

St. Catherine of Siena

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Religious Education Policies & Procedures Handbook 2021-2022

“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. After the July 31ST deadline, there will be a change fee of \$50 for modifications made for In class/Home Study. 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 will be provided with information on “Empowering God’s Children.” This course is in conjunction with the VIRTUS training and a Diocesan mandate.

Grade 1-5 "Class Attached to Mass" format for Religious Education:

This 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 days. You will have a choice of (2) sessions on Sundays: 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 that are chronically absent from class will be contacted.

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. This option involves working with our text at home and following the schedule provided. **Please note: grades 1, 2, 9 and 10 do not have the option of Home Study.**

Home Study Guidelines:

- Grades 3-6 will be given an e-book. Grades 7 & 8 will be given a text book. 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 come to the religious education office during the school year to review their progress.

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.

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.

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 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

Grades 6: Time – 7:00pm-7:45pm

- Enter through the gym doors
- Dismissal is from the gym at 7:45pm. Parents need to come into the gym for dismissal

Grades 7 & 8: Time – 7:30pm-9pm

- Students enter through the Parish Center (near the education office) and gather in the Conf. Room
- Dismissal is from the conference room in the Parish Center. Parents please come in to pick-up your child.

Grades 9 & 10: Time – 7:30pm-9pm

- Enter and dismiss through the Parish Center (near the education office)

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. Michael J. Parisi

Reverend Michale J. Parisi
Pastor

Lisa Ann Gervasio

Lisa Ann Gervasio
Director of Religious Education