

ST. MARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FAMILY HANDBOOK

2019-

2020



The mission of St. Mary's Religious Program is to provide Religious instruction which helps to guide families to a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus.

PARENTAL HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

Please thoroughly read the St. Mary's Family Handbook , sign and date this form and return to the Religious Education Office by the first day of classes.

I, _____ have read and understand the policies and procedures in the St. Mary's Family Handbook. I agree to abide by and comply with all content of the Handbook.

Signed _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

St. Mary Parish
Religious Education Program
303 W. St. Mary St.
P.O. Box 456
Minooka, Il 60447

Phone: (815) 467-2769

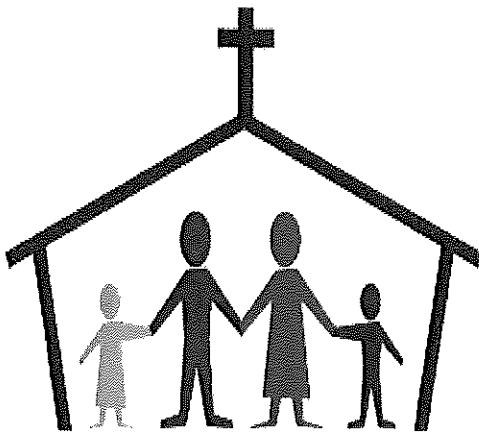
Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary Parish's Religious Education Program. It is our hope to provide quality religious education for your children. Because we realize that our time with your children is only secondary to yours, we wish to also support you as parents and families in your ministry to one another. In turn, we need your support and prayers as we begin another year.

As part of our catechetical program we have some changes to announce. To become more of a family-oriented program, we are instituting **REQUIRED PARENTAL ATTENDANCE**. This new program will require parental attendance on scheduled class sessions, **while your child will attend every week, parents will attend 3 times per year.**

Sincerely in Christ,

Religious Education Staff and Volunteers



As I Grow

~Author Unknown~

Please understand I am growing up and changing very fast.
It must be difficult to keep pace with me, but please try.

Please reward me for telling the truth.
Then I am not frightened into lying.

Please tell me when you make mistakes and
what you learned from them.
Then I can accept that I am okay, even when I blunder.

Please pay attention to me and spend time with me.
Then I can believe that I am important and worthwhile.

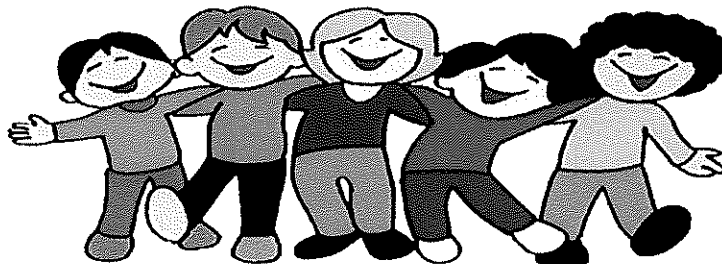
Please help me explore my unique interests, talents and potential.
In order for me to be happy, I need to be me.

Please do the things you want me to do.
Then I have a good, positive model.

Please tell me by your words and actions that you love me.
Then I will feel lovable and

will be able
myself and

to love
others.



Religious Education Office Hours

Monday thru Friday

8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Tuesday and Wednesday during RE I can meet
You on a prearranged basis.

I am open to be available anytime, AM or PM,
just call (815-467-2769), or email fbanstmarydre@gmail.com

and we can talk and/or
arrange for a time to meet.



ST. MARY'S
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM HANDBOOK

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Catholic Church is a Christ-centered family, which welcomes all members to continue their spiritual growth and religious education and to use their individual talents to assume shared responsibility for service and fellowship to our community.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION The purpose of Religious Education is to make a person's faith "become living, conscious and active through the light of instruction." While aiming to enrich the faith life of individuals at their particular stages of development, every form of catechesis is oriented in some way to the catechesis of adults, who are capable of a full response to God's Word. Catechesis is a life long process for the individual and constant and concerted pastoral activity of the Christian community.

--the National Catechetical Directory (32)

CATECHISTS-CALLED & GIFTED

By virtue of our Baptism, we are called to be members of the Body of Christ and sons and daughters of God. By virtue of our creation, we are each gifted with our own personal uniqueness, which we alone can offer as "gift" in service of others.

