

Religious Education Policy

Days of Retreat are provided for students in the formal religious education program. All program provided retreat experiences are free to participants. Attendance at these events is required for those preparing for a sacramental celebration (**Grade 2 First Reconciliation, Grade 3 First Eucharist and Grade 9 Confirmation**). All other experiences are encouraged, but not mandatory. These days combine fun with spiritual growth.

Family Faith Days are opportunities for families to share in the faith formation process with their children. Currently, these are scheduled thrice during the school year during the Sunday morning program. On these specially designated mornings, all children in **Kindergarten through gr. 2** are joined by parents, siblings and any extended family members to share in a special morning of prayer and fun.

Parent Meetings enable family members to best support the faith development of their child. Every year we hold a series of parent meetings designed to inform parents of curriculum topics, special projects and other details of interest. All parent meetings are designed to be informative and brief. All parents and guardians are highly encouraged to attend these meetings. Please consult the religious education calendar and the bulletin for specific times and dates.



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Absentee Policy: Preparing for a sacramental celebration is a very important process. Extra care and attention is directed to these parts of the program by the R. E. Office, the catechists and the families. To ensure that youth are as well prepared as possible, attendance policies are in place for these years. **Children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (grades 1, 2 & 3) must be present for a minimum of ¾ of scheduled classes.** Any child absent for more than a quarter of the scheduled classes will not be approved to celebrate this sacrament. (Any first grade student who has missed more than a quarter of the scheduled classes will not have met the requirement of completing a year of religious ed necessary to enter the First Reconciliation program.) Jr. High youth are required to attend 90% of the 7th & 8th grade sessions before enrolling in Confirmation preparation.

Confirmation candidates (grade 9) are mandated by diocesan policy to attend 90% of the sessions. Additional absences must be made up with the Director of Lifelong Faith Formation before the candidate can continue in the process. