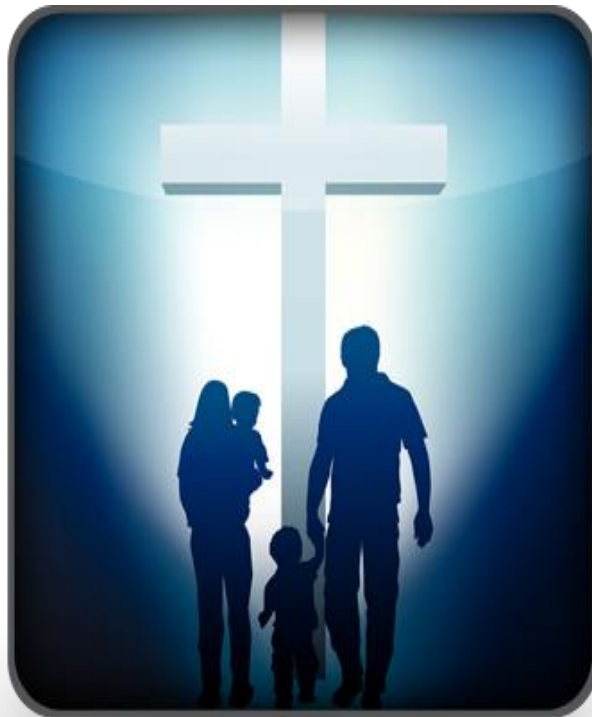


Parent Handbook

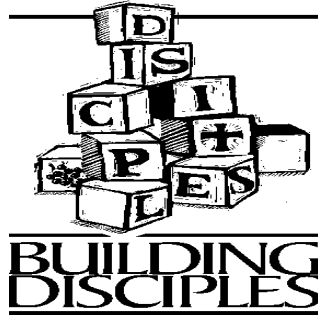


Fostering Faith...Cultivating Community

The Catholic Community of
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Children's Ministry
3100 W. Spring Creek Pkwy.
Plano, TX 75023-3903
972-596-5505

Phone number during sessions 972-398-5400 Ext. 4260

The Catholic Community of
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Children's Ministry
3100 West Spring Creek Parkway
Plano, TX 75023-3903



IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Phone number during office hours 972-596-5505
Phone number during group sessions 972-398-5400 Ext 4260
Fax: 972-985-0431 www.setonparish.org

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY STAFF

Bruce Baumann	Director	Ext 4289	bbaumann@seton.org
Michelle Parisee	Ministry Assistant/Registrar	Ext 4260	mparisee@seton.org
Laura Histed	Faith Formation Coordinator	Ext 4272	lhisted@seton.org
Denise Gilbert	Sacrament Coordinator	Ext 4264	dgilbert@seton.org
Annie Denker	Resources Assistant	Ext 4291	adenker@seton.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Friday 9:00 am - Noon, and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm
And During Session Times

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide the children of the Catholic Community of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and their families with an environment in which meaningful experiences challenge them to grow in faith by living and proclaiming Christ's message through worship, catechesis, building community and service to others.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY HANDBOOK

Welcome to the Children's Ministry Faith Formation Program for the Catholic Community of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. We welcome the opportunity to share in the responsibility for your child's spiritual development and faith formation. This is a responsibility we take very seriously. The Children's Ministry Parent Handbook contains our mission statement, calendar, program information, conduct statement and safety policies and procedures. As stated in the covenant page, Children's Ministry provides this handbook. By signing the covenant page, parents agree to read and support its provisions.

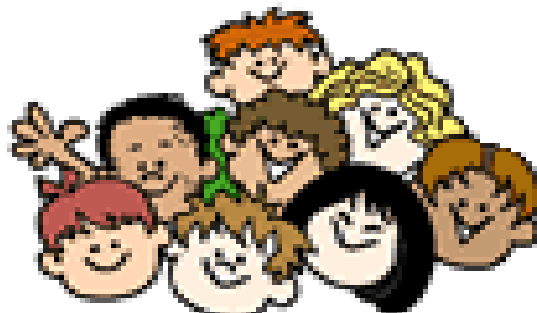
If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please call the Children's Ministry Office and speak to one of our staff. We welcome your input.

