

Dear Parents,

I am very excited to start this new year of Religious Education with you and am pleased to welcome your family to the St. Mary Religious Education Program for 2016-2017!

Our goal is to make disciples so that the children and families in our program are on fire with the faith and their love for God! Our hope is that as they grow in their knowledge of the faith they will become witnesses by their lives and be bold proclaimers of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Our catechists and assistants who instruct and hand on the faith are faith-filled Catholics who are eager and excited to share the Good News of the Kingdom of God with your children. They are very passionate about the Catholic faith and proclaim the love of God with great joy and enthusiasm.

The Religious Education program exists to assist you as parents in evangelizing and catechizing your children. Your role in your children's faith formation is vital. As the primary religious educators of your children it is by your practice of the faith and by your example that your children will see how essential God and the faith are in your daily lives. Your teaching, support, example, attitude, and the values you impart are fundamental for your children. To keep the faith alive at home it is important to attend Sunday Mass weekly as a family, pray together regularly, participate in the sacraments often, do the "Family + Faith" pages at the end of each chapter, and look at the family activities on the Our Sunday Visitor website, www.aliveinchrist.osv.com/family. The website has fun games for all grade levels. We also have a wonderful program called FORMED that provides dynamic Catholic videos online that can be accessed at anytime to help deepen and enrich your faith. Go to Formed.org put in the parish access code HRYZ8B. Then you will create a profile which you will use to login in the future. The parish has generously subtribed to this for your benefit and is eager for you to check it out. It's like Catholic Netflix!

I ask that you read this Family Handbook very carefully. It contains essential program and policy Information. It is important that parents understand the handbook contents and are willing to comply with its directives. You will need to return the form attached to the inside front cover to the Religious Education Office by October 8, 2016. On occasion, R.E. students may be photographed or videotaped during events. These images could be used in bulletins, flyers, videos, Facebook, or the website. The students will not be identified. If you object to having your child's picture taken, please return this form as well.

If you have a question regarding anything in this handbook please contact me. Also, if you would be interested in assisting the program further in a volunteer capacity, please feel free to contact me. We need many volunteers to make this beautiful ministry of handing on the faith to the children run smoothly and effectively.

Please take a look at our website www.stmarymokena.org and look at the Religious Education page to find information about the program. Also, please like the **St. Mary Religious Education** page on **Facebook!**

May the Holy Spirit guide and lead us in a grace filled year!

In Christ,
Ms. Nicole Brochmann
Director of Religious Education

Fr. Dindo Billote's 2016 Message to Religious Education Parents

Dear Religious Education Parents,

Welcome everyone to St. Mary's Religious Education Formation Program. Our Goal is to help all parents teach our young people the Catholic Christian Faith. Someone once said that it takes a village to raise a child and we at St. Mary's are here to help you teach and plant seeds that will help each child grow into active faith filled Christian adults.

Our Religious Education Program teaches our students about the Catholic Faith in every way. You, as parents, are the best and first teachers of your children. We need your cooperation with this very important task. You might ask, "how do I teach? I don't have a theology degree or only have basic knowledge of the faith." Don't worry. It is very easy. By being the best example of a Christian you can be and modeling the faith by actively practicing the Catholic Faith yourselves, you show your young people what is really important to you in your own life.

Our parish religious education team is here to help you with any questions you may have about our Catholic Christian faith. We also have a parish website, StMaryMokena.org, that contains all kinds of information about the parish and ways you can get involved and have the best parish experience for your whole family.

As your pastor, I am here to support you anyway I can. You can make an appointment with me anytime to discuss any spiritual matters. God loves you and wants you to be close to him all the time. Our Catholic faith is rich and beautiful. We are looking forward to an awesome year!!! Know of my prayers for all of our children and all of you parents. Peace and All Good Things!

Sincerely in Christ!

Father Dindo Billote

MISSION STATEMENT

Carrying the message of Christ's love to our children.

PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of the Religious Education Program of St. Mary Catholic Church is based on three key principles:

1. Religious Education is a life-long process of entering into a personal relationship with God and getting to know him more intimately. We strive to help the children recognize God's unconditional love, compassion, and forgiveness.
2. Religious Education has a threefold mission:
 - a. Through the Word of God, in study and prayer of both the Old and New Testament, the children will hear the Good News of Salvation. They will gain a better understanding of Scripture, learn how to apply it in their lives, and be able to proclaim the Good News to others.
 - b. To promote Worship through prayer and an appreciation and growth in the love of the liturgy, the children will realize that worship is central to our lives as Catholics.
 - c. In Service to the church, community, and at home, the children will learn that helping others, especially those who are elderly and poor, are at the heart of living a life in Christ.
3. In providing doctrinal, moral, liturgical enrichment, as well as formation in the sacramental life and values of the church, we seek to make disciples of Christ, whereby the children will give witness to Christ by leading lives of holiness.

GOALS

The Religious Education Program will strive to:

1. Develop a sense of personal worth as children of God, made in His image and likeness.
 2. Develop a sense of community where relationships may be formed and they can genuinely grow in friendship, trust, and prayer.
 3. Teach what Jesus taught by remaining faithful to the principle elements of the Christian message for Catechesis and the Church:
 - a. The Mystery of the Holy Trinity
 - b. Creation
 - c. Jesus Christ
 - d. Holy Spirit
 - e. The Sacraments
 - f. The Life of Grace
 - g. The Moral Life
 - h. Mary and the Saints
- Assist students in understanding and remembering:
- a. the traditional prayers of the Church
 - b. the Beatitudes
 - c. the Ten Commandments
 - d. the Laws of the Church
4. Provide students with experiences of Christian Community:
 - a. to celebrate together the principle events of the liturgical year.
 - b. to promote participation in personal prayers and communal worship.
 5. Guide students into commitments of Christian Service:
 - a. in doing service projects
 - b. to activate Christian concern for issues of life, truth, and justice.

GUIDELINES FOR ST. MARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Classes in the St. Mary Religious Education Program will be taught in conformity with the teaching of the Church as presented in the General Catechetical Directory, in Sharing the Light of Faith, The National Catechetical Directory of United States, The Catechism of the Catholic Church and in accordance with the policies and guidelines of Religious Education Programs within the Diocese of Joliet.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

CHANGE OF INFORMATION

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the Religious Education Office if you should move or change any of the following information:

- **Phone Numbers: Home Phone, Cell Phone, Work Phone**
- **Address**
- **E-mail Address**
- **Health Status**
- **Marital Status and Custodial Situation**

SCHOOLMESSENGER NOTIFICATIONS

News blasts, updates and flyers will be sent home via our SchoolMessenger System or hard copies may be sent with the youngest child of the family. Besides emergency information, the SchoolMessenger notifications will also carry a reminder of up-coming dates and deadlines for events.

PARENT CONCERNS

Our office number is 708.326.9350. We welcome any calls from parents who wish to express their concerns and we will be happy to answer your questions.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports will be given to the children in grades 1-8 in January and at the end of the catechetical year. These reports will help parents to keep track of their child's progress within the program and will also contain a record of the child's absences. Content, prayers and beliefs for each grade level are expected to be mastered with assistance from our parents.

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers are a wonderful asset to our program. Please call the Religious Education Office if you are able to give time to help in our program during the year. We count on your presence and your commitment.

All adult volunteers are required to attend a program called Protecting God's Children.

A volunteer background check form will be filled out by each volunteer.

CATECHISTS are the heart and soul of the Religious Education Program. They echo the life and stories about Jesus. Their time spent in preparation and presentation is greatly valued.

SUBSTITUTE CATECHISTS are vital to the program. They are needed to fill in when a catechist cannot come at their scheduled time.

CATECHIST ASSISTANTS, both adult and teen, are the strong right arms to the Catechists. Catechist Assistants are asked to perform many tasks such as taking attendance, listening to traditional prayers, helping children with class work, accompanying children to the office, making copies, helping with dismissal, etc.

OFFICE ASSISTANTS are willing volunteers who offer their time to help out in the Religious Education Office. They assist with tasks such as: taking phone messages, collecting absentee forms, making copies for catechists, preparing mailings and sacramental booklets, newsletters, etc. Other tasks include monitoring the doors, bathrooms, and hallways for security, greeting the children, and helping with dismissal.

