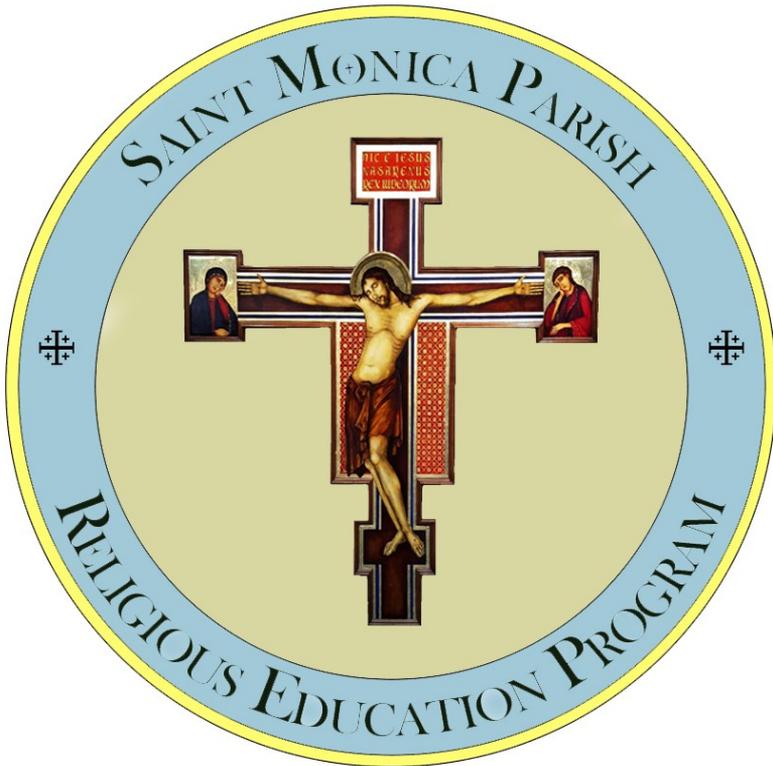


CATECHIST HANDBOOK



SAINT MONICA PARISH

2018-2019

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Monica's Religious Education Program is committed to instilling faith and a relationship with God into our students from a young age. We find Faith and involvement in church teachings and activities to be an essential part of growing up as a good and functioning Catholic. We believe that by using conversational methods to make our students feel comfortable, we are giving them their best possible start.

St. Monica's Religious Education Program:

- Seeks to awaken in the young person the experience of Jesus as a companion for his or her life.
- Provides support and empowers parents as they share their faith within a family structure.
- Provides support and empowers catechists in their ministry as they share their faith in the classroom setting.
- Supports a cooperative relationship between the parochial school and the School of Religion
- Promotes faith formation through class sessions, family participation, sacramental preparation, and special events.

SAINT MONICA PARISH

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2018-2019 SCHEDULE



MEETING DATES

September 8	January 12
September 15	January 26
September 29	February 9
October 13	February 23
October 27	March 9
November 3	March 23
November 17	March 30
December 1	April 6
December 8	April 27
December 15	May 11

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

September 8 - Opening Mass
Meet in Church at 9:00 am
with parents.
10:00-10:30 - Parents Meeting
at Beyenka Hall & students meet
teachers in classrooms.

May 11 - 9:00 am Closing Mass
and May Crowning with parents.
No classes. Meet in Church.

First Holy Communion—May 4 + Confirmation—February 22

GENERAL OPERATION OF PROGRAM

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Classrooms

- Students are not permitted to go into or use things from the desks in the classrooms. Religious education students are to use the supplies they bring, the property of other students should be respected.
- If accidents of whatever sort occur, please write a note of apology to the parochial school teacher explaining the accident, also notify your DRE.
- Do not move the students' desks or disturb the teacher's desk. We are sharing the space of those who use that space on a daily basis.
- Erase the whiteboards before you leave but NEVER ERASE the notices left by the classroom teacher.

Communication Devices

- Catechists and aides are not to contact students via cellphones, text messaging, instant messaging, message boards and blogs, chat rooms, web cams, and social media including but not limited to facebook, twitter, instagram, or snapchat.
- Catechists and aides are not to set up any type of social media under St. Monica's name without the permission of the DRE.

Electronic Communication

Electronic communication is not permitted during class sessions. If used the device is to be confiscated and returned after class. A second incident will warrant a call to the students parents and a possible meeting with the DRE.

Class parties

Since class time is so limited for Religious Education class parties are discouraged. Please check with the office before planning a party during class time. No eating in the classroom.

Class Disruptions

Continuous and prolonged disruption by a student in the classroom must be reported to the DRE as soon as possible. If you feel the behavior warrants removing a student from the classroom for a period of time, have your aide accompany the student to the office to speak with the DRE. If you do not have an aide, use the intercom system to notify the DRE that you wish to speak to her or send a responsible student to the office to notify the DRE that you wish to see her. Parents have been informed that if a situation warrants a child being sent to the office, the child will call his/ her parents and tell them what has happened in class. If the disruptive behavior continues after the telephone call or in a subsequent classes, an interview with the child, the parents, the catechist, and the DRE will then be initiated.