Our teachers in the Religious Education program are called CATECHISTS. A catechist is "one who echoes the Word of God." Our catechists are all volunteers called to freely share their gift of time and talent with the children of our parish. Please support them with your prayers and kindness through the coming year. All Catechists must have passed a background check and complete the Diocese program "Protecting God's Children" If you haven't done these yet, please see me and we can get this accomplished.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

It is the expressed expectation of St. Mary's Church that families of children attending the Religious Education program become actively involved in the parish as well as the Religious Education Program.

You are at the very heart of your child's religious education. In the blessing you received at the time of your child's baptism the priest prayed over you in these words "since you are the first teachers in the ways of the faith, may you also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say and do in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

The parents are the first catechists. Through the parents, the faith is first handed on. The parishioners who are called to be catechists support and extend the parents' role.

The example you give through your teachings, support and values are basic to your child and the major part of your child's religious education, may it also be the best part. **It is our hope that you and your children make it a family practice to attend mass each and every Sunday, for this is what our faith is all about. Mass attendance is a significant part of your child's religious education as well as a command precept of the church for all baptized Catholics. Students will participate in periodic prayer services during the school year. These in no way replace regular Sunday Mass attendance. Parents are always welcome to join us for these designated prayer services.**

When your children bring home their Religion textbook we ask that you set some time aside to review the weekly lessons with them. Not only will this help to reinforce what we are teaching the children, these reviews can also serve as a refresher for your own faith.

Periodically your children will also bring home in their Religious Education folder parent letters, assignments and/or tests that you will be asked to help your children complete. After you and your children have completed the work we ask that you return it to the Religious Education Teacher through their folder.

If you have any questions or need information, please contact the Religious Education Director (467-2769).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

St. Mary's Religious Education welcomes parish children in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Baptismal certificates must be presented for all new students, unless baptized at St. Mary's Parish. New children to the Religious Education program are always welcome. If a child attended classes in another parish, parents are requested to present evidence of the child's participation in an established program. This is of particular importance for a child anticipating reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation, Eucharist, or Confirmation.

Registration is held in the spring. New families to the area should contact St. Mary's Church Office to register with the parish (467-2233) and the Religious Education Office to register for Religious Education classes (467-2769).

All students must register even if they were in the program the previous year. Only students who have been properly registered will be assigned a classroom for religion. If the Religious Education Director has not received the necessary registration paper work at least a week before the first day of Religious Education Class your child(ren) will not be allowed to participate until the proper paper work is on file in the Religious Education Office.

Students are randomly assigned to a classroom on a first come first served basis. We do not take requests for room assignments because it can cause much chaos. It is our goal to make all students feel welcome in every situation and to instill in the students the idea of community. All are equal in the eyes of God.

CLASS SCHEDULES:

GRADES 1 - 5 -- two session choices - Tuesday or Wednesday
(2 classes per grade level per session)

Tuesdays: 6:00 PM until 7:20 PM (grades 1-5)

Wednesdays: 4:30 PM until 5:50 PM (grades 1-5)

Kindergarten will be held on **Wednesday Afternoons ONLY** 4:30 PM until 5:50 PM

Grades 6 and 7 will be **Wednesdays** from 6:30 PM until 7:50 PM

8TH GRADE CONFIRMATION SESSION: **Wednesdays:** 6:30 PM until 7:50 PM

ATTENDANCE: Each family will be required to attend Parental Sessions (3 times per year) during your child's classtime. If you do not attend, your child will be regarded as absent as will you.

Our preferred policy for absences is no absences. We take missing classes serious and expect missed lessons to be made up by the students with the help of their parents.

We do understand that there are times when a child will become ill or unexpected emergency circumstances will arise so there will be a need to miss class but the lesson that is missed must be made up so that your child does not fall behind the rest of the class.

When your child misses a class we ask that you please contact the Religious Education Office (467-2769) to report the absence AND send a note for the catechist to their next class. The catechist will let you know what needs to be made up.

Request for the early dismissal of a student from class will require a note prior to the start of class and the parent must come to the classroom to pick up the child, this includes any student in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade.

