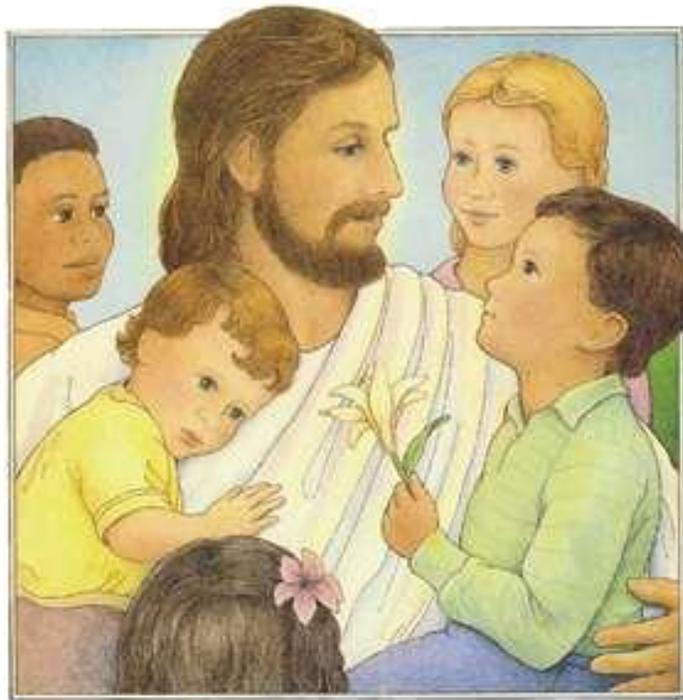


Sacred Heart of Jesus Religious Education Handbook



Learning, celebrating, and
sharing our faith

SUNDAY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Sunday morning Religious Education classes are established by the Sacred Heart Community to assist the faith development of young people, preschool through middle school. Sunday religion classes and sacramental programs are designed to assist parents by fostering study, growth and understanding in a formal setting and through special celebration events.

PHILOSOPHY

The aim of the Sunday morning Religious Education classes is to work with families so that all of us: students, parents, teachers and parishioners may grow toward greater faith, hope, love and knowledge of God and our Church. Together we work toward becoming the Kingdom of God by living in the love of Christ.

ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents are the primary religious educators for their children. Parents contribute to the spiritual growth of their children by nurturing the intellectual, emotional and physical growth of their children. At baptism the parish community promises to assist the parent in this role, *however the family is the first place where faith is learned, lived and interpreted*. The religious behavior of the parents will predict the religious performance of the children. The National Catechetical Directory tells us the “parents catechize informally but powerfully by example and instruction” (NCD 212), and that “though the influence of peers and of adult catechists is important, catechetical programs are not intended to supplant parents as the primary educators of their children.”

Faith development involves more than instruction in religious facts. It requires a personal relationship with Christ as well as practice of the faith. Here are some suggestions to help parents pass on their religious faith to their children.

- ✠ Celebrate the liturgy regularly with your family. Fully participate in all aspects of the liturgy, including prayers and hymns, and encourage your children to do the same. Children learn it's important if you make it so in your own life.
- ✠ Take part in adult religious formation yourself. Children need to see that religious growth doesn't finish in Grade 8 or 12.
- ✠ Live a life of service. “Faith without works is dead”. Children will catch on by watching the ways you give your time, talent and treasure to others.
- ✠ Arrange for time to review each week's lesson with your child. Complete family activities if they are sent home. Let your child know that their religious education is important to you by participating in it with them.
- ✠ Encourage your child's religious curiosity. Don't be afraid that you might not know the answer to a question...check the internet or ask someone on the parish staff.
- ✠ Use the Commandments and Beatitudes to make decisions.
- ✠ Make your home a place of justice and peace with consistent and respectful behavior.
- ✠ Pray together at home...morning, bedtime, and meals.
- ✠ Read the Bible at home.

Occasionally, parents may have concerns about things that occur during class times. We have found that open discussion with those directly involved helps create a more Christian climate and brings issues to closure much faster than holding them inside (or sharing them with others who are not involved). Parents are therefore encouraged to express any concerns they may have about the programs, teachers, or facilities by speaking directly with those involved or using the concerns form at the back of this handbook and returning it to the Parish Life Coordinator.

ROLE OF STUDENTS

The student's role is to learn about our Christian religion and grow in faith. They are to accept themselves, their classmates, and their teachers as the wonderful persons God made them to be with individual talents and abilities, as well as limitations. They are to use their talents and abilities to help those around them. They are to accept God's grace and realize that religious education is a lifelong experience.

ROLE OF CATECHISTS

Without volunteers religious education would not be a reality. We depend on those who have heard the call to be catechists for our children in the ongoing process of faith formation. These catechists are lay volunteers dedicated with active faith, enthusiasm and love of children. They are trained in the teaching of religion and are helped toward Archdiocesan certification.

All catechists and those working with children must undergo background checks, agree to a Code of Conduct and attend VIRTUS training, which are archdiocesan requirements to keep our children safe and secure. To view the archdiocesan policy on abuse go to <http://archindy.org/abuse/policy.html>.

ENTRANCE POLICY

Families enrolling in the Sunday morning religion classes must be registered members of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish. If not registered with the parish, you may do so when registering for classes. Students will be assigned to religion classes at the same grade as regular school unless otherwise noted on the registration form. Non-parish families (registered in other parishes) should attend classes at the parishes where they are registered. Exceptions may be made with the consent of the Pastor/PLC where the family is registered.