Parish WEBSITE **StMaryMokena.org** has a wealth of updated information for you. We encourage you to refer to it frequently. Here you may access a link to the Religious Education department.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday	4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Grades	K - 6
Wednesday, Thursday	4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	Grades	1 - 6
Tuesday, Wednesday	6:45 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Grades	7 - 8
Saturday	8:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Grades	1 - 6
	9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	R.E.A.C.H.	(children with disabilities)

CONTINUITY

Parents are reminded that their child should be enrolled in the Religious Education Program the **entire eight years**. Acceptance into the Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation Programs is based upon regular attendance of the student in the Religious Education Program.

A skipped grade will need to be made up.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES See pages 10 and 11.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

St. Mary Religious Education **SchoolMessenger** program enables the R.E. Office to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal or Religious Education cancellation. It will also allow us to send you announcements or reminders throughout the year.

Our office will also activate the Emergency Closing Center with our information.

Parents and Volunteers can receive automatic e-mails on any changes of our schedule. To sign up for this free service, or check status on any closings, please visit the public website, at www.emergencyclosings.com.

Automated weather related phone: 847 238.1234

Religious Education Office: 708 326.9350 or 708 326.9352

Reporting TV Stations: CBS, NBC, ABC, WGN, FOX

Search for St. Mary Religious Education Program (CCD), Mokena

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment in the Religious Education Program is open to any child of a family registered in St. Mary Parish and who is five years old through grade eight. You may know neighbors or friends, who for various reasons are not enrolled in the Religious Education Program. We ask you to encourage them to contact the Director at 708.326.9355.

The grade level of a student entering the program will be left to the sole discretion of the Director of Religious Education (DRE), in dialogue with the parent(s) or guardian.

EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that each family become actively involved in St. Mary Religious Education Program and Parish, as evidence by regularly participating in the Mass and financially supporting the parish, in order to model an active Christian faith and to reinforce the values and attitudes of living that faith. The parent and their child also **agree** to act in accordance with these values and attitudes.

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

There will be fire and tornado drills at the beginning of the R.E. year during the first week of classes.

FIRST AID

State law regulates minor injuries to be treated with water, disinfectant and Band-Aids. We follow the rules of universal precaution. The Religious Education Office has available to all catechists a supply of: disinfectant, Band-Aids, rubber gloves and Ziploc bags to dispose of any materials used to clean a wound. If there is a serious injury, we will call 911 and notify parents immediately. Our building is equipped with AEDs (Automatic External Defibrillators).

HOME STUDY

Special arrangements must be made with the Director of Religious Education. It should be noted, that even though a family may home school their children, the child must be in attendance in a Parish Religious Education Program for two years prior to the reception of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation. For St. Mary Parish, that means the child must be in attendance in our Religious Education Program for Grades 2, 3, 7, and 8. Home Study is not permitted to accommodate schedules or extra-curricular activities.

LOST AND FOUND

If your child loses an article, please check with the Religious Education Office 708.326.9352.

MEDICATIONS

Except in extraordinary circumstances, which must be approved by the Director of Religious Education, personnel will not maintain, administer or supervise the taking of medication. An exception is made for use of EpiPens, but only with the doctor's authorization. Arrangements must be made each year with the Director.

STUDENT MATERIALS

Children in the program will be given folders in which they can carry their papers, etc. **Please check their folders weekly and remove papers.** Students in grades K-8 are given **textbooks** and materials that they are expected to bring to every class. Students who lose their book (materials) may purchase a replacement from the Religious Education Office.

Grades K-5	folder, textbook
Grade 6	folder, textbook and Bible
Grade 7	folder, textbook, Youcat, and Bible
Grade 8	folder, textbook, Youcat, and Bible

REPLACEMENT PRICE LIST

Student text Grades K-8	\$ 20.00
Bible	20.00
Youcat	20.00
Chosen parent guide	10.00
Chosen sponsor guide	9.00
Grade 8 - Service Log Book	2.00

TUITION

The tuition for 2016-2017:

\$225.00 for one child
\$325.00 for two children
\$400.00 for three or more children
\$65.00 for Kindergarten

Program Fees:

\$ 35.00 First Eucharist Program (Grade 3)
\$ 40.00 Confirmation Program (Grade 8)

Registration for next year will begin April 7, 2017. Payment is expected at the time of registration. However, families may have the option to pay in full by **June 1, 2017**, with an arrangement made with the Director. Final payment is due August 7, 2017.

