

# Christian Formation Staff:

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## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Parents are the child's primary religious educators. We thank you for allowing us to participate in your child's Christian Formation. In the class, we can only hope to spark an interest and enthusiasm. While at home, you can develop and nourish the faith. Your child's attitude toward Mass, the Sacraments, prayer, service and commitment to Jesus grows out of their experiences of family and from the example of parents. We do our best to provide your child with religious content and prayerful experiences.

### WE ASK THAT YOU:

1. Foster the development of prayer. Pray regularly as a family. Please teach your younger children the basic prayers (The Sign of the Cross, The Our Father, The Hail Mary, The Creed, The Glory Be). Encourage them to share prayer and actively participate in the Mass. Special observances of the Church seasons (Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter) would make Jesus more alive in your family.
2. Encourage regular and prompt class attendance. Note the time of class on the calendar. Please call if your child will be absent.
3. Encourage the development of a sense of responsibility. Many times communications do not reach home. Please ask your child for any letters or notices. Show an interest in what they are learning. Ask them about their classes.
4. Read and if necessary respond to all communications sent by the Director of Religious Education (DRE), in a timely fashion. The letters are one way of letting you know what your child is learning and what you can do to reinforce the lesson. It may also contain important information about the program, schedules or offerings.
5. Volunteer your services. Our program is dependent on the dedicated service of volunteer catechists. Catechists are faith-filled adults who share their faith by teaching our children and youth. Those who teach or aid give more to the program than any book or film could give. They also benefit by personal growth. Would you commit your talents for one year to visibly profess the Catholic Faith?

## POLICY

1. All children of registered members of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Sebastian and St. Rita Parishes in Grades Kindergarten through 12 who are not enrolled in Catholic day school are expected to attend formal religious formation classes and related activities on a consistent basis.
2. **MASS ATTENDANCE** - Family participation in our parish Mass celebration is fundamental in the overall Christian Formation education of our Catholic faith. Please celebrate weekly as a family.
3. **Arrivals** – Parents are responsible for their child/ren's safety and the safety of others during arrival and dismissal times. Please bring your child no sooner than ten minutes before each session and pick up promptly at dismissal time. Earlier arrivals make it difficult to address preparations we need to attend to before each session.  
\* **St. Rita Site** - Parents must drop off and pick up child/ren – K thru 5<sup>th</sup> - in the gym. Please enter the school through the east doors.  
\* **St. Paul the Apostle Site** - Parent/s should escort their child/ren to and from the child's classroom. Please enter the church through the east doors
4. **Attendance:** Attendance is expected at ALL sessions, days of reflection, retreats and parent meetings. If a student cannot attend class, please call the office and notify us of his/her absence. If the student is absent without previous notification, you will be getting a call. Please try to make every effort to notify us of any absences.  
  
Two (2) unexcused absences per semester will require the student to make up the assignments. **It will be the responsibility of the parent to contact the catechist to make the necessary arrangement for their child to make up these assignments.** If there is an excessive number of absences during the year, a conference with the parent and Director will be called to determine the cause the absences and to either rectify the situation or decide whether a student should continue in the program.

Our Program is about formation and helping build community; there is no way we can duplicate what actually takes place in a session.

During Sacramental preparation (First Communion and First Reconciliation), attendance is necessary at all preparation sessions. If for some serious reason a parent is unable to attend a parent meeting, YOU must contact the Director to make arrangements to get this information. If a child misses more than 3 regular classes, that child may be asked to postpone receiving a sacrament until the next year.

5. **Communication** - Parent letters and notices are sent home with your child/ren, through U.S. mail and/or e-mail. Always check your child/children's folders for any newsletters, notices or homework that may be sent home. If you have any questions or concerns about the communication, please feel free to call the office at 639-6280.
6. **Weather Cancellations** – Families safety on the road is our primary concern in periods of inclement weather. If Racine Unified School System is closed/cancelled for the day due to weather conditions, the evening class will also be cancelled. Should storming weather develop late in the day, check out the **TV weather report on either channel 4, 6 or 12** and radio station **WRJN 1400** for announcements regarding a session cancellation. For the Sunday options, we will rely on parent discretion. During other questionable weather conditions, the decision to attend class rests on the parents.
7. **Information about Learning Disabilities** - Information about learning disabilities, special needs or any other personal problems should be given to the Director of Religious Education (DRE). This information will only be disclosed to the teacher as necessary. This information will be kept in confidence and intended to help with your child's well being and promote learning.
8. **Moving or Withdrawing from Program** - Please inform the Christian Formation office promptly if you are moving or withdrawing for any reason from the program.
9. **Student Behavior/Discipline** – Students are expected to conduct themselves in a Christian manner at all times. If a student is disruptive, he/she will be sent to the office. If a

student is sent to the office for a second time, the Director will call the parents/guardians. If a student is sent to the office for a third offense, a meeting with parents and/or guardians will be scheduled. Any very serious concern will be dealt with immediately by calling the parents/guardians.

A student may be dismissed from the Christian Formation program due to serious misconduct at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the Pastors and parents. Students are expected to show respect at all times to the teacher, other students, and the program as a whole.

10. **School/Parish Property** – Destruction of school property is considered vandalism. Restitution will be required. This includes articles that belong to this collaborative program.
11. **Class Treats** - Class treats will be allowed in designated areas with the approval of the DRE and classroom teacher. We have several students with very severe peanut, nuts and latex allergies. So please keep this in mind when sending treats or party favors.
12. **Fees** - Tuition is due at registration time. Installments may be paid in October, November and January. If there is a problem, an extension of time may be given.  
  
