

St. Thomas More Parish

Religious Education

Parent/Student Handbook



Religious Education Administration

Reverend Michael J. Yadron, Pastor

Reverend Jordan Fetcko Associate Pastor

Miss Emily Hackett, Director of Religious Education

Mrs. Rosemary Strimbu, Administrative Assistant

8501 Calumet Avenue

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(219) 836-8610

www.stm-church.com

from the director...

September 6, 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Please allow me to express my gratitude in serving the St. Thomas More Community. The opportunity to share in the faith lives of your children, as maturing Catholics, is a privilege. Together with parents, it is our goal in the Religious Education Office to foster personal and spiritual growth within each young person attending our Religious Program. To accomplish this goal, we need to walk this faith journey united as a community.

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.”(CCC 2223) *“Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.” (CCC 2226)

It is our responsibility, as mature Catholics to help empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. Our baptismal call is to educate and draw the youth to participate in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith.

Most of us have questions about the Catholic faith. This is true whether we are Catholics from infant baptism or converts from another faith. The faith formation program provides opportunities to find answers to these questions.

Our hope is to meet your family where you are on this faith journey and walk with you as you take your next step. Our goal is to serve you on this endeavor in Christ. Please do not hesitate to call or email. If I can render any assistance to you, I will do so happily.

May God Bless You and Yours,

Miss Emily Hackett
Director of Religious Education
ehackett@stm-school.com
219 836-8610 ext.332

Mission Statement

St. Thomas More Religious Education fulfills its commitment to every person through:

- Welcoming all to share the Good News of Jesus
- Instructing the baptized in Sacred Scripture and Tradition
- Encouraging family participation at Mass
- Helping families to develop a deeper prayer life at home
- Fostering Christian maturity
- Inviting non-baptized to seek baptism in the Catholic faith
- Embracing cultural diversity
- Nurturing catechists in education ministry
- Creating a safe environment in which to know, love and serve the Lord.

Policies of STM Religious Education

Family life in Christ:

Establishing a relationship with Jesus is an important aspect of your child's growth in faith. By asking your child to quietly and privately spend a few minutes a day with Jesus, you will enhance their faith life.

Additionally, through example of saying grace at the dinner table and the Hail Mary, Our Father or Glory Be at bedtime, good prayer habits are nurtured.

Liturgy and Prayer life:

Family participation at Sunday Mass is an obligation and opportunity to thank God for His many blessings on your family. Through worshipping as a faith community, we build our spiritual life as God's people. By maintaining a rhythm of attending Sunday Mass, we create a steadfast faith life. Children tend to follow the example of parental role models. If you want your children to attend Mass when they are older, it is wise to form a rhythm with them now!

Sacramental Preparation

Parent meetings for Candidates preparing for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation are mandatory. Meeting dates will be published in the bulletin and on the Religious Education calendar **The date for Confirmation will be announced as soon as the Bishop notifies us.**

All information for Sacraments will be distributed and discussed at the parent meeting.

Policies of STM Religious Education

Sacramental Preparation

Students are required to receive two years of catechesis prior to receiving a sacrament. For example, an 8th grade Confirmation candidate must have completed 6th and 7th grade catechesis and be currently enrolled in 8th grade catechesis. First Communion candidates must have completed 1st and 2nd grade catechesis and be currently enrolled in 3rd grade catechesis. Students must be baptized in the Roman Catholic faith. If your child is behind in Religious Studies please call our office. We can help your student.

Dress Code:

Students are expected to be dressed appropriately for class. STM does not allow clothing which would denote any affiliation with gang associations. This includes, but is not limited to, colors, clothing, earrings, hair styles, gestures, or signs.

Attendance & Tardiness:

Please call the Religious Education Office at 836-8610 ext. 336 if your child will be absent. Students should not miss **an extended number of classes** within the school year. Students are required to be in the classroom at 4:30. Students who receive 3 unexcused absences per semester and their parent will be required to meet with the director before returning to class. **It is the policy of Saint Thomas More Religious Education that students are not permitted to skip or miss grades. For example, a student must complete grades 1-3 before they can be placed in 4th.**

Bullying:

Bullying behavior is not allowed at St. Thomas More.

