

**PARENT
HANDBOOK**

**HOLY FAMILY &
ST. MARY
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**
We Believe

Welcome to Holy Family, and St. Mary's Religious Education Program

This handbook is for you as a parent of a religious education child who is registered in one of our Religious Education Programs. For the most part, this information does not talk about “rules”, nor is it considered hard and fast policy. Rather, this handbook is a way of helping you know our expectations. We want to work *WITH* you in helping your child get to know Jesus.

Please remember that our catechists are all volunteers who graciously donate their time and talent to share their love of Jesus with your children so that they may have a Catholic faith formation experience.

We welcome your feedback and suggestions for changes, additions, and corrections to the booklet.

MISSION STATEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our Religious Education Programs seek to work with parents in helping their children develop a faith life while learning a basic understanding of the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.

We do this by:

- Teaching about the Catholic Church so students gain an understanding of what it means to be a Catholic Christian.
- Promoting a liturgical life through liturgy, sacraments, and prayer.
- Encouraging students to be part of the broader community, that is their local church community.
- Talking about moral decision-making and learning the difference between making good choices and bad choices according to Gospel values.
- Understanding that we all have a special “calling” from God.

EXPECTATIONS

WHAT WE EXPECT OF STUDENTS:

Attend Mass every Sunday and pray regularly

Attend classes

Come with a positive attitude

Listen, talk, and act appropriately

Participate

Follow all rules and procedures

Keep hands (feet, whatever) to self

****We have a zero tolerance policy for violence against another person or for bringing on the premises any object that could be a weapon. Any child in violation will immediately be sent home and will require a meeting with parents to decide if further disciplinary action is necessary.**

WHAT WE EXPECT OF PARENTS:

Attend Mass weekly and pray regularly as a family.

Continue to enrich and educate yourself as a Catholic

Display a positive attitude toward Church, church leaders.

Make **Religious Education** a priority.

Take an interest in what your child is learning.

Cooperate with dismissal procedures.

AS A FAMILY, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

Have your child enrolled in an up-to-date, dynamic faith formation program.

Have opportunities for your child to participate in Catholic learning, scripture study and prayer, community-building and moral decision-making.

Expect supervised volunteer catechists who have an honest interest in helping your child learn.

Have your family's privacy protected (this includes data, record-keeping, and mail or e-mail addresses).

GENERAL INFORMATION

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

Classes are held on Wednesday afternoons and evenings. Holy Family and St. Mary's elementary students get bused from the Greenwood Elementary School to St. Mary's after school lets out (approximately 3:15). Students may be picked up in the back parking area at 4:45. The junior and senior high students meet from 7:30-8:30. Please enter from the school parking lot.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are prepared for and celebrated in second grade. If your child is older than second grade and has not received these Sacraments, please contact Margie Ouimette Coordinator of Religious Education at 715-937-1351

The Sacrament of Confirmation are prepared for and celebrated in eleventh grade.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

Part of the Bishops' directives for sexual abuse awareness programs includes implementing a curriculum in Religious Education programs. We will inform you before we present this curriculum during class time.

Parents must participate in the ***Adult Safe Environment training. This training will take place at the registration meeting, or you can also access the training online at <http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com/safe-environment/Parents.htm>***

CLASS NOTES

TWO RULES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The children are reminded of two basic rules they are to follow while they are in classes: Love God, Love Others. All other rules and guidelines fall under those two categories.

ABSENCE POLICY

If your child will be absent from a Holy Family/St. Mary's RE class, please notify St. Mary's School or your child's catechist. The school number is 715-267-6477.

CELL PHONES

No cell phones may be used during class time. If a phone is used, the catechist will take the phone away until the end of class. If you must get in touch with your child, you may communicate through the school office.

EARLY PICK-UP PRODEDURE

If you absolutely must pick-up your child early from class, please send a note to the catechist each time you wish to pick-up early. The child will remain in his/her class until you come in and get them. Although it is sometimes necessary to pick them up early, please remember that this can disrupt the entire class.

PICKING UP STUDENTS

Parents, please be extra careful when picking up your students. We want to make sure that all children are safely reunited with their parents for their ride home. St. Mary and Holy Family students, remember all pick-ups are in the school parking lot.

High school students that drive, please be especially careful when driving away from the parking lot.

Please pick your students up on time. A volunteer must stay until the last student is picked up, so if you are late, a volunteer will also have to stay late.

BATHROOM BREAKS DURING CLASS TIME

Students are encouraged use the bathroom before class starts. While we don't want to restrict students from using the bathroom, there are times when students take advantage of the opportunity to leave the classroom. If your child has any reason to use the bathroom more than once an hour, it would be helpful for us to know.

SNOW OR STORM CANCELLATIONS

If you think it is too snowy or icy to drive, chances are the catechists think so too. If public school is canceled, we are also. If the weather appears to be worsening, classes may be canceled even if schools were not.

Ways to find out if classes are canceled:

Public schools will be notified and will announce the cancellation.

If evening classes are canceled after school hours, teachers will phone the parents to notify them.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE

We meet for a little over an hour, one time a week, so we don't often have situations that require a lot of corrective discipline. Occasionally, however, the need does arise. Listed below is the progressive process we may try to use to handle difficult or disruptive situations:

1. The catechist first tries to handle the situation within the classroom in a positive, creative, caring and prayerful way.
2. The catechist sends the disruptive student to the school office.
3. If disruption continues, the child is asked to leave for the remainder of the class and parents are notified.
4. If the disruptive behavior continues over several weeks, a parent may be requested to sit with their child in class.

If you get a call about a disruptive situation involving your child, please know that we have attempted first to solve it here and are now asking for your involvement. Remember, **all** of our catechists are volunteers. Most are not trained or prepared to handle difficult classroom situations.

We want to provide a safe and welcome environment for ALL students. We do that best when everyone – students, parents, and catechists – cooperates and participates.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Although we do not have too many parent/child events scheduled during Religious Education Classes, we want you to know that you are never excluded from anything we do. Parents are always welcome to be involved. You are invited to call or e-mail the Coordinators of Religious Education in your parish. For questions related to grades 1-6 call Joyce Rondorf at 715-267-6076. For the upper grades call Margie Ouimette at 715-937-1351 or talk with your child's catechist, or visit their class (with prior arrangement).

MASS ATTENDANCE

In accordance with Church teaching, we strongly encourage that you and your child attend Mass each weekend. Celebrating the Eucharist is the ultimate prayer and the basis for all religious formation. The issues and topics discussed in the Religious Education classroom often refer to Mass and Eucharist. Coming to class makes so much more sense to students who attend Mass regularly.

Parents of all grade levels can help by praying with your child. In Religious Education class we can teach children some basic prayers, but they learn and remember them only if they are heard and said in their every day family life. We expose children to all kinds of prayers here – ritual prayers, prayers of Thanksgiving, prayers of petition, blessing prayers. What do you teach?

Parent's Prayer for Their Children

O Lord,
We give you thanks for having given us children.
They are our joy, and we accept with serenity
the worries, fears, and labors which bring us pain.
Help us to love them sincerely.
Through us you gave life to them;
from eternity you knew them and loved them.
Give us the wisdom to guide them, patience to teach them, vigilance
to accustom them to the good through our example.
Support our love so that we may receive them back
when they have strayed and make them good.
It is often so difficult to understand them,
to be as they would want us to be,
to help them go on their way.
Grant that they may always see our home
as a haven in their time of need.
Teach us and help us, O gracious God,
Through the merits of Jesus, your Son and our Lord.
Amen.



The Religious Education Committee appreciates your comments and feedback.