A late fee of \$100.00 will be assessed on registrations received after June 1, 2017.

No child will be denied instruction due to lack of funds. If payment for tuition presents a problem for you, financial arrangements must be made directly with the Director of Religious Education, Nicole Brochmann, 708 326.9355.

POLICIES

ABSENCES

A student who misses 3 classes in grades 1 through 7 (or misses 2 classes in grade 8) will receive a notification from the Religious Education Office. If the student misses a 4th time, the Director of Religious Education will call to discuss the student's future participation in the Religious Education Program. Depending on the results of this conference, the student may be asked to repeat the same grade the following year. **In the event of an emergency or illness parents are asked to call 708.326.9367 to inform us of your child/ren's absence.**

All class work must be made up. It is the parent's responsibility to call the Catechist to arrange for make-up work.

ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

Religious Education personnel are required to conform to the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (P.A. 81-1007). A brochure regarding child abuse, published by the Department of Children and Family Services, has been distributed to our personnel who work with children and is available in the Religious Education Office.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is expected for the **full hour and fifteen minutes of class each week**. Every class is important in the student's catechetical formation. The Catechist facilitates the formation of community, proclaims the Word, encourages service, and leads the students in prayer each week. Each class builds upon the preceding class.

***Requests for early dismissal
create a major disturbance to the class.
We strongly discourage this—even occasionally.***

ARRIVAL TIME

Students are expected to arrive no more than ten minutes before class time.

CELL PHONES

Cell phone use is prohibited before, during and after class in St. Mary School when Religious Education classes are in session. That means **any** cell phone:

- that rings, or
- is used as a phone or a camera, or
- to text message

is to be claimed by the Catechist or the Assistant and sent to the Director's office. The parent will be required to retrieve the cell phone. It will not be returned to the student. It is recommended that cell phones not be brought into the building. All of our classrooms are equipped with telephones in case of an emergency.

CELL PHONE LAW

Public Act 96-0131 went into effect January 1, 2010. **THIS LAW PROHIBITS ANY DRIVER, REGARDLESS OF AGE, FROM USING A CELL PHONE WHILE OPERATING A MOTOR VEHICLE IN A SCHOOL ZONE.** According to Secretary of State, Jesse White, distracted driving has become a serious problem in both our nation and our state. So please follow the law! There should be no cell phone usage in our circle drive or 195th Street pick up area. Keep our children safe!

CUSTODY ISSUES

If parents are divorced or separated, St. Mary's Religious Education Program presumes that both parents have access to the children and their records unless one parent provides documentation that he or she has sole custody.

DELAYED PARENTS

We expect children to be picked up ***promptly*** after class. If a parent is delayed in picking up their child, for the safety of the child, **he/she will wait in the Religious Education Office.** The parent will need to **come inside** the office, via door #3, for the child.

DISMISSAL

EARLY DISMISSAL:

Requests for early dismissal create a major disturbance to the class. We strongly discourage this – even occasionally. The catechist may not dismiss any student from the classroom.

An Office Assistant will contact the catechist - when the parent arrives - and request that the student be sent to the office. **Parents are to sign the child out and meet their child in the Religious Education Office.**

It is recommended that parents schedule **ALL** extracurricular activities and appointments at a time that does not present a conflict with your child's Religious Education classes. **We do not consider sports activities a valid reason for early dismissal.**

NEW TO 195TH STREET: Please be aware of our school's new Extended Child Care Program whose families will be sharing space in the dismissal line on 195th Street. They will have a staggered dismissal between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Caution will be needed pulling out.

DRUG/ ALCOHOL ABUSE POLICY

We will tolerate no possession or use of drugs or alcohol on Parish property. Serious consequences (including possible suspension or expulsion) will be taken should there be any infraction of this policy. All Religious Education Staff Members, Catechists, and Volunteers shall immediately notify the office in the event that they observe any person in possession of/ or under the influence of drugs/alcohol on school grounds.

