



The Office of Religious Education
310 Pulaski Street (Convent)
Bridgeport, CT 06608
Director: Melodie Noga
Tel. (475) 319-5982

email: SMAFAITHFORM@OPTIMUM.NET

Office hours: By appointment or most Saturday's 10-11am



St. Michael the Archangel Parish
Diocese of Bridgeport, Connecticut
Youth Faith Formation



TO TEACH AS JESUS DID

A PRAYER FOR PARENTS & CATECHISTS

*Merciful God, please give us the strength to change
whatever needs changing in us
so we can lead these children of yours, and ours,
to become the great men and women you had in mind
when you entrusted them to our care.*

We are in this together

We owe our gratitude to the Catechists who give their faith, commitment and volunteer their time to your children and to the religious education program in our parish. Religious education is not just another academic subject or after-school activity. It is part of your child's religious formation. No catechist can accomplish anything without your help, support and involvement. "You should therefore, take serious interest in your children's catechetical instruction to the point of sacrifice if necessary. No study of theirs is more important to them or to you. The destiny of their souls depends on it. Taking a serious interest means, among other things, growing in your faith along with your children. It means reading along with them, looking over their shoulders and answering their questions. It means *you* teach them as you go along together. Though you may *delegate* some instruction to the catechists, you do not *relegate* it. People outside the family may support your efforts, but not substitute for them. Most really important lessons are learned at home, from one's parents, or they are not learned at all. Treat this responsibility then, like all your other vital family duties."* We invite all parents to take an active role in the religious education program beginning with meeting and assisting your child's catechist. We encourage parents to recognize in the catechist, someone who has answered a call to bear witness to Christ in your child's life.

A* From LifeLine: The Religious Upbringing of Your Children by James Stenson
September 2001

means for them to witness God's gifts of love in action. It is because of this that families are required to take an active part in their child's sacramental preparation.

1st Holy Communion

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion begins in Grade 2 and immediate preparation takes place in Grade 3.

Confirmation

Confirmation preparation begins in the 7th grade and ends in the spring of 8th grade. All candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation must seriously reflect on their decision to receive the sacrament, cooperate fully with the parish program and participate in the learning sessions and spiritual opportunities offered by the parish and attend weekend and Holyday Masses regularly. The candidates must also show a sincere desire to receive the Sacrament and to live as Christ and His Church teaches. As part of the two year Confirmation curriculum, students will complete mandatory community service hours in both 7th & 8th grade.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Within the mission of the Church, for programs to be fruitful and successful many volunteers are needed. No one or two people can possibly be responsible for all aspects of the program. So that the burden does not rest upon a few generous giving volunteers, parents of religious education students are asked to volunteer services for some activities delegated to the program. We have many opportunities for parents to sign up short and longer term commitments such as teachers aides, security desk attendant, coordinating volunteer programs and office work to name a few. In this way parents can see first hand what their children are receiving in the religious education program and actively participate in their child's religious education. Please become VIRTUS trained. See us for details. *We need you!*

RELIGION CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

The Diocese of Bridgeport has prepared the following guidelines. These guidelines will be implemented in all Religious Education programs and Catholic Schools.

It is Bishop's suggestion that we make these guidelines available to you, the parents. "Even the best religious education or Catholic school cannot do the entire job. An education in real and lasting faith will not be successful without the full and loving cooperation of parents. If they are truly to learn and live their faith, children and your need the assistance, commitment and example that can only come from the home. "

It is our hope that these guidelines will provide transparency and provide an additional opportunity to come into closer partnership with our religious education program.

Grades K-8 Guidelines

<http://www.bridgeportdiocese.org>

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

The policy of assigning homework to the students exists so that the material covered in class will be enforced and thought about during the week. The type and frequency of assignments will vary according to grade level and catechists. All work is expected to be completed by the next class or the date assigned. Home assignments rarely require more than 15 minutes for younger students and 30 minutes for older students per week. It is hoped that parents will take an interest in homework, to be aware of what the child is being taught and to make the child aware that there is interest in the child's religious education.

TESTING

Testing will be done in each grade level. The use of tests allows the student to build upon what was learned in the previous year, and makes it necessary for the student to clearly understand the material. Testing also helps the student understand and take their religious education seriously and the need to know the content of faith, belief and customs which enable a person to be an educated and **practicing** Catholic.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can be and should be called the domestic church. - Pope John Paul II on the Family

Our parish supports parents in their role as "primary religious educators" (Documents of Vatican II) We expect parents to be involved in their children's formal religious education. During the year, parents whose children are in third or eighth grade will be asked to attend special meetings. You will be notified by mail, phone, a note your child will bring home or notice in parish bulletin. We ask that these meetings be given special priority in your family.

SUNDAY EUCHARIST

In order to remain with us, Jesus left us the Eucharist: "Eternal Wisdom, on the one hand, wished to prove His love for man by dying in his place in order to save him, but on the other hand, He could not bear the thought of leaving him. So he devised a marvelous way of dying and living at the same time, and of abiding with man until the end of time. So in order to fully satisfy His love, He instituted the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and went to the extent of changing and overturning nature itself. He does not conceal Himself under a sparkling diamond or some other precious stone, because He does not want to abide with man in an ostentatious manner. But He hides Himself under the appearance of a small piece of bread – man's ordinary nourishment – so that when received He might enter the heart of man and there take His delight."

- Saint Louis de Montfort

SACRAMENTS

According to Church Law and diocesan directives, St. Michaels parish incorporates preparation for the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist Penance and Confirmation in its catechetical program. In order to receive each Sacrament worthily it is important that one be prepared to the best of one's ability. While the intellect is important, we cannot make it the only criterion. Only the experience of a love relationship with the Lord and His Church makes a personal response possible. In the case of children, their families are the basic

Dear Parents:

The purpose of this letter is to encourage you to fulfill the Sunday Obligation. Attending Mass with your children on Sunday and holy days is the serious obligation of every Catholic Christian. It is even more serious for parents who are the primary example of Catholic life.

