

ST. MARK'S
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
PROGRAM

FAMILY HANDBOOK



PASTOR:
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PROGRAM HOURS:

Grades K-8 Sundays: 10:45 am-12:00 Noon

TUITION:

One Child	\$120.00
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Two Children	\$135.00
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Three or more children	\$150.00
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ADDITIONAL FEES:

First Eucharist	\$15.00
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Confirmation	\$25.00
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Non-parish member fee per family _____	\$50.00
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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Parents understand that because of their unique relationship to their child, they are the primary educators of their child's religion.

By enrolling children in the Parish Religious School of Education, parents automatically accept the responsibility of practicing the faith fully themselves and thereby provide the proper climate of Catholic faith practice in the home. They accept the responsibility of seeing to it that the children in the home attend Sunday Mass and receive the sacraments regularly. To do otherwise is to create a most serious conflict in the child's mind and is unacceptable parental behavior.

ATTENDANCE

New students coming into the program must have two years of instruction before the sacraments (Penance, Eucharist, Confirmation) will be administered .

Children are EXPECTED to attend Religious Education classes uninterrupted.

Prior attendance elsewhere will need to be verified. Only three excused absences per year are permitted, excluding illness. An absence of 1/3 of scheduled classes will hinder promotion and the reception of sacraments. Prolonged absences for any reason, unless work is completed at home, will hinder promotion. Communication with the Religious Education Office is expected.

Please email or call the office if your child will not be attending a class, for any reason, so we can record the reason. Your child's teacher will give make-up work when possible. Remember that make-up work is not always possible and is never as valuable as your child's attendance in class. If you know that your child will be absent many Sundays due to family obligations, please let the Religious Education Office know early in the year. This will allow us to give special attention to your situation.

According to the Diocesan Policy, four consecutive absences shall be considered a withdrawal and a parental interview will be required for re-admission to the program.

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD(REN) ARRIVE BEFORE THE START OF CLASS.

TARDINESS NOT ONLY HURTS YOUR CHILD, BUT THE INTERRUPTION OF YOUR CHILD'S LATE ARRIVAL HARMS THE WHOLE CLASS. CLASS TIME IS AT A PREMIUM AND THE TEACHER NEEDS EVERY MINUTE OF IT.

DISCIPLINE

The teachers expect that the students will exhibit self-discipline. Your child's teacher will discuss any problem with the student. If the problem is not settled between these two, the DRE will talk to your child. If there is no improvement, you will be asked to help correct the problem. Please let your child know that it is important to you that he or she follows classroom rules so that the limited time that your child spends in class is utilized to the fullest extent.

HOMEWORK

Homework assignments are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Children in the sacramental classes (grades 2 - 8) may receive more assignments than other grades. When homework is assigned, it is to help reinforce religious concepts developed in class. Parents are asked to read any sections of the child's text which pertain to parents and also to read any parent letters from your child's teacher or from the office.

We expect all students to learn the common prayers of our Catholic faith. Textbooks for each grade level contain prayers, which can benefit our students with different types of prayer to learn for words of thanks and praise, offering words of sorrow and for help. This is how students can begin to learn a style of communication with our Heavenly Father, among others. Prayer begins at home with encouragement of parents and in a family environment. Prayer is an important part of the Mass. Prayers can be recited in the morning, before meals, at bedtime, in the car when traveling, standing in long lines, etc. Please contact the Religious Education Office, if you need a list of prayers for your child to recite and learn at home.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship means accepting responsibility for using God's gift of time, talent, and treasure in a responsible way; to acknowledge that He is the source of them all. We show our gratitude and appreciation of these by returning a fair portion of these to Him through the Church and His people. As the children get older, they can volunteer as altar servers, office and classroom aides, helpers at parish-wide events, and can seize other opportunities as they arise.

Please encourage your child to share his or her time, talents, and treasures.

CHILD SAFETY POLICIES

In order to safeguard the children in our care, as of June 20, 2003, the Diocese has initiated a program, "Protecting God's Children". A fundamental part of this Program is to ensure that all persons dealing with the children in our School of Religion Program be screened and certified as free from any previous or present child abuse. This includes all teachers, classroom aides over 18, as well as all employees paid by the parish—anyone who comes into contact with our children. All paid employees must receive clearance from Accurate Biometrics, while all volunteers who come into contact with children will be cleared by Premiere InfoSource (an organization hired by the Diocese that provides this service). The parish will assume all costs connected with the program as well as security clearances.

Please read the following articles and policies BELOW provided by the Diocese of Joliet, then sign the attachment stating that you have received and read them:

Sex and Cell Phones: Protect Your Children

[Internet Safety for Children and Teens](#)

[Parent Guide for Understanding and Preventing Child Abuse](#)

[Virtus: Protecting God's Children Quick Reference Guide](#)

[Virtus: Practical Advice for Parents on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse](#)

And Visit the Joliet Diocese Website to read:

["Standard of Behavior for those working with Minors and Vulnerable Adults \(Revised 7-152021\)"](#)

Also on the form is a section for parent(s) to initial and advise St. Mark Parish and Religious Education Office about whether or not you allow photographs of your child to be used on the parish website and bulletin boards in the church, hallways, and classrooms. Students may be photographed, during events and service projects, which may occasionally be displayed in these areas.