FOOD POLICY

Food is not permitted in the classrooms. We have discontinued all classroom parties. There are no exceptions to this policy. No food or treats will be offered at any time, in any grade level. This eliminates Halloween, Christmas, Valentines, end of the year and birthday celebrations. Please do not provide treats for the children to TAKE HOME. The reasons for this policy change are listed below:

- 1. To ensure the many children with food allergies are safe in our program
- 2. To maintain an insect-free and rodent-free school building
- 3. To eliminate the wasting of serious class time
- 4. To eliminate unnecessary financial burdens on the Catechist

Gum chewing is not permitted in the building at any time.

LATE ARRIVALS (TARDINESS)

Late arrivals are to be discouraged as they are disruptive to the class. Parents are requested to make every effort to have their children arrive on time for class sessions. The door monitor will stop tardy students to give them a late-admission pass to class. **All tardy students must enter the building at door #3.**

SHOE SPIKES FOR SPORTS

Spikes **are prohibited** in the hallways or classrooms of St. Mary School.

REGULAR DISMISSAL

Classes will end promptly when the bell rings. A student will be released to either parent unless the Religious Education Office has a copy of the court order giving one parent exclusive custody.

SECURITY

At the time of dismissal, we ask that the parents do not enter the building. Parents must wait outdoors for their child. Dismissal takes place at Doors #3, 4 and 9 **only**.

In order to safeguard the well-being of our children during class time, our building doors will be locked at the beginning of each class. Any person having business in the school building during these hours will be asked to come to the Religious Education Office, via Door #3, to state his/her business and sign in. All other doors are locked at all times.

SKATEBOARDS AND SCOOTERS

Skateboards and scooters **are prohibited** and may not be brought into the building. Any skateboard or scooter that is brought to the classroom will be retrieved and sent down to the Director's office. These items are a significant danger to the child and to other children.

WEAPONS POLICY

St. Mary Parish takes seriously the safety and well being of students in our care. We will tolerate no possession of any type of weapon (whether real or make-believe) on parish property. Serious consequences (including possible suspension or expulsion) will be taken should there be any infraction of this policy. All Religious Education Staff members, catechists, and volunteers shall immediately notify the office in the event that they observe any person in possession of a firearm or weapon on school grounds.

R. E. A. C. H.

The REACH Program offers classes for the young people with disabilities from our parish and the surrounding community. Please contact Nicole Brochmann at 708.326.9355 for more information.

R.E.A.C.H. SCHEDULE		9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Saturday	
<u>2016</u>		<u>2017</u>	
September	17	January	14 28
October	1 15 29	February	11 25
November	12	March	11 25
December	3 17	April	8

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD

Fr. Dindo Billote	Mary Heffernan
Fr. John Lovitsch	Bob Prskalo
Nicole Brochmann	Donna Swiderski
Matt Malicki	Barb McGarry
Monica Cha	Joan Posewick
Rachel Feil	Brendan Kelliher

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BOARD MEETINGS 2016-2017 **6:30 p.m.**

Tuesday	August 16, 2016	Religious Education Office
Tuesday	October 11, 2016	Bishop Fitzgerald Meeting Room
Tuesday	December 13, 2016	Bishop Fitzgerald Meeting Room
Tuesday	February 7, 2017	Bishop Fitzgerald Meeting Room
Tuesday	April 4, 2017	Bishop Fitzgerald Meeting Room

Discernment Meetings 2016-2017 **6:30 p.m.**

Tuesday,	March 14, 2017	Bishop Fitzgerald Meeting Room
Tuesday,	April 11, 2017	Bishop Fitzgerald Meeting Room

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES FOR 2016-2017

Parents and guardians are urged to use extreme caution when dropping off or picking up their children. Religious Education Staff, Catechists, and Assistants will be assigned to help with dismissal at 195th Street and Circle Drive only. Please make sure your children know from which exit you want them to be dismissed.

Please follow the directions given below.

All STUDENTS will be dropped off at DOOR # 3 in the Circle Drive.
This is the ONLY Drop-Off Station. All other doors will be locked.

