in PCEP functions. Occasions arise where family members have been active parishioners of the Church for an extended period of time and their level of commitment/involvement has already exceeded that which would be expected during the "Good Faith Year". Should this situation arise, the family's "Good Faith Year" requirement would be waived. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis directly with the Parish Pastor and/or Senior Associate.

Upon successful completion of the "Good Faith Year", families are eligible to receive tuition assistance for their children's Catholic education through a contractual arrangement with Holy Trinity. PCEP families sign and adhere to a contract on an annual basis. The contract outlines the specific requirements and obligations of the program, which must be met in order to receive tuition assistance. Contracts include a minimum number of expected Parish Support Hours in relation to the amount of assistance being received. This is only the minimum requirement. **There must be sufficient participation from all families, for all events, to help make the events successful. This may result in exceeding the minimum numbers of support hours.**

PCEP contracts are comprised of three (3) areas:

1. **Active Parish Participation and Commitment**
 - a. Members of Holy Trinity Parish only;
 - b. Weekly attendance at Mass, as a family, at Holy Trinity Parish;
 - c. Contributing a minimum of ten dollars (\$10) to the weekly offertory collection, even if not in attendance;
 - d. Having at least one family member participate as an Altar Server, Choir Member, Eucharistic Minister, Usher or Lector at one of the two weekend Masses according to the assigned *schedule; and
 - e. Supporting the annual Catholic Services Appeal, during Lent, with a pledge/gift.

**Family members are asked to find a replacement if they cannot be present on their scheduled day.*

2. Active PCEP Participation and Commitment

Participating in all parish and PCEP functions including but not limited to:

- a. Attending the majority of pierogi making sessions (cheese patties and assembly), Chrusciki sessions (if held) and potato pancake sessions (if held) throughout the year;
- b. Assisting with any Zabawa preparations leading up to the event (i.e. golabki sessions, onion cutting, grounds set up, bakery preparations, etc.)
- c. Setting up, selling tickets for, working at, and helping to tear down at Zabawa and other named PCEP events (i.e. Bingo);
- d. Attending baking sessions for and working at the Christmas and Easter Markets (or any other planned PCEP events);
- e. Participating in any additional PCEP functions and/or fundraising necessary to meet the program budget.

3. Parish Support Hours

By actively participating in Parish and PCEP functions, families earn hours for the amount of time they invest in each function. Families are responsible for keeping track of their hours on a monthly basis relevant to their signed contract. According to Diocesan guidelines, an invoice must be submitted prior to any payment made by the Parish. The completed Parish Support Hours Log serves as an invoice to the Parish, allowing payments to then be made to the necessary schools. Without receipt of hours worked by the established deadline, a given month's tuition payment may not be made. Submitted hours will still count toward the hours needed for completion of the signed contract. The following steps apply to the Parish Support Hours:

- a. Complete the minimum number of Parish Support Hours by the end of the contract.
- b. This is only the minimum requirement of hours as there must be sufficient participation from all families, for all events, to help make the events successful. This may result in our need to exceed the minimum numbers of support hours.
- c. Hours should be documented on the Parish Support Hours Log form and submitted to the Parish Office, via email or hard copy, by the 4th of each month, following the month that the hours were completed.
- d. A log form should be submitted for each month of the contract year, by the deadline, regardless of the number of hours completed in a given month (i.e. even if no hours were completed in a given month).
- e. Parish Support Hours may be completed by participating parents and children ages 12 through the end of high school.
- f. Single parents may identify a volunteer, who should be named in the contract, to assist with assigned hours. Volunteers must be parishioners and the same volunteer should be used throughout the duration of the contract.
- g. Children must be recipients of the tuition assistance in order for their hours to count.

Additional duties may be identified by and performed for the Parish by families if, ***after active participation by all eligible family members in the above noted activities/events***, they remain in need of additional hours to fulfill their contract. Hours and participation will be reviewed monthly to determine the possible need for secondary sources for completing hours.

As participants in PCEP, families must remain active, participating members of only Holy Trinity Parish. If they fail to consistently attend mass, contribute to offertory, follow the assigned schedules for corresponding ministries, participate in the CSA, or comply with any remaining provisions of the contract, up to and including completion/submission of the required Parish Support Hours, one of the following may occur as determined in coordination with the Holy Trinity Parish Senior Associate:

- Any one of the monthly tuition payments, up to and including the final payment (which may include additional assistance factored into tuition payments to the school) will be withheld and payment to the school will become the family's responsibility;
- Families may be asked to pay back monies which may have already been paid to schools for which insufficient hours were completed.
- The family's next contract will be amended by adding the number of incomplete hours to the new contracted amount, increasing their expectations for the next year; or
- Their assistance will be reduced for the next year by the dollar amount equivalent to the number of incomplete hours.

