

**THE CATHOLIC PARISHES OF
ST. FRANCIS AND ST. JOHN
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK
2016-17: Pre-K – 5th Grades**



CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY HANDBOOK

Preface

An effective religious education program is essential to proper formation of young people in their Catholic faith. For those who are born into the Catholic Church, and those whose families join the Church when children are young, thorough knowledge of the teachings of the Church must be gained during childhood. This helps to assure that the faith will be an integral part of the lives of Catholics when they become adults. **Parents make a commitment to the education of their children in the faith at the time that they present them for Baptism. Thus, the primary responsibility for education of children in the Catholic faith rests with parents.** However, the Catholic Religious Education Program offered through the parishes of Stillwater should have an important role in supporting the educational efforts of parents. Ideally, the Religious Education Department and parents should cooperate closely in this educational program. The service of parents who volunteer as religious education instructors is invaluable. It is essential that parents make every possible effort to enroll their children in classes and make certain that they attend regularly. Also, it is important that parents, who are not able to serve as volunteers, **attend and participate in religious education classes with their children at least once during each semester (fall and spring).**

Registration

All families must be registered with the Religious Education Department in order for children to participate in religious education classes and programs. Registration for families/students will be conducted annually during the month of August. Children must reach the age of 4 years by September 1 to enter the Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Program. Children in Grade 1 and above will normally be enrolled in classes corresponding to their grade in school. There will be no charge assessed for enrollment of children in any of the religious education classes.

Children with special needs are welcome in religious education classes. Individual consideration will be given to meet the particular needs of each child. Parents of children with special needs are encouraged to consult with the Coordinator of Religious Education to determine the best means to serve these children.

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5 Curriculum

The curricula that are used for each grade level have received approval from the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB). For the Pre- K/Kindergarten class the curriculum is lectionary-based, and follows the liturgical calendar. The content of the Gospel reading serves as the primary source for the classroom lesson each week. The text/workbooks for Grades 1-5 are from the *Be My Disciples* series that have as their primary source the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Pre-k and Kindergarten will use the *Allelu* curriculum. This curriculum is outlined in a series of books that are age- specific and

provide a balance between doctrine, scripture, and celebrations that occur throughout the Liturgical Year. The primary emphasis of this series is to initiate the children into the community of faith and plant the seeds of discipleship through Scripture, doctrine, and prayer. The series presents the Catholic faith in a stimulating format that is easy to read and understand.

VIRTUS Child Safety Program

The Diocese of Tulsa requires that children K-2nd and 3-5th each attend one class per year designated for a VIRTUS child safety program. The details of this program will be given to each family well in advance of the class and curriculum will be available for parents. Parents will have the option of opting children out of the program. However, attendance is encouraged as the information is designed to help children recognize those people and situations that may cause them harm.

Class Attendance

Class sessions for Pre-K through Grade 5 are scheduled **from 11:15 AM to 12:30 PM on Sunday at St Francis Catholic Center**. Parents are asked to insure that children arrive and are in their classrooms by this time. However, it is important that students **not arrive for classes before 11:15AM** because teacher volunteers will not receive and supervise the children until classes begin. Parents should pick children up after classes have ended, by no later than **12:40 PM**. If a child needs to be dismissed early, parents of the child must notify the class instructor (or the Coordinator of Religious Education) when the

child is brought to class.

Attendance records are kept for all religious education classes. Please call the office and leave a message if your children will be absent. Although regular class attendance is important for all children, it is particularly critical for those who are preparing to receive, for the first time, the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion (normally, children in Grade 2). Children who are planning to receive these sacraments must attend 80% of the classes, which means no more than 5 classes may be missed. **When children in the First Communion class have more than two unexcused absences, parents will be contacted by the CRE to discuss means for improving attendance and making-up class work that has been missed in order to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.**

Safe Arrival and Departure from Classes

When bringing children to classes, or picking them up after classes, parents must park either in the lot next to the school (entering from the east side and departing from the west side) or next to the church across the street from the school. In either case, parents should escort their children into the school before classes and from the school to their vehicle when classes are dismissed. **Under no circumstances should parents stop on West Street between the church and the school to drop off or to pick-up children!! This creates a serious hazard to the safety of the children!!**

Children in Pre-K/Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 must be **signed-in** as they are brought to their classrooms by parents or **siblings that**

are above 5th grade before the session begins, and signed-out when they are picked-up at the end of each class session.

Classroom Management

An important aspect of religious education is teaching children to be respectful in word and action, to one-another and to adults who are serving as their instructors. Respect and consideration for other persons are important aspects of Christian life that should be learned at an early age. At the beginning of each school year, children will be informed regarding appropriate behavior during the class sessions. If a student exhibits inappropriate behavior that disrupts the class or shows disrespect for instructors or other students, he/she first will be given a verbal warning. Under no circumstances should an instructor touch/physically discipline a student. If a student continues to exhibit inappropriate behavior after several warnings, he/she should be escorted to the Religious Education Office, and placed under the supervision of the Coordinator, who will discuss with the student the necessity for improving behavior. (Note: A classroom should never be left unsupervised while a student is escorted to the office.) The student will remain in the office for a period of 'time-out' away from class. If a student is sent to the office to address a disciplinary issue, the student's name and a description of the incident will be recorded and kept on file. Parents of the student will be informed in a timely manner (at the end of the class session or soon thereafter) on any occasion when it is necessary for a student to be sent to the office. If the disruptive behavior continues, parents may be required to attend class with their child in hopes of improving the issues. In the event

that a student is engaged in fighting or destructive behavior, parents will be notified and a meeting will be arranged with the Coordinator to discuss effective remedies for this behavior.

All students must be dressed appropriately Toys should be left at home. Cell phones must remain in pockets.