

Religious Education Policies 2020-2021

Covid-19 Information and Guidelines: Religious Education Classes, Sacrament Preparation, and Youth Groups will be held in person with certain Guidelines as per the instruction of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. If you decline in person classes because of health and safety reasons, please contact Ethan Weltens at eweltens@stmarysmaail.com or 830-997-9523 to discuss for online or parent taught classes. The guidelines for the year will be as follows:

1. **Physical distancing:** Students will be distanced as much as possible in the classrooms. The Classes which tend to be the largest (1st Communion and Confirmation Preparation Classes), will be in the Holy Family Center and/or the SMS cafeteria in order to spread out properly. Please see the list of class times for details.
2. **Limit of 15 Students for non-Sacrament Preparation Classes:** All non-sacrament preparation classes which take place in the Elementary building will be **capped at 15 students** to enable distancing. The non-sacrament preparation classes include Kindergarten, 3rd Grade, 4th Grade, and 5th Grade. Registration for these classes will be on a first come, first serve basis. If any students are not able to attend a class because it has reached the 15 student limit, then they will be given the option to take the class online. Sacrament preparation classes will not be capped since they will be in a separate building with more space.
3. **Masks/Face Coverings:** Catechists and students in grades 3-12 will be asked to wear a mask/face covering during the sessions and K-2nd are encouraged to wear a mask. Face coverings may include homemade masks, scarfs, bandanas or a handkerchief. Families will be responsible for providing their own mask/face covering. Face coverings are not required when outside, exercising or engaging in physical activity, consuming food or drink, or when it poses a greater mental or physical health or safety risk to the person.
4. **Sanitation:** Surfaces and common touch points will be disinfected after each class. Shared materials and physical contact will be avoided. Hand sanitizer will be available for students to use.
5. **Self-Screening for Covid-19 Symptoms:** Parents will be asked to screen their children for any Covid-19 symptoms. Symptoms include: cough, temperature of 100+, chills, muscle pain, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, headache, trouble breathing, persistent pain/pressure in chest, confusion/disorientation, fatigue, bluish lips/face, shivering, gastro-intestinal issues including nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. If a child exhibits any symptoms or comes into contact with anyone who has been infected with Covid-19, then they should stay home and contact a medical professional. They should then contact Ethan Weltens for further instructions about Religious Education Classes.
6. **Positive Covid-19 Test:** Students with a positive Covid-19 test should stay home and consult a medical professional until symptoms subside for 72 hours without medication or is given clearance from a physician. **Campus Outbreak:** If at any time there is an outbreak of positive Covid-19 cases amongst Religious Education Students, then classes will move online for at least one session.

PLEASE NOTE: These guidelines are subject to change so please monitor your email for any updates that may occur.

Parent and Student Policies

Parents are the students' primary teachers of the Catholic faith. The best way for your children to learn is by attending Mass each weekend, attending class regularly, completing required homework assignments, studying for tests, and most importantly, by following your example of living the Catholic faith daily.

What is St. Mary's Religious Education about?

The religious education program is a parish and family based program geared towards teaching our children the beautiful truths of the Catholic faith in a safe, structured learning environment. We hope to foster in our children a deeper faith and a personal relationship with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

What classes are available to my child?

Kinder, 3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th Grade (Sunday 8:30-9:45 a.m.)	Elementary Building
1 st Comm. Classes: 1 st and 2 nd Grade (Sunday 11:15am – 12:30pm)	Holy Family Center
2nd Grade A (1st year Comm. Prep.) (Sunday 11:15am-12:30pm)	St. Mary's School Cafeteria
3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th Grade Communion Class: (Sunday 8:30-9:45am)	St. Mary's School Cafeteria
Middle School Youth Group 6 th -8 th Gr. Edge (Tues. 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m.)	Holy Family Center
High School Youth Group 9 th -12 th Life Teen (Wed. 6:30-8 p.m.)	Holy Family Center
Confirmation Classes 10 th -11 th Grade (Sun 8:30-9:45a.m.)	Holy Family Center
Class for Unbaptized Children over age 7 (Wed. 6pm-7:15pm)	Holy Family Center

What are the fees for enrolling my student?

One student	\$40
Two students	\$60
Three or more students	\$80

No child will be denied catechesis due to financial need. If you need a financial assistance, please contact Ethan Weltens at 830-997-9523.