Please print, sign, and return the following form via your child to his or her classroom teacher.

August 23, 2026

Dear Parents,

The Diocese of Joliet has asked that we verify that all parents of our students read certain documents, sign a verification slip, and that I keep the form on file in the office. Some documents, like those you receive for the Safe Environment program and Sex and the Cell Phone, and Internet Safety need to be reread each year. (The Cell Phone document also contains a "Safe Use Agreement" on page 6 for you and your child to review together, although this does not need to be returned to me.) Then there are those you need only receive one me, such as Standards of Behavior for those Working with Minors and Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors, Parent Guide to Understanding Sexual Abuse, and other Virtus: Protecting God's Children materials.

Please read the documents, sign the slip, and send it to the office with your child. He or she may give it to the teacher or directly to me. Thank you for helping St. Mark Church remain in compliance with the Diocese of Joliet, and for helping us all keep the children safe.

Please print: Family Name: _____

Address: _____ Names

and grades of children in St. Mark Religious Education Program:

I acknowledge that I have received and read:

- * Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors
- * Sex and Cell Phones: Protect Your Children
- * Internet Safety for Children and Teens
- * Parent Guide for Understanding and Preventing Child Abuse
- * Virtus: Protecting God's Children Quick Reference Guide
- * Virtus: Practical Advice for Parents on Preventing Child Sexual Abuse

Videotaping & Still Photographs

Video and still photos may be taken during events during the year. These may be used on bulletin boards in the church, on the parish website, or shared with the people we do service projects for. Please initial where indicated. I give my permission for photos of my child/children to be on bulletin boards in the church. Y___ N___

I give my permission for photos or videos of my child/children to be on the parish website. Y___ N___

I give my permission for photos of my child/children to be shared with those we do service projects for. Y___ N___

Parent(s) Signature(s)

Date

CURRICULUM

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE EIGHTH: FAITH AND LIFE by Ignatius Press

The General Catechetical Directory states that catechesis “must take diligent care faithfully to present the entire treasure of the Christian message” (#38). All its essential elements are to be presented as a whole, even in the initial stages of religious education. In the beginning this presentation will be simple, adapted to the limited capacity and experience of young children. Then it is progressively deepened and broadened in accordance with the level of the children’s development.

To achieve this balance in content, and to ensure consistent progress and development, the Faith and Life series presents Catholic teaching using the time-tested ecclesial methodology and spiral development of catechesis, in a beautiful, student-friendly, comprehensive format.

KINDERGARTEN: WHO AM I?

The students will focus on two unifying key truths: God and creation. The curriculum stresses the dignity of each child made in God's image and presents the faith in terms and activities children will understand.

FIRST GRADE: OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

The students will be introduced to the Church’s faith regarding the Triune God, the life of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the life of prayer, with an emphasis on growing to know, love and trust God. They will become acquainted with Mary, angels and the saints.

SECOND GRADE: JESUS OUR LIFE

The students will learn about the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. The lessons emphasize God’s mercy and love. They cover Creation, the Covenant with Moses, the Ten Commandments, Redemption, Forgiveness of Sins and the Mass.

THIRD GRADE: OUR LIFE WITH JESUS

The students will learn that they belong to God’s chosen people and that their family is an important part of God’s family. They will learn about God’s plan of salvation, from

creation to the Incarnation and Redemption and to the birth of the Church at Pentecost. Special emphasis will be given on the importance of Confession, Communion and the Mass.

FOURTH GRADE: JESUS OUR GUIDE

The students will understand their purpose and goal in life, and to see God's plan in history and society to lead us all to Heaven, our true, eternal home. They will learn of God's plan to save his people from sin (Salvation History), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us through his word, his law, and his Church.

FIFTH GRADE: CREDO: I BELIEVE

The students will acquire a solid knowledge of God and his Church through the understanding of the Creed as the basic belief of our Catholic faith. There will be an emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, the prophets, and the prayers of the Church (and the distinguished truths of our faith from errors that lead away from the love of God).

SIXTH GRADE: FOLLOWING CHRIST

The students will learn to love the moral law as Christ did and to cherish and love the Mass as our best prayer to God. They will understand the challenges of God's law and his gifts of grace that help us fulfill his law. There will be an emphasis on the presence of Jesus in the Holy Mass in the Blessed Sacrament.

SEVENTH/EIGHTH: THE LIFE OF GRACE

Altaration: The Mass

The students will learn that grace is our link with God, his gift to us to bring us to Himself and his eternal life, with an emphasis on transmission of grace through the seven sacraments and on God's loving gifts of revelation, of himself through the prophets, the Incarnation, and the Church and the role of grace in developing the virtues.

CONFIRMATION: Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is based upon enrollment in every other year. The Sacrament of Confirmation was conferred in the 2026 – 2027 school year.

CATECHIST CLASSROOM GRADE ASSIGNMENTS:

Catechist K – 2 (First Reconciliation and Holy Communion as needed)

Catechist 3 - 4

Catechist 5 - 6

Catechist 7 - 8 (Confirmation)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

For additional information, please visit the Joliet Diocese Website.

<https://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/>