Pick-Up Stations:

1. Pick-up Lane. Eastbound on 195th Street.

This driveway provides safety for children and very easy access and exit for drivers. Children can leave the building via Door #9. We are requesting that families whose last name begins with the letters “A-J” arrange to meet their children at the **195th Street lane**. **Please be aware of our school’s Extended Child Care Program whose families will be sharing space in the dismissal line on 195th Street.** They will have a staggered dismissal between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Caution will be needed pulling out.

2. Circle Drive. Pick up for Doors #3 and #4.

We are requesting that families whose last name begins with “K-Z” arrange to meet their children in the Circle Drive.
This would include any child in your car pool.

Question: I am assigned to the 195th Street Lane for pick-up because my last name begins with “D”, but one of the children in my carpool has a last name that begins with “S”. Which pick-up point should I use?

Answer: The Circle Drive. If **anyone** in your car pool has a last name that begins with “K-Z”, your car belongs in the Circle Drive. (This plan allows for a possible change of drivers each week and for the children to consistently come to the same dismissal point).

PLEASE NOTE: The Religious Education Staff will monitor dismissal at the above-mentioned two locations only. There will be no supervision or responsibility for dismissal at the upper lot, the lower south lot, or at any other location.

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF **STRONGLY** DISCOURAGES PICK-UP AT THESE LOCATIONS.

Safety Alert

- Cell phones are a **DISTRACTION**. Please turn off when you are in the pick-up lane. ***There is a law in Illinois that prohibits use of cell phones in a school zone. This is a ‘ticketable’ offense.***
- Calling children to cross the road to come to your car is dangerous and should not happen.

SACRAMENTS

Sacraments are sacred moments in a person's life as he/she encounters Jesus Christ. Preparation for the Sacraments are joint efforts on the part of the child, the parents, and the catechist. Class time, parent meetings, parent participation, retreats, and celebration experiences are all necessary ingredients for a meaningful initiation into these sacramental experiences.

Sacraments are usually celebrated in:

Grade 3 First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Grade 8 Confirmation

First Reconciliation preparation begins in grade two and is further developed in grade three. There will be a group celebration in December for third grade children when the parents, in conjunction with the Pastor and Director, deem the child ready.

First Eucharist preparation begins in grade two and is further developed in grade three. The celebration of this sacrament usually takes place in third grade when the parents, in conjunction with the Pastor and Director, deem the child ready.

Preparation for the initial reception of sacrament(s) by children in grades four through eight will be arranged, using age-appropriate instructional materials and procedures, with the parents by the Director.

Confirmation preparation begins in grade seven (Year I) and continues through grade eight (Year II). The candidate must have completed two consecutive years of Religious Education before they can be confirmed. If they have not taken Year I they will be required to do so.

There must be a desire and commitment to the requirements of the preparation programs and the Catholic faith on the part of the children and families preparing to receive sacraments.

EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

On the night before He died, Jesus directed us to remember Him by celebrating the Eucharist. It is the most important thing He told us to do. It is a GREAT blessing to be Catholic, that the God of the universe should humble Himself and take on the form of bread and wine, so to be intimately united to us. The Eucharist is the GREATEST gift we will ever receive! What a tremendous grace that we are called to share in this profound mystery of the Eucharistic meal, "the wedding feast of the lamb" (Rev. 19:9).

There is NOTHING more important in our whole life that we will ever do then go to Mass. God is so madly in love with us and longs to be with each one of us. We should have a great desire to want to attend Mass on Sunday, and as often as we can, to be so closely united to Our Lord. Mass is essential to coming to know God and growing in our relationship with Him. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, show by example their commitment to weekly participation in the Sunday Eucharist. May we help our children grow in love of God and the Eucharist by attending Mass on Sunday as a family.

Each week the children in every grade level, 1-8, are expected to fill out a **Mass Reflection form** that they can obtain from their catechist or from our website. This is a great way for the children to pay attention and participate in the Sunday Liturgy. Each week they can choose to focus on the songs, readings, or homily. It also provides a wonderful opportunity to discuss the Mass with your children so they will gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the liturgy.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

CONDUCT

Students in the Religious Education Classes are reminded that the rooms and desks they use for class are shared with other children within the parish. All are expected to respect the property of the school and other students. Parents are responsible for any damage to or theft of St. Mary's property.

Good conduct, cooperation, attention, and courtesy are expected during class time. Any student who continually fails to cooperate with the Catechist and other students within a class shall be subject to the following procedures.

