

Religious Education Handbook
Saint Agnes Parish
Middleton
2009-2010
Religious Education Office (978) 777-3404

Finding God as a Covenant People

Parent Covenant:

As the primary educator of my children, I am chosen by God to form them in the faith and model Jesus' Way. With the help of St. Agnes Parish, I will lead my family in daily prayer and friendship with God. My family and I, to the best of our ability, will faithfully participate in weekly Mass (unless ill), and strive to put worship first before personal considerations or other activities. I will teach my children that Jesus is truly present in the Eucharist. I will do my best to bring my children to scheduled classes (or adhere to my home school schedule). I will encourage good behavior and courtesy from my children and show interest in their lessons.

Signed: _____

Registration and tuition:

Families should register their children in March/April to assure proper placement and allow for enough books and supplies to be procured. Families new to the area are always welcome to enroll regardless of the time of year. For a new registration, a copy of the baptismal record is needed unless baptized here. **Tuition:**

Tuition is due at registration.

All Rel. Ed. programs: \$100 per child. Cap is \$300 per family.

Late fee (after May 1): \$10 per child; \$15 cap.

This does not refer to new families in the parish.

Programs:

(There is no longer a fall program except for Sacramental Preparation.)

Summer program:

Grades 2, 7&8, 9&10 meet the last week of June, or (if snow days) the first five days following school closing.

Grades 7&8: 8:30AM-noon.

Grade 2: 1-4:30PM.

Grades 9&10: Supper (supplied by the parish) at 5:30PM, & classes from 6-9:30PM.

Grades 1, 3, 4, 5&6 meet for two weeks in late August. The program should finish prior to the last Friday before Labor Day. Grades 4, 5&6: 8:30AM-noon. Grades 1&3: 1-4:30PM.

Using the summer for classes should make it possible for families to come together for Mass each week during the year.

This is the central action of our faith and is more important than classes.

Home study is discouraged unless there is no alternative. Students will be required, in early January and early May, to turn in their

papers and their textbook for examination by the Director of Religious Education. These materials will be provided. Home study students will be graded on the prescribed text. Families may use other materials as well if they wish.

Blue sheets:

Students in grades 7-10 must involve themselves in some Mass related participatory activity, at least ten times during the year in order to build their self image as a functioning part of the Faith Community. These activities are recorded on the blue sheet, dated, and signed by the pastor or his agent on each occasion.

Blue sheets are due by the beginning of May.

Class hours:

The Archdiocese wants parishes to hold between 28-30 class hours for each grade level if possible. This is our aim. Grades 2, 9 and 10 besides the summer class hours, also add on the hours for sacrament preparation. Sacrament classes meet monthly.

Attendance:

Parents should try to avoid absence altogether. Only serious reasons will be accepted for absence, since each day is equal to 3 1/2 hours or 3.5 absences! Sports practice and games are not considered a reason for absence. For extended illness, we will make adjustments to the needs of your child. Absences, if not made up, or if they occur in a year of sacrament preparation, may require delay or repeating a grade.

For the protection of our children, parent/guardian will be contacted when absence occurs, unless previous notification of absence has been received.

If you know your child must be absent, please leave a phone message at (978) 777-3404 explaining the reason.

Lateness:

Children who arrive after prayer has begun are asked to wait by the office door out of respect until prayer is finished. If more than five minutes late, please tell your child to stop by the office and give her/his name so you will not be called.

Drop off:

Parents may enter the front door of the church hall with their children, or drop them off at that door no sooner than 15 minutes before class time. This is to ensure adults will be present for your children's safety.

Teacher Meetings: Teachers and aides meet for orientation before classes begin. Meetings for enrichment and for working towards the next year's program success may take place during the year.

Cancellation of class:

If an emergency arises, we will phone the teachers, who in turn will try to phone the student's homes.

If in doubt, please phone **(978) 777-3404** and **listen to the message.**

Safety:

Every class must have an adult present at all times. Catechists and other helpers are carefully screened, fill out a CORI check each year, and have attended the training program, *Protecting God's Children*.

Parents may see all materials in the religious education office, so as to better prepare their children in these areas. The Archdiocesan safety program covers grades 1-8. Safety, especially safety from predators, will be addressed each year as

well as other grade appropriate topics. While it is always a parent's right to opt out of these safety programs, the parent is required to fill out the form from the Archdiocese (available in the Rel. Ed. Office) to do so. Parents are always allowed to be present in children's classes, but if they do so, must be quiet so as not to distract. Parental help in the classroom is most welcome anytime.

Dismissal safety:

Because the protection of our children is of the utmost importance, children grades 1-6 must stay seated in their classrooms until picked up by the parent or designated adult driver. **Written permission from the parent is required for any adult other than the parent to pick up a child.** No child under age 16 may escort a child out of the building. All enter by the front door but are to exit from the **back door** to lessen congestion in the hallway. If due to illness, handicap or endangerment, you cannot come in for your child, please call ahead so your child can be escorted to your car.

Waiting area:The bench in the hallway is available for quiet waiting. Close of class will be announced. Please wait for the signal before proceeding to your child's classroom.

Behavior:

Respect and courtesy are expected at all times. If catechists must correct students they will give one reminder, sometimes by placing a yellow card in front of the child. Should another infraction occur, a red card may be given. Second infractions require the child to go to the office for the rest of the class time. This also requires that the parent be phoned and told about the behavior. If parents are phoned about behavior a second time, a conference is called. Conferenced parents are likely to be required to sit through classes with their child from then on.

Textbooks:

Grades 1, 3- 6 use *Finding God* published by Loyola Press. Grade 2 uses *God's Gift ,Reconciliation* and *God's Gift, Eucharist* published by Loyola Press. Grades 7& 8 uses the *Fireside Catholic Youth Bible Study*. Grades 9&10, besides special pre-confirmation sessions, use the series *Understanding the Catechism* published by RCL. All publications emphasize the Four Pillars of the Catechism: Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments, Morality, and Creed (beliefs).

Middle and older children are encouraged to use the bible in class and explore areas of service. Bibles are available in all classes.

Parents and Sacrament Prep:

Parents of children preparing for **Reconciliation** and **First Communion** are required to attend a special adult session for each of these sacraments. Parent session occurs while your child is in sacrament class during the school year. Children's sacrament classes are on one Saturday a month, from 3-4:30PM. (See enclosed calendar.)

Pre Confirmation candidates (grade 9) attend at least four special sessions on designated Monday nights at 7PM. These require adult attendance. Parents need at this age to re-emphasize the importance of Mass attendance and prayer.

Confirmation candidates (grade 10) attend 6 or 7 sessions (one a month) on designated Monday nights at 7PM. These require the attendance of either the parent or sponsor, or another significant adult.

Based on the church's RCIA process, this mentoring in the faith by a significant adult is of great importance in passing on our religious heritage. The attending adult helps the candidate with that month's work sheets and discusses her/his faith journey. Sponsors need to give the candidate an example of Mass attendance and service.

Candidates are given an opportunity to express personal desire for Confirmation and how it will affect their life. This interview takes place during Lent. The archdiocese requires every candidate to attend a retreat. Usually the retreat takes place in September of the following year. Confirmation is usually in October of the junior year.

Older children needing sacraments:

If for any reason your child missed out on a sacrament, please bring this to the attention of the office. We will place your child in the age-appropriate grade but also tutor her/him in preparation for celebrating these sacraments. Parents will attend the required parent sessions for Reconciliation and Eucharist. Older children may receive their sacraments either with public announcement or more quietly.

Special Needs: If your child has any physical, mental, emotional or other challenge, please inform us. We will try to adjust the program to meet the need. If there are severe allergies, do tell us, and also make an antidote available.

Date	Grade	Time	Event
Mar.28/29, Apr.4/5	All	after Masses	Registration
6/25-7/1	7&8	8:30-noon	Classes
6/25-7/1	2	1PM-4:30PM	Classes
6/25-7/1	9&10	5:30PM	Supper
		6-9:30PM	Classes
8/17-21, 24-28/09	4,5&6	8:30-noon	Classes
8/17-21, 24-28/09	1,3&4	1-4:30PM	Classes
9/5/09	2	3-4:30PM	Reconciliation class
9/5/09	Parents	3-4:30PM	Parent Session
9/26/09	11	1-6PM	Confirmation Retreat
9/14/09	9	7-8PM	Pre-Confirmation class
10/ /09	11	7PM	Confirmation
10/3/09	2	3-4:30PM	Reconciliation class
10/ /09	2	7PM	Reconciliation
10/5/09	10	7-8PM	Confirmation class
11/7/09	2	3-4:30PM	Eucharist class
11/7/09	Parents	3-4:30PM	Parent Session
11/16/09	9	7-8PM	Pre-confirmation class
12/7/09	10	7-8PM	Confirmation class
12/5/09	2	3-4:30PM	Eucharist class
1/4/10	10	7-8PM	Confirmation class
1/9/10	2	3-4:30PM	Eucharist class
1/11/10	9	7-8PM	Pre-confirmation class
2/1/10	10	7-8PM	Confirmation class
2/6/10	2	3-4:30PM	Eucharist class
3/1/10	10	7-8PM	Confirmation class
3/6/10	2	3-4:30PM	Eucharist class
3/8/10	9	7-8PM	Pre-confirmation class
4/3/10	2	2-4:30PM	Rehearsals &banners
4/5/10	10	7-8PM	Confirmation class
9/ 19/10	11	1-6PM	Confirmation Retreat
10/ 8 /10	11	7PM	Confirmation