Washrooms and Hallways

Only let the students go to the washrooms as it is necessary. The students are only here for two hours so the bathroom usage should be minimal. Teachers of lower level students need to supervise bathroom usage. Encourage your class to walk quietly through the corridors respecting the other classes that are in session.

Homework

Homework is assigned at the catechist's discretion.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Evacuation procedure - Fire emergencies

In the event of an emergency that would require an evacuation, the following procedures should be followed:

- Students should walk quickly in a single file line with no talking or pushing.
- Catechists should have their class folder with them so they can check to make sure the entire class is out.
- If a child is in the lower level washroom or with another class at the time of the evacuation, he/she should go out with the class that they are currently with or find a teacher or responsible adult and remain with them until instructed otherwise. It is important to go over these procedures with your students to insure that they have all the tools necessary to stay safe if they find themselves in this situation.
- Catechist in the upper level rooms should check classrooms and washrooms to make sure that every student is safely out and has vacated each room.

Tornado Instructions

In the case of a tornado, upper classrooms should go to the lower level and remain in the hallway. Students in the lower classrooms should also move to the respective hallways and assume the tornado positions taught to them in school until instructed otherwise.

Lockdown instructions

In the case of a lockdown, the door(s) to the classroom should be closed and locked and the students should be gathered into a corner of the room out of sight from the doors and away from the windows. They should remain like this until the all clear signal is given.

**All of these policies and procedures identified in this handbook
are to be adhered to so that we may
better serve our children and their families in faith and in safety**



Gifted children

Exceptionally gifted children may need extra intellectual stimulation.

Special needs

Parents submit such information to the office on their registration forms. This information will be passed on to the catechist by the DRE. Please check your attendance folder for information provided regarding children with special needs. Just as a reminder, such formed and informational papers regarding the students including but not limited to their health or personal information are strictly confidential.

Textbooks

Textbooks will be distributed to the children on the first full day of class.

Supplies and materials

If you need supplies such as construction paper, notebook paper, glue, ect. There is a cabinet in the teacher's lounge filled with supplies. Feel free to use what you need for your class, while remaining respectful of the space by keeping it nice and tidy.

Copying needs

There is a copying machine available in the Parish office for your copying needs. Please try to copy all documents needed for class before class begins, the code for use is '444'. Documents may be emailed to the DRE to have them printed if you can not get to the office. Please specify number of copies and if they are single or double sided.

Divorce and Custody

You will be informed if a child can not go home with a parent because of a court decision.

Guest Speakers

If you would like to request that a priest or deacon visit your classroom to speak on a topic, please give the DRE your request date and who you wish to come to you classroom at least two class periods ahead of the request date. She will notify you if the priest or deacon is available.

Assistance

Please stay in your classroom once the students are present. If you need help and you don't have an aide and it is not an emergency, use the intercom to call the office or ask a neighboring teacher with an aide for assistance.



CATECHIST RESPONSIBILITIES

Arrival

Catechists are to arrive no later than 30 minutes before class starts.

This will give you time to prepare your classroom for the lesson, read over any notes to check if there have been any changes in the scheduled activities. It also gives you the chance to welcome students as they come into the class.

There will be community prayer in the gym prior to going to the classroom. Teachers and helpers should plan to be in the gym no later than 8:55am. Parents are welcome to stay for prayers. They are not allowed in the classroom.

Please pick up your attendance folder and any other requested materials from the teacher lounge before going to your classroom. If you have your own children helping you prepare before class, please keep them in your room with you until classes begin. Children should always be under the supervision of an adult the entire time they are in the building.

Helpful suggestions

- Keep a seating chart; it helps you get to know your individual students; and it will assist a substitute teacher if one is needed
- Catechists who have their own children in Religious Education should keep them in their classrooms until a few minutes before the beginning of class.
- Set goals for the class and yourself.
- Be prepared so that you have a sense of confidence as you enter the classroom.
- Be honest, fair, reasonable, and considerate. Anticipate problems, be consistent and be organized as you move the class along. It really helps to have a lesson plan prepared so you know what you have to cover during the class period.
- Give directions slowly and clearly. Make sure that all students understand the topic(s) just covered before you move on to the next subject.
- Encourage a sense of discovery, wonder, and growth. Try to maintain a conversational classroom so the students are not afraid to participate.
- Provide opportunities for creative expression
- Expect the best from the students; help to develop gifts and talents.
- Move around the area for variety of eye and body contact observation.
- Admit when you make a mistake or an error.
- Adapt your tone and voice to the situation; happy, sad, mysterious, celebrative.
- Let the students help with classroom clean up activities. If possible, leave the classroom in a better condition than you found it in.
- Show love, interest, and try to make the students feel like you care.
- Have a good sense of humor.
- Help students to understand that God is good and loves them for who they are.
- Be receptive to the movement of the holy spirit.