SPECIAL FRIENDS INCLUSIVE RELIGIOUS FORMATION

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton parish welcomes all children, including children with mental and physical challenges, in its faith formation programs. Inclusion teaches all children the importance of Christian community, the giftedness of all people, the Gospel values of love and acceptance and the value of relationships. In addition to participating in the faith formation program, special needs children and their families are invited to participate in our other Children's Ministry programs, as well as extra events designed for families with special needs. We will provide a volunteer "special friend" to work with any child in the classroom if the parents feel that is appropriate.

We also offer a separate class on Sundays at 10:15AM for any child who may benefit from an approach directed more specifically to their abilities. The lead catechist has a Master's degree in special education.

For information, please contact Raylene at rjuneau@seton.org or 972-596-5505



Attending Mass as family is crucial in your children's faith development. There are plenty of opportunities for you to make it to Mass with busy schedules:

Sunday Mass Times

**Saturday Anticipatory Mass at 5:00p.m.,
Sundays at 7a.m., 8:15a.m., 10a.m., 11:45a.m., 1:15p.m., 5p.m. and 6:30p.m.**

Reconciliation Times:

Fridays 1:30-2:30p.m. & Saturday 3:30-4:30p.m.

Here are some ways for children to get involved in celebrating the Mass.

Lectors and Ushers



Children's Liturgies are celebrated in the Church on Saturdays at 5:00 p.m. Mass, except where noted. The Children's Choir sings at the liturgies and children serve as lectors and ushers. Children in third through fifth grade who have received First Eucharist are eligible to volunteer to be lectors, ushers and greeters for the Children Liturgies. Children will receive training in September and make a commitment to serve. Practice is held one hour before the service. For more information call the Children's Ministry office.

Altar Servers



Fifth grade and older are invited to be altar servers. Training is held several times a year. See the bulletin under Worship Commission for more information.

Children's Choir



Second through fifth graders are invited to participate in the Children's Choir. Rehearsals are held weekly in the Faith Formation Center on Wednesday afternoons from 3:30-4:15 p.m. The choir sings for all Children's liturgies and other special occasions. Please contact Lisa Kellen at lkellen@seton.org for more information. *Note: Student instrumentalists are also welcome!*

Living Our Faith



Each grade will participate in an outreach activity during the faith formation year. We also encourage your family to do other stewardship/outreach activities together. Seton Service days are wonderful ways for your family to participate in an outreach/stewardship activity. These are organized twice a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Watch the parish bulletin for more information.



SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

Jerry Waynant, Coordinator of Safe Environment
972-596-5505 ext. 4265

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton adheres to the Diocese of Dallas Safe Environment Program in order to provide a safe environment for the protection and well-being of our children and youth. All priests, staff and lay ministry volunteers go through a criminal background check and yearly training before serving with the children and youth. As part of the program, we must have **Two Cleared Adults** (cleared through Seton in conjunction with the Diocese of Dallas), with children at all times. It is crucial that each faith formation group have two cleared adults for the session to begin each week. We depend on the dedication and responsibility of the catechists and other support adults such as, office aides, babysitters, resource aides and substitutes to adhere to this policy. In P3-5th grade we have over 1000 children with 85 groups each week. This takes over 250 catechists, special friends, office aides and resource aides. If you are interested in serving as a Children's Ministry volunteer, you may pick up a form from our office. Office hours are 9:00am-noon and 1:00pm-5:00pm. The CM offices are closed from 12noon-1:00pm so staff may have their midday meal.

A sign will be hung outside the room at the beginning of each session if two cleared adults are not present. This will be a signal that additional cleared adults will be needed for this session to continue. Parents are asked to go through the screening process so they can help in the room when necessary. The parent will not be volunteering to lead the session, but to help as the second cleared adult. If you are not already involved, please consider helping in this manner. Thanks!

Restroom Procedures

1. Restroom locations:

Preschool classrooms – located in classrooms – The doors to these restrooms are split doors. The top portion is to remain open at all times while a child is using the room (with the assistance of an adult other than the parent). Kindergarten through 5th grade – Located near end of hallways.

Preschool through 2nd grade:

Child must be accompanied by a cleared adult to the restroom. The adult must remain in the hallway at all times, not entering the restroom. If the child requires assistance, the adult must notify CM staff that they were required to enter the restroom for this purpose and an incident report will be completed for our files.

No teen volunteer is allowed to escort a child to the restroom at any time.

2. 3rd through 5th grades:

Children may go to the restroom alone. The catechist is to monitor the time away from class and investigate any absence deemed to be taking an inordinate amount of time.