Policies of STM Religious Education

Bully Free Zone

We strive to provide a safe environment for all students. Every student has the right to learn their faith without fear of threat, injury or violence (physical harm to another person).

Discipline policies may vary upon the circumstances. The pastor and director have final recourse in all discipline cases. The following are considered bullying behaviors: pushing others around, calling others names, spreading rumors, talking behind others backs, excluding others from your group, writing unkind notes about others, telling people not to like someone, bossing others, hitting, kicking or hurting others laughing at others in a mean way, sexual harassment, cell phone bullying or cyber bullying this includes “facebook and twitter” bullying.

Bullying May Result in withdrawal from St. Thomas More Religious Education Program.

Discipline:

Parents are a wonderful source of positive motivation and reinforcement for student cooperation. Please continue to positively reinforce the need for productive behavior. A big thank you, in advance, for your help in forming a safe and positive environment.

In accordance with our Catholic values and mission statement, we promote respect for others, self and property of others at all times. Student’s conduct should be formed by Christian values. Expected behavior, but not limited to these, are full participation in the STM religious education program, respect for catechists, aides, monitors and all helpers. Maintaining appropriate behavior during the class time, using appropriate language and mannerisms when addressing any adult or a fellow student, as well as

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Policies of STM Religious Education

school and personal property and refraining from the possession of weapons or potentially harmful (or illegal) substances of any kind. Students are expected to observe STM policies as well as classroom procedures (determined by catechists). A student's failure to observe these will result in disciplinary action.

Very serious situations are determined on a case by case basis by the Director and Pastor. Some, but not limited to, are as follows: bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, physical injury, vandalism, possession of illegal substances, weapons of any kind, fighting, gang behavior. These can be grounds for immediate removal from our program.

If a student is a victim of bullying they should report the bullying to a parent, teacher or the director. If you are afraid to report bullying in person you may send an email to Miss Hackett or Mrs. Strimbu in the office. This will be taken seriously.

Cell Phones:

Cell phones are never to be used in the classroom for texting, emailing or talking. If a cell phone is used during class it will be retrieved from the student and a parent will be required to pick it up from the Director.

Cancellation of Class:

If classes are canceled, an announcement will be made over WJOB 1230AM radio. The Munster schools are also notified.

Dismissal:

Children's safety is a primary concern. Grades K-4 are dismissed at 5:55 pm and grades 5-8 are dismissed at 6:00 pm.

It is important that your student is picked up on time! When you are late, students become worried and office workers are detained.

Early Dismissal:

Rare occasions should occur to cause your student to leave class early. If this happens, send a note to the catechist stating time of pick up, reason and signature of parent must be included. **Parents must come into the office to pick up the student on an early dismissal. Students will meet the parents in the office.**

Policies of STM Religious Education

Illness or injury at school:

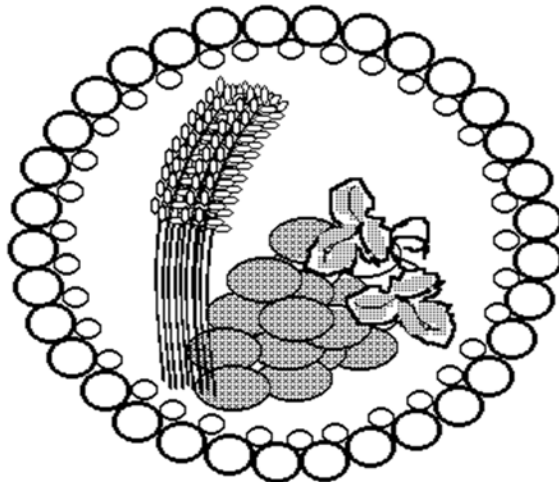
If a student becomes ill or injured at school, the parent or guardian is called. If a parent is not available, the person listed as the emergency contact will be notified. **It is important to update your phone numbers.**

Guardianship: A child will be released to their parent unless the Office has a copy of a court order giving one parent sole custody.

Books: Students receive their books the first day of class. Students are responsible for their books. Replacement books cost \$30.00.

Grade Placement: Students are **not** allowed to skip grade levels. A child must have completed all previous grade levels of religious education before entering a new one.