PLEASE NOTE: *There is no school or sport activity that will be accepted as an excuse for not attending Religious Education classes.* However, there is an exception for tournament games but parents must contact the Director of Religious Ed to report if their child will participate in such games. As with any absences, lessons missed must be made up and a written excuse from the parents must be given to the teacher. There will be only 4 absences allowed per year, with missing a Required Parental Session counting as two absences. If more than 4 absences, the child will not be allowed to go onto the next year.

TARDINESS: We ask that parents have their children in their assigned classroom 5 - 10 minutes before the start of class so the classes can start on time. A child who comes late not only loses the key preparatory concepts of that week's lesson, but even more important, disrupts the entire group's learning momentum. Please make an effort to plan your day so that your child is in his/her classroom on time.

PICKUP: Please make every effort to pick up your child no later than 10 minutes after class dismisses. If circumstances arise that necessitate a delayed pick up, please notify the Religious Education Office, if no one answers please leave a message. Someone will retrieve the message and reassure your child that you are on your way.

PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE: When dropping off and picking up your children from class, please abide by the directions we have set in place. Please have patience. Not everyone can have "pole" position. Each of us has the responsibility to drive with care and watch for pedestrians crossing the streets ... They have the right of way!

VOLUNTEERS: Please consider volunteering. We usually enroll about 500 students in our Religious Education Program so we need many teachers and aides. We have discovered it to be increasingly productive if there is an aid in every classroom, K thru 8. Teaching time is limited and when the teacher has extra hands to take care of details such as attendance, passing out papers, collecting assignments, giving individual students help, bathroom patrol, etc., it gives them more time to concentrate on the teaching.

It is increasingly important that we have volunteers to act as Hall Monitors to help out a teacher in an emergency, to deliver and collect materials and to monitor hallways and bathrooms.

If you are not available to volunteer every week maybe consider helping when you can. We can also use extra hands.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS: All children are expected to participate in all aspects of the program to the best of their abilities. Students are required to exhibit appropriate Christian behavior by cooperating with teachers, staff personnel, and other students; showing responsibility for program materials, tasks, and homework assignments; and displaying proper respect for others and the property of others. Disrespect for classmates, teachers, or any adult involved in the Religious Education program will not be tolerated. All students are required to obey the following **Code of Conduct:**

1. Students are to report promptly to their classroom 5 - 10 minutes before the start of class, and take their assigned seat. Children who are late are to be walked to their classroom by their parent. Continued tardiness will result in being counted absent.
2. All students are to remain in their assigned seats at all times unless permission to move is received from the teacher.
3. Talking is permitted ONLY with permission from the teacher. Students must raise their hands to receive permission.
4. Respect for the teacher, all persons in authority and fellow classmates is expected.
5. Respect for other people's property in the classroom and all parish center and church property is to be maintained at all times. DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU.
6. Student will be responsible for the replacement of any property that is damaged by them.
7. Student must have their text books, bibles for 5th through 8th graders, and assignments that are due in order to participate in class.
8. Students will be allowed to use the washrooms only in an emergency or at break time which will be designated by the teacher.
9. The Religious Education Staff reserves the right to add rules to this list if it becomes necessary.

Failure to follow these rules will result in the following:

Strike 1 - A warning will be given by the teacher.

Strike 2 - The student will be reported to the Religious Education Director and the parents will be contacted.

Strike 3 - The student will no longer be allowed to participate in our Religious Education Program unless the parent accompanies him or her for the remainder of the classes.

STUDENT MATERIALS

Each student will be given a two-pocket folder for use in transporting Religious Education materials and important information for parents. Parents, please check your child's folder after every RE Class. Students will receive a Religious Education **text which is required for class**. Each student in the fifth grade will be given a Bible as a gift from St. Mary Parish. **This bible will be required for all Religious Education classes through eighth grade.**

LOST OR MISPLACED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEXTBOOK.

All students must have their textbook to participate in class. Students in 5th through 8th grade have received a bible as part of their textbook requirements and must bring it to each and every class. The cost to replace a student textbook is \$25.00. The cost to replace their bible is \$10.00. Students who are new to the program in the 5 - 8 grade will be given a bible at no cost.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are to be turned off during class time. The RE volunteers reserve the right to take the phone from any student if it is causing a distraction and that student will receive a warning. The phone will be returned at dismissal. If it continues to be a distraction in additional class sessions the phone will be given to the Director of Religious Education and he will contact the parents to come to retrieve it.