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1 st step | Catechist will speak privately with the student to discuss the situation. |
| 2 nd step | An uncooperative student will be sent to the office to meet with the Director. |
| 3 rd step | If the problem continues, a telephone call is made to the parents. |
| 4 th step | If there is no improvement, in fairness and justice to the Catechist and students in the class, the Director reserves the right to require the parents to attend classes with their child until the behavior improves or to provide an alternate form of Religious Education outside of the regular class. |

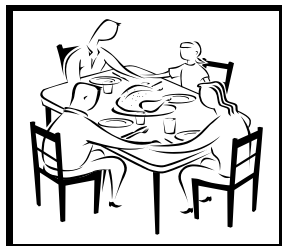
The Religious Education program defines serious misconduct as, but not limited to, fighting, stealing, cheating, and possession/use of drugs, weapons, and/or alcohol, disrespect to staff, gang involvement, vandalism, aggressive behavior, swearing, vulgarity, and possession of dangerous items.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

1. The children will enter and exit school in an appropriate manner.
2. The Catechist must be present in the classroom before the students may enter.
3. Students will take assigned places in the classroom and need permission to leave their seats.
4. Coats and hats are not to be worn during class. There will be a designated place for coats and hats.
5. Modest attire is required. Wearing any of the following: suggestive logo or wording on t-shirts
low-rise jeans that expose underwear, and low cut tops may result in your child being sent home.
6. Catechists, assistants, and students should display mutual respect.
7. Students will raise their hands and wait for permission before speaking.
8. Textbooks and appropriate materials are required for each class.

HOMEWORK AND THE PARENT'S ROLE

Parents are expected to worship with their children at Mass. Parents should be modeling their faith, talking about their faith and values and telling and re-telling stories about Jesus. Parents are asked to review what has been taught in class and help the children with any homework a Catechist may have assigned. Parents are also encouraged to take time to pray with their children and help them learn the traditional prayers.



Code of Behavioral and Spiritual Expectations for Parents of St. Mary Religious Education Students

The relationship between religious education representatives (Catechist, Administrators, Staff and Assistants) and parents of St. Mary Religious Education Program is one of the strongest and most important elements in the effective faith sharing and education of our young people. This policy statement provides structure to several phases of the relationship. Feel free to contact the Religious Education Board Members with any comments or concerns.

The purpose of this code of behavioral expectations for parents is:

- To establish patterns of conflict-resolution in a spirit of cooperative communication. We can disagree with one another, even in complicated matters, but still respect each other. We can be respectful in our speech, courteous in our actions, and Christian in our attitudes.
- To establish levels of appeal through appropriate channels that promotes conflict resolution.

Due process seeks to give all parties the chance to make their case and to really be heard. Due process enables many issues to be resolved at the lowest possible level of decision-making.

Student Behavior: Should a parent wish to question/discuss an issue with a Religious Education representative, any employee or volunteer, the following procedure must be followed:

Step One: Please contact the Religious Education representative by phone to discuss the issue. The telephone conversation between the parent and program representative is expected to be courteous, collegial, and cooperative. A plan should be worked out with follow-up calls or face to face meetings as needed.

Step Two: If the behavior is repeated or is beyond the realm of a telephone conversation, a Religious Education Program representative-parent conference may be scheduled by either the representative or the parent. This personal, private and two-way dialogue will be calm and will be collaborative. The content of this meeting is **confidential** on the part of both parties (i.e. parent(s) and program representative(s)).

On any occasion involving a program representative-parent dialogue, especially involving a difference of opinion, the Director of Religious Education or assistant Coordinator may participate at the request of either party. All of these interactions are part of the confidential relationship regarding all student behaviors.

Step Three: If the above procedure has not successfully resolved the matter, or in those instances when one party's behavior is intrusive, inflammatory, or overbearing the following grievance procedure has been developed:

- The director or assistant coordinator will be involved in conferences, upon request, between the parent and program representative on no more than two occasions. He/she will attempt to resolve the difference.
- The second step will be to involve the pastor, director, and the parent in a confidential conference.
- If an additional parent-director-pastor meeting is required due to elements involving the parent's behavior, a decision may be made by the pastor and by the director to deny the continuation of the family's presence in the program.