Communication

Please prepare a note to send home on the first day of class introducing yourself and what your expectations are from the parents as well as the students. Please feel free to include some of your teaching experience. Please provide the DRE with a copy of this note before you hand it out to the families.

Attendance

Attendance should be taken as soon as possible. Please complete your attendance sheet found in your folder as soon as class begins so it is completed when the office assistant comes around to collect it. Please keep your attendance folder with you at all times whenever you leave the classroom.

The parents of absent students will be contacted by phone (if they did not call the absence line to report the student's absence) by the office assistant to obtain a reason for the student's absence. Students who are tardy must go to the office before going to class so that the attendance records can be adjusted.

If a student is present, please mark **'P'**

If a student is absent please mark **'A'**

If a student is tardy, please mark **'T'**

Please only use these symbols so we can all have a universal understanding on what these things mean. Do not add or delete any names unless otherwise notified by the office.

Search and Seizure

The Pastor and the DRE of the program reserve the right to inspect and search all book bags, and other enclosures. In addition, they reserve the right to inspect a student's personal property when there is a reasonable belief that the student is violating rules, regulations, or policies put in place. Anything brought to the class that may be deemed harmful to others by the catechist will be confiscated and duly reported to those in authority. We retain the right to search for and seize drugs, alcohol, and other contraband. Such possession is in violation of the rules, regulations and policies of St. Monica.

Students who possess such contraband will be subject to immediate termination from the program. The religious education program personnel will assist local government authorities by reporting these possessions and, if and when requested by authorities, will cooperate fully with police and other authorities when prosecuting.

Dismissal

Make sure that all letters, flyers, or other handouts go home with all the students. Please remind your students to give the information to their parents or guardians as soon as they get home. All lower level students, when being dismissed, must alert their teacher when they see their parent/ guardian and must point them out to their teacher in order to be released. Middle school students may go directly to their cars/ be released to walk home.

If you are the last person in the classroom after dismissal, please double check to make sure that all windows have been closed, all mess has been cleaned up, and the classroom is left in the same if not a better condition than it was found in.

NO CLASS IS TO BE DISMISSED BEFORE THE SCHEDULED TIME!

Early Dismissal

Parents who request that a student be released before the regularly scheduled dismissal time are asked to:

- Write a note to the catechist stating that they are requesting that their child be dismissed early
- Parents are not to go to the classroom. The child will be paged to come to the office as soon as the parent arrives to pick them up.
- The note that was given to the catechist by the parent is to be placed with attendance sheet and sent to the office in order to keep record of classroom activity.

In service meetings

A schedule for in service meetings and special gatherings will be provided. The sessions are to assist the catechist in his/her ministry of bringing the spirit of Jesus to the students. It is expected that you attend these meetings on a regular basis.

Catechists teaching second grade and middle school students are asked to attend the retreats and liturgies connected with the sacramental preparation whenever possible.

Lesson Plans

Each catechist will be given an appropriate grade level Archdiocese of Chicago curriculum. Catechists are to develop their own lesson plans based on their grade level manuals. A copy of the lesson plan should be available to the DRE if it is requested.

Absence

If you are unable to teach your class for whatever reason, please call the parish office (773- 763-1661 ext 122) as soon as possible in order that we might make arrangements for your class to be covered. If it is a situation that you know about this in advance, please prepare a lesson plan for the class to follow in your absence.

Manuals

Catechists should only write information in their manuals that might be helpful to catechists who will be using the manual in the future. Manuals need to be handed in at the end of the year unless otherwise directed by the DRE.

Mandated requirements

Mandated requirements for all those 18 years of age and older working with children in the Archdiocese of Chicago:

- Completion of application for background check online and approval of background check before entering into ministry with children.
- Completion of CANTS form which gives permission for your name to be tracked by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services for any irregularities. This is done yearly.
- Signed statement (Code of Conduct) that you have read and understand the proper conduct expected between adults and children.
- Attendance at a Virtus training session, the purpose of which is to develop the ability to recognize potential situations that may prove to be harmful to children and continue training online by the reading of safety bulletins provided periodically through personal email.
- Completion of the mandated reporter training.

Personal File

The following data is kept in your personal file;

- Application form
- Ongoing information regarding continuing faith formation through workshops, classes, conferences, ect.
- Verification of background check, virtue training, mandated reporter training, signed code of conduct, and a copy of DCFS (CANTS form).
- Any papers regarding your catechetical work for the present year, such as letters to parents, lesson plans, incident reports, ect.



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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2018-2019 SCHEDULE

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March 30	
April 6	
April 27	
May 11	

First Holy Communion—May 4 +

Confirmation—February 22

A CATECHIST'S PRAYER



Lord, our God,
I ask for the grace of your light.
Fill my heart
with your great love.
Strengthen me with your
power and wisdom.
I ask for your blessing
that I may become a true 'echoer'
of your word.

May the children I teach be true to their
Catholic faith So that one day they may
share in the heavenly banquet with your
son and with each other.

AMEN