STUDENT RECORDS

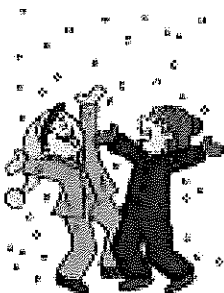
Student records will be kept on file with the Director of Religious Education. Changes in an address, a phone number, etc. should be made known to the Religious Education Office as soon as possible to keep the student records current.

We understand that every child progresses in their faith at varying paces and we do our best to accommodate each child to the best of our ability. If questions arise concerning your child's progress please contact the Religious Education Office to arrange for a conference.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION FROM US

Please check the Parish web site www.stmarysminooka.com each Tuesday or Wednesday before RE class for any vital information you might need before you bring your child to the Parish Center for religious education.

In the case of an emergency, weather related or other, we will post the canceling of religion classes as soon as the decision is made.



Additional Information

** We will be enforcing the policy that there be no food or drink brought into the Parish Center at **anytime** for any reason during Religious Education sessions.

** Any parent who feels their child needs to have a snack before RE class must be responsible for feeding their child away from the Parish Center.

** Periodically, catechists may bring treats for their class. **These treats will be served in the Parish Center's Multipurpose Room.**

RECEPTION OF SACRAMENTS

Religious Education is a building process. Every level (grade) builds on the previous level. Therefore, children are required to participate at every level of religious education. Failure to do so will delay your child's opportunity to receive the sacraments. If you registered your child for 3rd grade and up and they have not made their Reconciliation or First Communion, you must inform the RE office at the beginning of the RE year.

Reconciliation

As mandated by the Diocese of Joliet, children preparing for the sacrament of Eucharist must first be given instruction and opportunity for the sacrament of Reconciliation. Preparation for this sacrament begins in grade one, and continues with more time spent on its development and understanding in grade two. There will be a group celebration of this sacrament in the winter.

All families are encouraged to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation which is celebrated at St. Mary's Church on Saturdays from 4:00 PM - 4:45 PM.

Eucharist

Preparation for this sacrament also begins in grade one and continues with greater intensity and emphasis in grade two. Any child, regardless of age or grade level, who wishes to receive the Holy Eucharist will be expected to participate in a two-year preparation and attend mass with the parish community weekly. Mass attendance is an essential aspect of the instruction and preparation required for the reception of the sacrament of Holy Eucharist. If you are not taking your child to mass and do not intend to do so, he or she should wait until an age where this can be a personal choice and responsibility. The celebration of First Communion will be in the Spring.

Confirmation

Preparation for confirmation requires the desire and serious reflection by the candidate; completion of a study program of basic Catholic doctrine previous to grade eight, which occurs in grades 1 through 7; and satisfactory involvement in and completion of the confirmation program. Class attendance for these students must be consistent.

A parent/candidate meeting will be scheduled for the fall at which time we will explain the details of St. Mary's Confirmation Program.

Eighth grade students who have successfully completed the confirmation program will be confirmed in the Spring. The exact date depends on the Bishop's scheduling.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR PARENTS

Parents are asked to take a more active part in the preparation of their children for the reception of the sacraments. Meetings and liturgical celebrations with the children are planned to be a meaningful and joyous experience. Parents of children who are preparing for the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and/or Confirmation are required to attend the sacramental preparation meetings. Please check the Religious Education Calendars for the dates of these meetings.

SPECIAL SACRAMENT CLASSES

For children who are new to our program and have not received the Sacrament of Baptism, Reconciliation, and/or Eucharist; or who are in the 8th grade or older and have not completed all levels of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, there are special sessions designed to meet their needs. Parents are asked to contact the Director of Religious Education so arrangements can be made.

HOME SCHOOLING

There is no home schooling, except as organized through the Director of Religious Education.

The Joliet Diocese offers a RE program for **special needs children**. Please contact Fred Ban for more information.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Children, ages 4-11, are invited to attend a Liturgy Service in the church hall during the 9:00 AM & 11:00 AM Masses. The children return during the Presentation of the Gifts for the remainder of the mass. The program runs from September through June. Adult or High School age volunteers are always needed.

CHILDREN'S MASS

Is on the 4th Sunday of every month. All children are invited to participate.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Open for any interested child age 4 years through 8th grade. Information will be sent home with your children and also watch the Sunday bulletin.