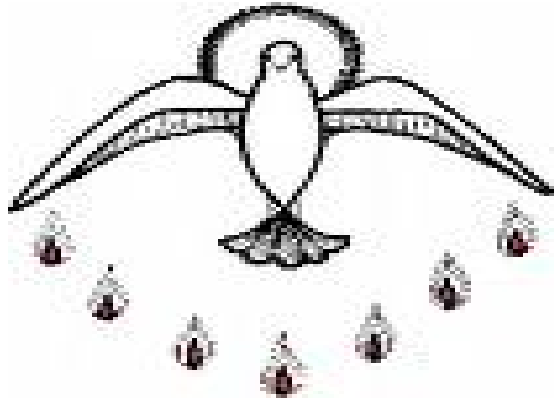
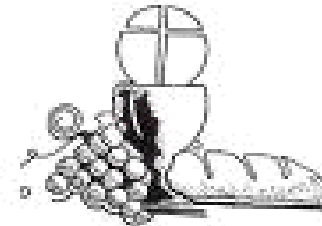


St. Thomas More Parish Religious Education



**Parent/Student Handbook
2014-2015**

**Saint Thomas More Parish
Religious Education**



8501 Calumet Ave.
Munster, IN 46321
(219) 836-8610

Religious Education Administration
Reverend Michael J. Yadron, Pastor
Reverend Ted Mauch, Associate Pastor
Miss Emily Hackett, Director of Religious Education
Mrs. Carolyn McGill, Administrative Assistant
8501 Calumet Avenue
Munster, In 46321
(219) 836-8610

www.stm-church.com

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

February

4/5 Class

11/12 Class

14 – **Sacrament of First Penance 9:30 in Church**

18/19 No Class – Ash Wednesday

25/26 – Class

March

4/5 Class

11/12 Class

18/19 Class

25/26 No Class – Spring Break

April

1/2 No Class- Holy Week

8/9 Class

15/16 Class

22/23 Class

29/30 Last Class for all except First Communicants

May

6/7 First Holy Communion Practice

Wednesday classes practice on Wednesday 4:30-6:00

Thursday classes practice on Thursday 4:30-6:00

13/14 All Communicants must attend both days 4:30-6:00

16 First Holy Communion 10 a.m. Mass



Religious Education Schedule 2014-2015

4:30 pm—6:00 pm

September

3/4 First Religious Education Class

10/11 Class

17/18 Class

18 Parent Confirmation Meeting 7:00 pm, Gym

24/25 Class

October

1/2 Class – 5:00 pm **Mass (Confirmation Commitment)**

8/9 Class

9 Parent First Penance/Communion Meeting 7:00 pm, Gym

15/16 Class

22/23 Class

29/30 – Class

November

5/6 Class

12/13 Class

19/20 Class

26/27 No Class – Thanksgiving Break

December

3/4 Class

9 TUESDAY Confirmation Retreat- All 8th Graders

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

10/11 Class

17/18 Class

24/25 No Class Christmas Break

31 No Class- Happy New Year!



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.

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 use the Christ Our Life series of Catechism books. As spiritual curriculum, each year builds upon the past and prepares for the upcoming year.

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

Grade One: God is Good: God as Father, Jesus as Friend, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit, Understanding Baptism

Grade Two: God Cares for Us: Understanding Reconciliation and Eucharist

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

Grade Four: God Guides Us: Live in Eternity, Commandments, Beatitudes, Appreciation of Sacraments,

Grade Five: We Worship: Liturgy, Prayer, and Service, Understanding the Mass

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: The Four Marks of the Church, Catholic Truths, Loyalty to Christ, Mature Christianity, Confirmation Preparation



Policies of STM Religious Education

Illness or injury at school:

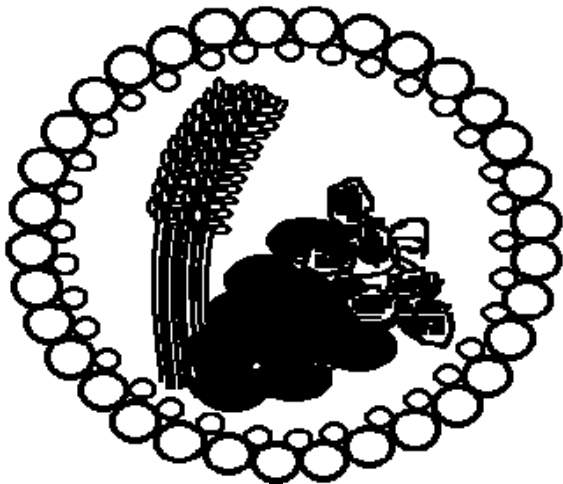
If a student becomes ill or injured at school, the parent or guardian is called. If a parent is not available, the person listed as the emergency contact will be notified. **It is important to update your phone numbers.**

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)



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 should be ill. Students should not miss **an extended number of classes** within the school year. Students are required to be in the classroom at 4:30. Severe **tardiness and or absenteeism** could result in repeating the 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:

Bully 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

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. McGill 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 5:57 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.**