Safety Programs A Project in Anti-victimization

Children in kindergarten through 5th grade will receive information on Virtus –Touch Safety lessons to discuss at home. This is a Catholic based program initiated by the Dallas Diocese, based on God's love for us all and protecting our children. For more information, visit virtusonline.org or call the Children's Ministry at 972-596-5505.

PARENTS' ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR CHILD'S PRAYER LIFE

Prayer with children at home, in church and in the faith formation setting is an important aspect of faith formation. During Children's Ministry sessions, our preschool and elementary children will experience prayer as a part of each week's activities. Prayer will consist of a prayer ritual in the form of the Liturgy of the Word with some spontaneous and/or formal prayer.

We respect the role of parents, as the primary educators of their children, to share prayer times within their family. According to Cardinal Joseph Bernardin in *Growing in Wisdom, Age and Grace*, the best way for children to learn formal prayers is for the parents to explain the prayers and join the children frequently in praying with them. Preschoolers enjoy reciting prayers like the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary" with their parents. As children memorize traditional prayers, they become integrated with the formal prayer life of the community. Children in first grade and older are expected to attend Sunday Mass with their family.



PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Actively share the faith with your children by reviewing the week's session with your child and checking the contents of his/her folder weekly. We also believe that weekly Mass attendance is vital in growing your child's faith and Catholic identity. Please remind your children to care for church property. Do not misuse, abuse or damage the building or its content.

ARRIVAL

Ensure that children arrive on time for the group, but no earlier than 10 minutes before the session is scheduled to begin. Each preschool, kindergarten and first grade child must be accompanied to their room by a parent or authorized person 16 years of age or older. *The escort must sign the child into the class.* Second graders are to be accompanied to their room by an authorized person (authorized person may be an older sibling). **Do not leave your child in the room until two catechists are present.**

On rare occasions when children arrive earlier than 10 minutes prior to the session time, the parents are to bring them to the Children's Ministry office and let the director or coordinators know so the child can be properly supervised. This is to ensure the safety of the child and is not expected to occur on a regular basis. **Catechists arrive in the room a few minutes early but cannot be responsible for supervision since they are preparing for the session.**

DISMISSAL

Students are to be picked up within 5 minutes after the end of the session. Each Preschool, Kindergarten and First grade *child must be picked up and signed out by a parent or authorized person.* Second graders must be picked up in their room by a parent or older sibling. Third grade through 5th grade are released at the end of the session.



LATE PICKUP

Group sessions will be dismissed on time. If parents have not picked up children by 5 minutes after dismissal, the catechist will take the child to the Children's Ministry office. The child will remain in the office until a parent is contacted and the child is picked up. Please realize how a child feels when a parent has not arrived on time, and make every effort to be on time. If there is an emergency and/or you will be late to pick up your child, please call and inform the office. After 5pm, call 972-398-5400 Ext. 4260.

EARLY RELEASE OF CHILD

This form is available in the Children's Ministry office. If children are to be picked up before the dismissal time, the parent **must** complete and sign the Early Release form and return it to the Children's Ministry office before the session begins. The parent or authorized person 16 years of age or older must come to the room to pick up the child no matter what grade he/she is in.



SETON PLAYGROUND AT SOUTH ENTRANCE

Please follow the playground safety and age-limit rules. Do not leave children unattended in the playground. The playground is intended for the use of the young children in our parish. Do not allow children to climb on top of any of the playground equipment. This will ensure the safety and continued enjoyment of the equipment for all children.

AUTHORIZED ESCORT PERMISSION SLIP

If children are to be released to a person other than the parent, for either regular dismissal or early release, that person must be at least 16 years of age or older. The parent must complete and sign the Release Escort Permission Slip available in CM. This form is used for a one-time only situation or carpooling. The authorized escort may be asked for a photo ID before the child can be released.

ABSENCE/TARDIES

If your child is sick and/or there are unusual family circumstances, please keep us informed. Please ensure your child arrives on time. Late arrivals may result in being marked absent and can be disruptive to the group who has started their prayer ritual.

MAKE-UP CLASSES

Weekly attendance at Faith Formation sessions is expected. If your child is unable to attend a class, he/she is welcome to make up the lesson by attending another class during the same week as the one missed. Please contact the Children Ministry office for make-up time and to obtain an Admit Slip. If it is not feasible for the child to make up by attending another session that week, it is the parents' responsibility to check the grade-level calendar and cover the chapter for the week.