Spiritual: Our Religious Education Catechists, Administration and Staff recognize that Jesus has called them to the ministry of teaching. In following Jesus, we strive to provide an excellent and caring education for all students. There is a need for parents, the primary religious educators of their children, to constantly search for God in their lives. They are encouraged to:

- walk in the footsteps of Jesus by being an active member of the Parish Community.
- attend weekend Mass with their children.
- be responsible stewards in sharing of time, gift and talent.

Thank You for your continued cooperation.

CURRICULUM

The Religious Education Program of St. Mary Parish uses the series, **Alive in Christ** published by Our Sunday Visitor for **grades 1-6**.

Alive in Christ follows a systematic Scope and Sequence organized around key themes of Catholic teaching that repeat each year within a grade-level focus, building on the child's knowledge of the faith at each developmental stage. It follows a seven unit structure: Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, The Church, Morality, Sacraments, and Kingdom of God, with age appropriate levels for each topic. Progressing from first to sixth grade, the child deepens understanding as he or she is presented content that is theologically precise and developmentally appropriate. It teaches children to know, love, and live their Catholic faith through Sacred Scripture, doctrine, prayer, practices of the faith, and seasonal celebrations. It has been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Alive in Christ follows a three-step process of Invite, Discover, and Live to encourage a personal and ongoing relationship with the Holy Trinity.

- 1.The Invite Step begins the lesson with God's invitation through Sacred Scripture. Children open their minds and hearts to what God is saying to them in Scripture, and reflect on it.
- 2.The Discover Step helps form Catholic identity through the study of Scripture, knowledge of Church teaching, and an understanding of Catholic practices.
- 3.The Live Step helps children relate knowledge of the faith and the ways we worship, live, pray, and serve together as Catholics.

Kindergarten will be using **Allelu** published by Our Sunday Visitor. It nurtures young children's natural tendency to seek a relationship with God, reinforcing a strong sense of community and love. It will familiarize children with the Catholic sacraments, liturgical rituals, symbols, and seasons. It will help form their moral lives, standards, and values. It will teach them how to pray and give them the tools they need to talk about God.

Confirmation Year I and II (Grades 7 & 8) will be using **Chosen** by Ascension Press. This program will take them on a journey through the entire Catholic faith in all its richness and beauty. It will be a powerful and transforming experience for them as they watch videos that were filmed on location throughout the US and internationally featuring top youth experts in the Church.

Grades 7 & 8 will be using the **Youcat**, a youth catechism which is written in language suitable for young people to understand the faith.

Grades 6 will be using **The Catholic Youth Bible**. These Bibles contain four different types of articles which include: Study it!, Pray it!, Live it!, and Catholic Connections. These articles will help them to learn to pray and listen to God's voice while reading the Scriptures. They will help them to make the connection with Scripture and the Catholic faith. They will help them to understand the history and times in which they were written. They will also help to encourage them to live out what God is calling each of us to do.

MASTERY OF CATHOLIC PRAYERS AND BELIEFS SPECIAL EVENTS

<u>GRADE LEVEL</u>	<u>PRAYERS / BELIEFS</u>	<u>SPECIAL EVENTS</u>
Kindergarten	Sign of the Cross Angel of God Glory Be	Bible Stories
1 st	Hail Mary Prayer Before Meals	Bible Stories
2 nd	Morning Offering Our Father	My Prayer Book
3 rd	Act of Contrition Ten Commandments	1 st Reconciliation 1 st Holy Communion
4 th	Seven Sacraments	Ten Commandments
5 th	Eight Beatitudes Apostles' Creed	Vocations
6 th	Nicene Creed	Church Tour
7 th	7 Spiritual Works of Mercy 7 Corporal Works of Mercy	Confirmation Kick Off: Matt Malicki Special Presentation 2 retreats Service Projects Confession
8 th	7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit Prayer to the Holy Spirit	Confirmation Kick Off: Matt Malicki Service Projects Theology of the Body presentation by Fr. Thomas Loya Confession followed by Youth Ministry Welcome Workshop: Fr. John and Fr. Dindo 2 retreats Evening of Reflection/Practice Confirmation Liturgy/Reception