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1.) To register a student, we must receive complete payment of the registration fee.**
- 2.) All sacrament students must turn in a copy of their Baptismal Certificate at the time of registration, unless the student was baptized at St. Mary's.**
- 3.) Families must be registered members of St. Mary's parish, (forms are available at the office.)**
- 4.) No child will be admitted to class without completed registration paperwork.**

What is the Disciplinary Policy for Students?

One of the hindrances to a pleasant and inviting atmosphere is the student who repeatedly is a disruptive influence on the class. In order to insure a comfortable learning atmosphere for all students, we have established and abide by the following policy:

- Students must agree to abide by the classroom rules given out on the first day of class. Parents also must consent to the enforcement of these rules.
- Any breaking of the classroom rules can result in a violation warning.
- After two warnings, a student can receive a two month suspension from religious education classes. Please keep in mind that if a student misses more than six classes, they will not pass.
- A student can be expelled from religious education if he/she receives another violation after being suspended or commits an infraction of the rules that is very serious.

What is the Attendance Policy for Students?

For any student who wishes to grow and mature in the spiritual life, attendance at all classes is desirable. For students to move up to the next grade level, they must attend a minimum of 75% of the classes, and pass all required tests. We believe that the religious education of our parish youngsters is a high priority, and we urge parents to see to it that their students are present each week for the entire class time, except in the case of an emergency. *Sports and other after-school events are not considered emergencies.*

What is the Dress Code for Religious Education Classes?

All pants must be worn at the waist; no shorts or short skirts are allowed. Clothing that is excessively revealing is unacceptable. This includes the following: halter tops, tube tops, muscle shirts, clothing that shows bare midriff, and transparent or see through clothing.

Boys: Collared shirts, dress slacks, and dress shoes are preferred. No t-shirts with excessive or inappropriate writing should be worn. Nice jeans and tennis shoes are acceptable.

Girls: Dress blouse with dress slacks or Church dress is preferred (nothing tight, low cut, or too short). Dress shoes preferred (no slides, no flip-flops, no mules, no heels above 2"). No t-shirts with excessive or inappropriate writing should be worn. Nice jeans and tennis shoes are acceptable.

Electronics

Anyone found using a cell phone, iPod, mp3 player, or other electronic device during large group presentations, small group class, community service projects, prayer sessions, retreats, and activity nights, will have said device confiscated for the duration of the event. Parents, we always allow students to use the phone to call in an emergency.

When will my student be allowed to receive sacraments for the first time?

The Diocese of San Antonio and St. Mary's Parish require two consecutive years of religious education before sacraments can be received. Sacraments are normally received in the spring of the second year of religious education, provided all requirements are met.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

If your student is not baptized:

Elementary students must attend the appropriate grade level classes and attend Sunday Mass. Please contact the DRE, Ethan Weltens, for further details regarding the Christian initiation process.

If your student is baptized:

First-Year Classes:

Regular attendance and participation in class, as well as attendance at the weekly Celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy, are necessary to complete this first year. Late arrival for class, especially on a regular basis, and early withdrawal for any reason, are a distraction for catechists and students alike. If a student must be absent, it is the parent's responsibility to pick up class materials and see that appropriate lessons are completed and returned to the catechist. Inform the Religious Education Office in the event of the student's absence so the catechist can prepare materials for you to use at home. Missed assignments can be picked up in the Religious Education Office. A student who misses more than six scheduled classes must begin the preparation classes again from the beginning (September) of the next year.

Second Year:

Upon completion of the first year of religious education, your student is eligible to begin preparation for Sacraments. The same attendance requirements apply for the second year of preparation. (see above first-year requirements).

Under normal circumstances, attendance at Sunday Mass is required for parents and students in first and second year sacrament classes. Since the Covid-19 Pandemic, Archbishop Gustavo has given a dispensation which lifted the requirement to attend Mass every Sunday, especially those who are elderly or have a preexisting medical condition. That being said, it is still crucial for everyone to go to Mass if possible, and the requirement for Sacrament preparation students to attend Mass will be put in place as soon as the dispensation from the Bishop is lifted.

Pick up and drop off the Elementary and Jr. High students:

- Parents need to walk their students to their classrooms prior to the start of class. Students must be signed in and parents must make sure a catechist is present before leaving.
- No students are to be unsupervised in the parking lot, classrooms, or playground area.
- Parents need to pick up their students at the assigned time. Students will not be allowed to leave without a parent or a pre-arranged adult.
- Students need to be picked up on time from the classroom.