Homeschool agreements for catechism are available on a discretionary basis to accommodate and supplement classes. The director must approve these agreements. Homeschooling is **not** permitted during Sacramental preparation years. (3rd and 8th)



Students will learn to form a personal relationship with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They will learn to choose a Christian way of life regarding human dignity and life.

We are transitioning to the Faith and Life Series, beginning with 1st, 2nd and 4th grades. Other grades will use the Faith and Life Series.

Kindergarten: God Loves Us: Learning, growing, sharing and celebrating God's love.

Grade One: Our Heavenly Father: Introduction to the Holy Trinity through presentations on God the Father, the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's plan of salvation and our part in that plan. Acquaints children with Mary, angels, and the saints.

Grade Two: Jesus Our Life: Preparation for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. The lesson emphasizes God's mercy and love. Covers Creation, the Covenant with Moses, the Ten Commandments, Redemption, Forgiveness of Sins, and the Mass.

Grade Three: We Believe: God's Holy People, First Penance Preparation, First Communion Preparation

Grade Four: Jesus Our Guide: God's plan to save his people from sin (Salvation History), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us in our pilgrimage on earth to Heaven through his word, his law, and his Church.

Grade Five: Credo: I Believe: A thorough study of the articles of the Creed as the basic belief of our Catholic faith, with a special emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, and the prophets, and the prayers of the Church.

Grade Six: God Calls a People: Old Testament Studies, Jesus as the Fulfillment

Grade Seven: Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life: Living a Life of Faith, Hope and Love, Understanding Jesus' Words and Actions, God's Unconditional Love, A Way of Peace and Happiness, Jesus Reveals the Truth about God, Jesus' Promise of Divine and Eternal Life

Grade Eight: Church Then and Now: Church, Catholic Truths, Confirmation Preparation



and Now: The Four Marks of the Church, Loyalty to Christ, Mature Christianity,

**Religious Education Schedule 2017-2018 4:30
-6:00 pm**

September

6/7 First Religious Education Class

13/14 Class

19 Parent Confirmation Meeting 7:00pm in

CHURCH

20/21 Class

27/28 Class

October

4/5 Class – 5:00 pm **Mass (Confirmation Commitment)**

11/12 Class

17 Parent First Penance/Communion Meeting 7:00

pm, in CHURCH

18/19 Class

22 – Family Formation session 1-2pm in the gym

25/26 – No Class-Fall Break

November

1/2 –No Class – All Saints Day Holy Day of Obliga-

tion

8/9 Class

15/16 Class

22/23 No Class – Thanksgiving Break

29/30-Class

December

5 TUESDAY Confirmation Retreat- All 8th Graders

8:15 a.m.-2:30p.m. Gym

6/7 Class

13/14 Class

20/21No Class Christmas Break

27/28 No Class- Happy New Year!

January

3/4 No Class Christmas Break

10/11 Class

17/18 Class

21 – Family Formation session 1-2 in gym

24/25 Class

31 Class

February

1 Class

7/8 Class

14/15- No Class – Ash Wednesday

21/22 Class

28 Class

March

1 Class

3- First Penance 10am in Church

7/8 Class

11-Family Formation session 1-2pm in gym

14/15 Class

21/22 Class

28/29 No Class – Spring Break

April

4/5 Class

11/12 Class

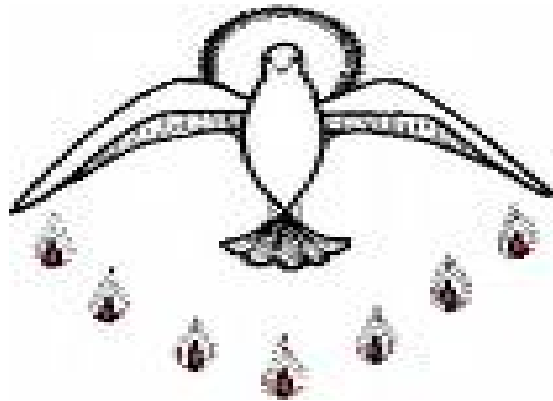
18/19 Class

25/26 Last Class

May

2/3 Communion practices. Both classes attend both nights

5 First Holy Communion 10am Mass



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