Whenever possible, students with special needs are included in religious education classes. If your student has special needs please contact the PLC to determine how those needs can best be met. Occasional gatherings for special needs students are also available at the deanery level.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and prompt attendance at Sunday religion classes is vital to the growth in faith and community. We understand that some absences are unavoidable. Please contact the teacher in case of absences and work with your young person to cover materials missed during absences. Students missing more than half of the classes in a year may be required to do additional work during the summer or repeat that grade the following year.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Morning students will meet on Sunday before Mass. Children will gather in the Holy Family Center and at 9:00 a.m. the teachers will take the children to their classrooms or song practice. (NOTE: Children are not to go to the classroom unless their class has already left.) **Children will be returned to the Holy Family Center fifteen minutes before mass begins. There is no need for parents to pick up children from the school.** Milk and donuts are available 8:45-9:00 for RE students. Donations are appreciated to help cover the cost.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT & REPORTS

Each year students in sixth and eighth grades (and any grades combined with those) will take the archdiocesan ACRE Assessment. Individual results will be sent to parents and group results will be shared with all who are interested. These results will help us to assess areas of strength and weakness in our programs and make changes as needed.

Attendance reports will be sent out at the end of the religious education year.

FEES

The registration fee for all the Sunday Religious Education Programs is **\$30 per child** (\$90 family maximum). This fee helps cover the cost of books and materials used through the year. Additional sacramental preparation fees which help cover the cost of additional books, materials, and retreats are as follows:

First Eucharist (grade 2) - \$20

First Reconciliation (grades 2) - \$10

All fees are payable at registration, or may be made in payments. If this is a hardship for the family, please indicate so at time of registration or contact the Faith Formation Office at 466-1231 to make other arrangements. No child will be refused religious education for financial reasons.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Parent participation in sacrament preparation is required at Sacred Heart of Jesus. Archdiocesan policy requires that we prepare children for First Reconciliation before reception of Holy Communion. Because of this children in second grade will be prepared for First Reconciliation in the fall and First Eucharist in the spring. If your child is in a higher grade and has not received these sacraments, or has not yet been baptized, contact the Faith Formation Office to make arrangements.

STUDENT/TEACHER SAFETY INFORMATION

On the registration form parents are asked to give emergency information and back-up persons to call in case parents cannot be reached. In case of serious accident or emergency, the DRE will be notified and will contact parents or alternates and emergency personnel if needed.

First Aid kits are located in the teacher's bathroom on the first floor, in the RE office closet by the door and in the kitchen of the Holy Family Center. Teachers are to notify DRE of any incident where a child is injured.

Once each semester students will participate in fire and tornado drills. The following table indicates escape procedures for each area.

RE Grades	Fire exit	Tornado procedure
Preschool/ Kindergarten/ First	Exit west door, proceed to church parking lot	Proceed west to basement stairway
Second	Exit east door and proceed church parking lot	Proceed east to basement stairway
Third/Fourth	Exit west door, proceed to church	Proceed west to basement stairway
Fifth/Sixth	Exit east door and proceed church parking lot	Proceed east to basement stairway
Seventh/Eighth	Exit west door, proceed to church	Proceed west to basement stairway

Fire extinguishers are located at strategic points throughout the buildings. Teachers need to be aware of those closest to their rooms.

A whistle will signal the beginning and end of fire and tornado drills. During fire/tornado drills all items are to be left behind. Lights should be turned off and doors closed by the last person. Ideally, one teacher should lead and one should bring up the rear. Be sure to take your attendance sheet and verify that all students are at the safe location. During fire drills students are to stand quietly and wait for the "all clear". For tornado drills, students are to sit with backs against the wall, face on knees with hands covering head and neck.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES DUE TO WEATHER

The PLC will send emails to inform you of any cancellations. **Please do not drop off children and leave if there is any question of classes being canceled.**

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Please do not allow students to bring IPODS, MP3 players, cell phones or other electronic devices to class. Those bringing such items will be asked to place them on the teacher’s desk until the end of class.

SACRED HEART OF JESUS RE GUIDELINES

1. Be on time to class
2. Be respectful to everyone you meet - teachers and other adults, classmates and other students.
3. Walk quietly through the halls.
4. Be attentive to those speaking.
5. Do not hurt others with your words or actions.
6. Use supplies provided by your teacher, do not take things from the desks.
7. Clean up after yourself.

CONSEQUENCES FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES:

Students will be allowed two warnings during class time. At the second offense the student will be sent to the PLC who will contact the parents to discuss appropriate consequences. After two offenses where parents need to be notified the student will be on probation. A third offense will result in an immediate call home, parents will be asked to continue their child’s studies at home for the remainder of the year.

This information is also available on the parish website. shjth.org

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CONCERNS SHEET

This sheet may be used to file a concern from parents to catechists, or PLC. The usual process is to contact the catechists or administrator involved. If you are not satisfied, make your concern known to the administrator. If you are still not satisfied, make your concern known to the priest moderator.

TO: _____

Please consider the following concern I have about

What has happened: _____

What I did: _____

Suggestions on how to prevent this from happening again:

DATE

PARENT OR GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

CONCERNS SHEET
RESPONSE FROM CATECHIST or PLC:

DATE

SIGNATURE