There is a fee for Eucharist and Reconciliation to cover the cost of books and other materials. This fee is due at the Parent Meetings.
13. **Visitors** – Parents who wish to observe a child’s class may do so by calling our office beforehand. Students may bring a friend to class, but it must be pre-arranged one week in advance with the catechists.
14. **Homework** – Sometimes homework is necessary as a part of any student’s education. Homework will be given according to the catechist. We expect that such assignments will be completed to the best of the student’s ability.
15. **Dismissal** – If a student **MUST** leave a class early, the requirements are as follows:
  - A parent/guardian note must be given to the catechist and it will be forwarded to the office with

the attendance sheet, so that we will know who is leaving.

- Parent/guardian needs to sign out his or her child with the Director.
- When the parent/guardian comes in to pick-up the student and the child is not in our office, an office helper will assist the parent to the classroom. Verification is necessary.

16. **Door Security Policy** (This is for the safety of our children) **At St. Rita** - The east entrance door to the building will be locked at 6:25 and will remain locked until dismissal time. All persons coming in during class time will need to be let in by a hall monitor or the office personnel. **There is a button on the right side of the door that you need to press so that we are aware someone needs to be let in.** All people that are in the building need to be accounted for. If you plan on staying in the building (to just wait for students or walk around the building for exercise - we are happy to have you here), we will have a sign in sheet that you will need to sign. Again this is all for the safety of our children.
17. **Athletic Policy** – [Students belonging to St. Paul the Apostle are allowed to play on the St. Sebastian teams] Based on the policy set by the Archdiocese, St. Sebastian and St. Rita Schools, the Christian Formation program will adopt this policy for students in grades 5-8 wishing to participate in parish sport teams:  
  
Extracurricular activities are ways that the parish children can build community with one another. It is important that students, parents, catechists, coaches, and other leaders agree that education is a high priority. Several considerations will be taken into account in determining a student’s eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities and athletics:
  - Report cards and grade point averages
  - Behavior
  - Attitude, effort for student work
  - Attendance**Report Card and Grade Point averages: All athletes registered in the Religious Education Program will be expected to submit a copy of their report card/ progress reports to the DRE in order to review a**

**student's eligibility for activities.** Students will be expected to achieve grades that reflect their individual ability\*. Students will be suspended from the activity:

- If the grade point average for all subjects combined falls below 2.0
- If a student achieves below a "D" in any subject

\*It is understood that in specific cases a low grade or a low grade point average may represent reasonable progress for a child. In such cases, no action will be considered.

**Behavior** - Students must show respect for the policies and procedures for this parish program. In the following cases, the student may lose eligibility for activities:

- Any student suspended from school for behavior reasons
- Students who consistently disrupt Christian Formation sessions/events
- Any student who misuses or damages any material or property relating to any parish or school program.
- Any student who establishes a pattern of refusal to relay communication from the Christian Formation program to home, so that it compromises the learning situation.

**Attitude and Effort:** - Students must have a good attitude toward parish facilities, volunteers and required student work. The student may lose eligibility for activities if:

- Any student in the Christian Formation program who consistently lags in doing the required work.
- Any student whose attitude toward adults, whether staff, volunteers or parents, is consistently very poor and is witnessed in the parish community.

**Attendance** - Students should be on time for the Christian Formation program and classes. Students should not take absences from the Christian Formation program lightly. Students will lose their eligibility for activities if:

- The student is tardy for, or misses more than 3 Religious Education classes.

If a student does not comply with these policies, the following procedure will be followed:

- A probation will be issued for a two-week period. If the behavior or grades do not improve, a suspension from the activities will be issued for another two-week period.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Kindergarten thru - Grade 5**

- Kindergarten:** Lessons are formatted at a level that makes learning and understanding the Scripture fun. Through the use of the Loyola series the children will hear the Word, complete projects and activities that foster readiness.
- Grade 1:** First graders are introduced to personal ways that the Trinity is found in their lives. They explore God's love for us in Jesus and in the gifts of creation, life and the church.
- Grade 2:** Second graders are prepared for Reconciliation and First Eucharist by fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the liturgy, God's love & mercy, and the life and teachings of Jesus.
- Grade 3:** Third graders learn about the Church as a loving community of believers. They become aware of the beginnings of the Church, the community of followers of Jesus and the mission we have as People of God.
- Grade 4:** Fourth graders are led to a growth in Christian moral life through the study of the commandments and the understanding of the Beatitudes.
- Grade 5:** Fifth graders develop a deeper understanding of our religious beliefs and traditions. They study the seven sacraments.

# SACRAMENTS

## First Reconciliation/ First Eucharist

*(Preparation for First Reconciliation takes place in Second Grade.)*

A truly Christian preparation for these sacraments begins at home in the early childhood and continues to develop throughout life. Parents are expected to be active in their faith practice. This means attending weekly liturgy and participating in the parent meetings.

This preparation is an important time for the children and youth of our parish, but it is also a time for the parents and the faith community to consider the deeper meaning of these sacraments in our lives.

A progressive catechesis of forgiveness is essential to the formation program and curriculum for preparing for Reconciliation. The Sacrament of Eucharist is a parish-based celebration and experience. Each family has its own unique experience, its own relationship. This preparation provides the opportunity to reflect on these unique experiences and relate them to this sacrament.

**Parents are assisted in their part of the preparation process through meetings.**

**Parents and children are required to participate in special workshops for the preparation as well as the mandatory parents meetings**

### **RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) Adapted for Children:**

This class has been especially developed for those students in grades 3 and up that have not had any type of Christian Formation previously. Students in this class learn basic prayers, what it means to belong to a community, and begin to explore God's love for us in Jesus and in the gift of creation, life and the church. Children also prepare for the sacraments of Baptism (if needed), Reconciliation and Eucharist.

# PARENT HANDBOOK



## Sowing the Seeds

## Collaborative Christian Formation

**2009-10**

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