

August 17, 2021

Dear Our Lady and Saint Ann Religious Ed Parents,

Hello! And welcome back to what we hope will be a fairly normal year. Hopefully, the worst of our pandemic woes are behind us.

And on that subject, we want to assure you that we will be taking precautions in the classrooms to protect one another from the spread of the virus. I will share with you a quote that I received from our diocesan office: "... your plan is sounding good with masks for all, distancing at least 3 feet apart, and continuing to promote handwashing and such. I would only add to do all you can to have the best ventilation (opening windows when possible, keeping doors open, etc.)."

As you look over the calendar you will see that classes are starting a week later than previous years, on September 19th. We will have classes into May and, with holiday breaks and Sundays off, this will total 26 classes, which is the diocesan requirement.

As Father Raj indicated in the spring, we will be having a monthly RE Mass, with the year beginning and ending with a Catechetical Mass. On Sunday, September 19, all parents are to be present in the social hall at 9:45 for a meeting with Father Raj (during RE classes).

A couple of new things this year - the Knights of Columbus will be hosting breakfast for the First Communion students and their families on October 10th. (This will be our first Sunday that we do not have class.) Also, we plan to have a celebration for the children on Wednesday evening, December 29th, in the RE classrooms.. This is being offered as an opportunity to gather the children during the Christmas season and, as it is a party, attendance is optional. We will, however, have a short lesson on the Nativity (maybe a video), followed by cookies, milk, and other goodies. We will also have Christmas music, games, crafts, and just a generally good time! We understand that you may be away during Christmas break; others may find that their kids are becoming bored at home and would welcome an "evening out" for them.

We will host RE Stations of the Cross the second Friday of Lent, March 11th. As we have done in the past, it will begin with a Simple Supper in the social hall. This has become a very popular event and we are so glad to have students and their families and all parishioners participate.

There will be four classes in March because there are only two classes in April. We will also hold our annual Lenten Hygiene Drive to benefit the food pantry. This does so much to aid the community and I know it is greatly appreciated.

We are starting something new by having First Communion on Good Shepherd Sunday. This is always three weeks after Easter Sunday (or the Fourth Sunday of Easter) and the liturgy for that Mass is so beautifully fitting for our “lambs.” The date for this celebration will vary since the date for Easter Sunday varies from year to year. As there are two more classes after May 8th, our First Communicants will have the opportunity to identify with their older peers in religious ed. Hopefully it will be in their minds that, “I’m one of the big kids now. I’m growing up and it’s time to mature in my faith.” This identity growth is an important part of this rite of passage.

We are welcoming a new catechist this year. Wren Hershberger will be teaching sixth grade. Wren is from the Cassopolis area and we are very glad to have her working with our religious education children. John and Patty Gremaux resigned from teaching RE and we appreciate all they have given of themselves to RE over the past 15 or so years.

We are hosting a hospitality weekend at Our Lady after all Masses on August 28th and 29th. We hope that you will spend a little time after Mass enjoying some refreshments and getting better acquainted with other parishioners. This could be an especially good time to meet other RE parents. You can also turn in your registration form to me at any of these receptions.

As always, we will be looking for your full and consistent participation in your religious ed program. Children should be in attendance every week unless they are ill. If your child must miss a class, please let me know by calling (269) 699-5870, ext. 132, or emailing [religiouseducationlol@gmail.com](mailto:religiouseducationlol@gmail.com). Your dedication to your children’s faith formation is essential and appreciated.

We look forward to seeing you for our new RE year. God bless you for all that you do for your family, and for the good that you bring wherever you find yourself in the community.

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