

St. Catherine of Siena

10 N. Pocono Rd.
Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046

Contact Information

Office of Religious Education
973-334-5257

Director of Religious Education
dre@stcatherine-ml.org

Lisa Gervasio

Youth Minister
youthministry@stcatherine-ml.org

Gail Egan

Office Administrator
religiouseducation@stcatherine-ml.org

Linda Caruccio

website - stcatherine-ml.org

Religious Education Policies & Procedures Handbook 2019-2020

“Reflect that God requires nothing else of us except that we show our neighbors the love we have for God.”

-Quote from St. Catherine-
Letter T8

Importance of Prayer

Catechesis is not simply an academic exercise. Students, staff and parents should all actively engage in a personal and communal faith life. Regular prayer and reception of the sacraments, particularly Sunday Mass, is the most important part of our program. Participation in the Sunday liturgy is the first precept of the Church as outlined in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (see no. 2042). Without Christ, all that we do here is wasted.

Communication is most important in the team effort, and therefore we encourage an open line between parents, students, volunteers and staff here at St. Catherine's. We are available for questions, problem solving and encouragement, and it is our hope that this will be reciprocal.

Registration for the religious education program is open to all registered members of St. Catherine of Siena Parish. Students with special needs will be placed into the mainstream when possible. Arrangements will be made to the best of our ability for any child who cannot be placed in the classroom situation.

Diocesan Programs All 1st and 4th grade students, with parental permission, will participate in a class dedicated to learning about “Teaching Touching Safety.” This course is in conjunction with the VIRTUS training that all staff and volunteers must undergo.

Grade 1, 2 & 3 New Format for Religious Education:

The new format is “class attached to Mass”. It will allow families to make a connection from classroom catechesis to Mass. It will meet Sundays at Mass followed by classroom instruction and family catechesis. It will also have Family Faith sessions. You will have a choice of (2) sessions: Section A 9:30am-11am or Section B 11:30am-1pm. Placement will be on a first come, first serve basis. We look forward to celebrating the Eucharist with you, which is the source and summit of the Catholic Faith.

Attendance

Classroom attendance is a requirement for all students. Students in grade 1-6 are allowed 5 absences for the year. Students that are chronically absent from class will be contacted.

Students in grades 7-10 are allowed 3 absences for the year.

Behavior

All students are expected to live up to the Christian values taught by the Catholic Church. All staff and families are freely choosing to participate in this program as a way to live out their call to holiness. First and foremost, all students are called to be respectful and courteous to all teachers, staff, fellow students, and to themselves. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. If a student demonstrates actions contrary to the mission of this program, the parents will need to become involved.

Home Study Program

There will be provisions made for children in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 who cannot make any classes during the year and need to be taught at home or tutored. **Please note: grades 1, 2, 9 and 10 do not have the option of Home Study.** The Home Study is an option, provided that you have indicated this on the registration form of the current religious education year. This option involves working with our text at home and following the schedule distributed at the Home Study Parent Meeting. (You will be notified via email of this meeting a couple of weeks after our in-class instruction begins). During the course of the year, if an emergency arises and there is a need to change to the Home Study option, please contact the Religious Education office.

Home Study Guidelines:

- Parents will be given a textbook. The parent is considered to be the teacher at this point. No child should be working on the material without assistance from an adult.
- Students will need to come to the religious education office once during the school year to show work and progress and meet with the Director. There will also be a final meeting to hand in the book and hand in the take-home assessment.
- When there is a Family Class Mass scheduled for your child's grade, you are invited to attend.

Sacramental Guidelines

- Families are to participate in the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy – the Mass.
- Baptismal certificates must be on file in our office prior to the reception of any sacrament and should be included with any new registrations.
- Diocesan guidelines require at least 2 years of enrollment in religious education prior to the reception of any sacrament.
- A parent meeting is scheduled prior to the beginning of the preparation of any sacrament to answer any questions you may have concerning the theology or celebration of the sacrament.
- Additional fees for Sacraments.

Reconciliation and First Communion

- Classes take place in a classroom setting with sacramental catechesis being covered in class and in conjunction with family involvement.
- Reception of the sacrament normally takes place in the fall for Reconciliation and in the spring for First Communion during the child's second grade.
- A 2-hr. retreat in preparation for First Holy Communion is held in the spring here at St. Catherine's.

Sacramental Guidelines continued

Confirmation

Retreats:

- Diocesan guidelines require a Confirmation retreat. Here at St. Catherine's this is normally in the late summer. If an emergency or illness arises, the student must attend another similar retreat prior to receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. This retreat is the bridge between the ninth and tenth grade programs and begins the final months of preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- 9th grade holds an "in-class" retreat in the fall during regular class time.

Christian Service:

- Upon entering 9th grade, we ask our students to seek out and engage in several opportunities to serve both the community of St. Catherine and the wider community.
- Students must maintain a "Christian service log" recording their service hours.
- Students will submit a "reflection paper" discussing their experience of Christian service as well as elaborate on their chosen Confirmation Name.

Interviews:

- In 9th grade we will discuss ideas for Christian service, as well as review goals, attendance, behavior and discipleship.
- In the spring of 10th grade the final interview will be conducted with the pastor, youth minister or director. The candidate must be able to articulate his/her faith during the interview and submit their Christian service criteria.

Drop Offs/Pick Ups

All students should be dropped off and picked up at the Parish Center

Grades 4-6:

- Enter through the gym doors
- Dismissal is from the gym for grades 4-6
- Grades 4 & 5 classes are from 4-5:15pm/Grade 6 classes are from 7-8:15pm. Parents please come into the gym to pick-up your child.

Grades 7 & 8:

- Students enter through the Parish Center (near the education office); classes begin at 7:30pm
- Dismissal is from the conference room in the Parish Center. Parents please come in to pick-up your child. Classes dismiss at 9pm.

Grades 9 & 10:

- Enter and dismiss through the Parish Center (near the education office)
- Classes run from 7:30pm-9pm

If a student needs to leave early a parent needs to come into the education office and sign them out.

Calendar/Class Closures:

The schedule of classes for the year is available on the parish website. All dates and times are subject to change due to weather or other unforeseen parish events. Should it become necessary to close unexpectedly, we will make every effort to leave a message on the religious education voicemail under inclement weather, as well as post notifications on our website at stcatherine-ml.org and our Flocknote communication system. All religious education classes will be cancelled anytime Mountain Lakes School District cancels due to inclement weather.

All policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook are subject to change at any time at the discretion of the pastor or the director of religious education.

Rev. Jared J. Brogan

Reverend Jared J. Brogan
Pastor

Lisa Ann Gervasio

Lisa Ann Gervasio
Director of Religious Education