Children in sacrament preparation, those in 1st grade, Basic-2, 2nd grade and Older Sacrament classes, are required to make up all missed lessons and workshops. For missed classes parents should cover the lesson at home, attempt one of the activities and e-mail to eschuett@seton.org in the CM office that the lesson was completed. You will receive confirmation that we have made the appropriate notation on the attendance sheet so that the file is correct. For a missed workshop or other event, please contact the Children's Ministry office, Eileen Schuett or Raylene Juneau, for make-up materials. **RCIC classes are accelerated due to one year preparation, Attendance is expected every week. Please contact Denise Gilbert if you and your child miss a class.**

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Sessions will be canceled when snow or ice makes it hazardous to drive on roads or in the parking lot. We will NOT have sessions on Wed. if PISD cancelled their classes that day. The director or coordinator of Children's Ministry will initiate a phone-tree so that catechists can contact parents to inform them of the cancellation. The Seton Website www.setonparish.org will have current information.

CHILD'S RESPONSIBILITY



The child's responsibility for having a positive experience in faith formation will include:

- ♦ Attending group sessions regularly and being on time.
- ♦ Bring folder, text book and class materials weekly.
- ♦ Be properly attired. (See dress code).
- ♦ Exhibit an attitude of respect toward others.
- ♦ Actively participate in activities, listen and share ideas in appropriate ways.
- ♦ Observe all safety rules.
- ♦ Care for church property.



CONDUCT

Children in faith formation are expected to:

- ♦ Treat others, adults and children, with respect. Inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated.
- ♦ Listen while others talk.
- ♦ Remain on church grounds before and during class time.
- ♦ Report to the office if arriving more than ten minutes early or remaining five minutes after dismissal.
- ♦ Walk in the hallways. No running.
- ♦ No roller-blades, mini-skate boards or "heelys" are allowed in the buildings.

DRESS CODE

- ♦ Shoes must be worn at all times.
- ♦ Appropriate shorts are permitted for all levels.
- ♦ Tube tops, bare midriff or half shirts, halter type blouses, see-through blouses or mesh shirts are not permitted.
- ♦ Items with provocative or drug related pictures or slogans will not be permitted.
- ♦ Clothing advertising alcohol or tobacco products will not be permitted.
- ♦ Baseball caps may not be worn in rooms, church or chapel.
- ♦ Heelys (shoes with wheels) may not be worn in the Seton Faith Formation Building. Any child seen 'rolling' in the hallways will be asked to leave their shoes in the Children's Ministry office and he/she may pick them up upon leaving the building.





COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

During the school year various communicable diseases make an appearance wherever children gather. These diseases include, but are not limited to, chickenpox, measles, influenza, viral hepatitis A (infectious hepatitis), viral hepatitis B (serum hepatitis), and chronic: human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection), AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis.



CHRONIC DISEASE

Children with a chronic, reportable disease will be allowed to attend Faith Formation with the approval of his/her doctor. The Director of Children's Ministry shall function as the liaison with the child's doctor.



CONFIDENTIALITY

The identity of a person with a reportable disease is confidential and every precaution shall be taken to maintain that confidentiality. Knowledge of the disease shall be confined to those persons with a direct need to know, e.g. the Pastor, Director of Children's Ministry. Information may be released only to physicians, nurses or other healthcare personnel who have a legitimate need to know in order to provide for the child's welfare. Information may be released upon written authorization by the parents specifying the persons to whom the information can be released.

LICE POLICY

According to Texas law, a child must be sent home from school if live lice are found in his/her hair. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish will abide by this law and the child will be allowed to return to class only after receiving a medicated treatment. The parish has also established a "NO/NIT" policy for the best interest of the other children attending the same class session. A child who repeatedly returns to school with *live lice* will be asked, after the THIRD episode, to remain home for a period of two weeks. This period of time allows the parents to continue to treat the child's scalp and eliminate all evidence of eggs. The child will be admitted back into their sessions after two weeks with evidence of no nits or live lice found at arrival time.

POLICY OF THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS

Regarding Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

Children with AIDS will be allowed to continue in the group setting under ordinary circumstances. Decisions affecting children who have tested positive for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) AIDS or who have been diagnosed with AIDS Related Complex (ARC) will be made on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with physicians, parents and public health officials. Regulations regarding children who have HIV, ARC and AIDS are based upon current medical knowledge and law and will be subject to continual review.