In the event that a family repeatedly fails to meet the contracted expectations and/or continue to fall short on completing the minimum number of contracted hours, their participation in the Parish Catholic Education Program will be jeopardized.

PCEP contracts are developed annually and remain in effect from June 1st, each year, to May 31st of the following year. Contracts are created for all families who are actively participating in the program, with tuition payments being made to the identified schools in eight monthly installments beginning in October of the contract year and ending in May, the final month of the contract. Families who will be completing their "Good Faith Year" at some point during the contract year will also be provided with a contract; however, tuition assistance will be prorated and will not commence until the completion of the "Good Faith Year". At the point that tuition assistance begins, the family would then begin completion of the Parish Support Hours outlined in the contract.

EXAMPLE: A family, with one child, begins their "Good Faith Year" in December 2018. Their "Good Faith Year" ends in November 2019. When new PCEP contracts begin in June 2019, the family in their "Good Faith Year" would receive a contract as well. However, they would not be eligible for tuition payments until December 2019. They would have six payments made from December 2019 through May 2020 as opposed to the customary eight (8) payments. Additionally, in December 2019, the family would also begin completing their contracted amount of Parish Support Hours. Hours completed prior to December 2019 would be done as part of the Family's "Good Faith Year".

In preparation for yearly contracts, budgets are developed to determine the amount of assistance that can be provided to PCEP families, with a maximum family allotment identified relative to tuition costs. Specific tuition amounts are identified, each year, for all the schools represented for the children in the program. The amount of assistance may change year to year depending on the number of families/children receiving assistance and the amount of budgeted dollars available for distribution.

Based on entrance into the program and completion of the "Good Faith Year", and for families beyond the "Good Faith Year", tuition assistance is provided according to the following tiered structure:

- Good Faith Year: 0%
- Year One: *50% of tuition, up to the maximum family allotment
- Year Two: 75% of tuition, up to the maximum family allotment
- Year Three (and on): 100% of tuition, up to the maximum family allotment

**prorated if finishing "Good Faith Year" during the contracted year*

EXAMPLE: A family enters the program with one elementary student (6th grade); the student's school tuition is \$3,746 and the maximum family allotment budgeted is \$6,000. Tuition assistance would be provided as follows:

- Good Faith Year: 0%
- Year One: *50% of tuition, up to the maximum family allotment (i.e., \$1,873 based on the above scenario)
*prorated if finishing "Good Faith Year"
- Year Two: 75% of tuition, up to the maximum family allotment (i.e., \$2,810 based on the above scenario)
- Year Three +: 100% of tuition, up to the maximum family allotment (i.e., \$6,000 based on the above scenario)

Note: The figures utilized above are only an example to fully outline the manner in which a family receives assistance. The dollar amounts listed do not constitute the expected amount to be received, as budgets are created on an annual basis, which may alter the tuition figures year to year.

In addition to receiving assistance through PCEP, all families are expected to complete the diocesan tuition aid application forms, for elementary and high schools, to determine if their children are eligible for either of the two separate scholarship programs offered by the Diocese of Erie (the Bishop's Scholarship and the Star Foundation). These forms can be accessed via the Diocesan website www.eriercd.org and often through the elementary and high schools directly. In the event that either scholarship is received or any other form of financial assistance, the family must provide Holy Trinity with a copy of the notification to allow for any necessary contract amendments. PCEP families should not receive financial assistance, in multiple forms, in excess of tuition expenses. Assistance received outside of PCEP will be applied toward tuition expenses before any PCEP assistance. If necessary, PCEP assistance may be reduced so as not to exceed total tuition expenses.

Occasions may arise where additional tuition assistance can be offered through Holy Trinity based on available funds. In the event of this opportunity, contractual obligations may be added or altered to reflect the additional assistance being provided and the payment arrangements with schools may differ. As with any assistance provided to the schools, upholding the expectations to the contracts is paramount to receipt of the tuition assistance.

Finally, all schools, to whom tuition payments are made, receive notification letters reflecting the amount of assistance being provided for students involved in PCEP shortly after the start of the contract year.