We bring your attention to our awareness that a serious problem exists. A large number of families do not attend Sunday Mass regularly.

We know that in bringing your child to religious education classes you take seriously the promise you make at your child's baptism, to bring up your child in the faith of the Church. We do all we can in the 1.5 hours a week, a very small part of your child's life. But the real job is up to you. Family life is where our children are first introduced to God. From there, the child will come to recognize "community of faith" as family. A parent's own attitude toward the Eucharist significantly influences the attitude of the child. Parents who celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday teach its value more profoundly than any catechist ever could.

Faith is not about books or knowledge, it's about what's in our hearts and how we live as disciples of Christ. If the Sunday Eucharist is not a regular part of their life, it is impossible for the children to connect with what we teach since the Eucharist is the center of the Catholic Christian life.

Individual prayer and family prayer is the door to spirituality, but worship of our God can only be accomplished as a people, for true worship is never in isolation. We come to Mass to love (worship) God and to be loved (Eucharist).

Only you have the power to transform your family's habits by continuing to attend Mass, go more often, or begin again on a regular basis.

God has blessed you with a beautiful child. We assure you of our prayers and support as you carry out your responsibility to help your child realize that he/she is a child of God who must be led to our Father.



GENERAL STANDARDS AND POLICIES

"You have asked to have your children baptized.

*In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of
training them in the practice of the faith.*

*It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments
as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor."*

- Rite of Baptism

MISSION STATEMENT

The Roman Catholic Church has a divine mission to teach as Jesus did and must educate all its members all of the time. It is our mission in religious education to support the growth of the child's loving relationship with God and with the community of believers. As your child grows in awareness of the larger world and grows in their capacity to wonder, religious education uses age appropriate methods to support the process of looking at daily experience in the fullness of the Catholic faith tradition. We are committed to support every child as they learn, love and serve the Lord with a profound and growing awareness of their mission in building the kingdom of God and their belonging to the Body of Christ.

DROP OFF – PICK UP OF CHILDREN

Unless otherwise noted, *children should be dropped off before 8:45* am at the convent/ school building next to the church. The entrance door from the parking lot side is to be used. *At the end of class parents should pick up their own child inside the gated grounds of the convent. This is to ensure your child's safety.* Please see that your child is picked up promptly, in case of an EMERGENCY, you may contact us at: 203.572.2374 until 10:00 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Sharing your Catholic faith so that your child can experience the eternal love of God is one of the most important gifts you can give. Growing in faith is a lifelong process. Children should participate in religious education every year so they have continuity in their faith formation. Each grade level contains important material necessary for understanding the Catholic faith. Attendance is required. Consistent attendance at class each week supports the continuity necessary for effective religious education. Weekly attendance enables the catechist to present new material each week, building on the previous week's lesson. Regular attendance also builds a sense of community within the class and each child is an important member of this small Christian community.

******Since catechetical programs are conducted only for registered students, it is important that students not bring friends or visitors to class without the parent's FIRST telephoning for permission from the Religious Education Office for a one time event. *******

CANCELLATIONS

In the case of inclement weather conditions contact your child's teacher. We will send out an email to the email address provided on the registration form.

PARISH BULLETIN

Please check the weekly parish bulletin for religious education class updates, and notices to parents on special events. These notices serve as a reminder and also notify parents of any changes in the schedule.

TUITION

The registration fees are as follows:

1 child	\$75
2+ children	\$100

Scholarship applications are available upon request and are due no later than one week prior to the start of classes. A late fee will be imposed on all submissions after the registration date.

CLASS TIME AND PREPARATION

Class time is so important for religious formation of our children, it is crucial that classes begin on time. **Students should arrive on time by 8:45am, prepared for class and should remember to bring their books, assignments and a pencil/pen.**

*** Absences or tardy class arrival must be made up before the end of the month.**

The Catechetical program runs from September – May. Classes are held Saturday **from 8:45-10:00 am** in the convent next to St. Michael's church.

Eucharistic Adoration is held each 1st Saturday's of the month inside the main church from 9-12 (unless otherwise noted. All parents are invited to participate). 8th grade Confirmation students will have their quarterly community service meetings announced in class and the parish bulletin and additional service and retreat activities.

Supervision of students begins with the opening of class and ends at dismissal time. The Religious Education Program is responsible for students only during scheduled class time.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Golden Rule: Do unto others, as you would have done unto you

Students come to religious education to learn about their Catholic faith that leads to experiencing a personal relationship with Christ in the context of the Church. Faith commitment is an invitation from Christ for each to accept freely with love. We expect students to come to class willingly. Children are expected to behave respectfully and responsibly towards the Teacher and their fellow classmates. Parents are asked to talk with their children on a regular basis concerning the need for appropriate behavior while at religion class. Our catechists are **dedicated volunteers** who give freely of their faith, time and talents. An orderly and respectful environment is necessary for effective religious education. Experience shows that students who find little or no faith commitment at home have trouble understanding why they are attending religious education classes or how they can make these hours relevant to the rest of their lives. Often their state of confusion is acted out in poor behavior or language. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated. Parents will be notified if such behavior occurs. Lack of improvements in such a situation will be resolved according to Christian charity and justice on behalf of the students and the program. We strongly request that no games, electronic devices for games music, internet etc... be brought to class. Cellular phones are allowed only for urgent use and should be placed on vibrate or low/quiet mode tucked away from site as not to disrupt class.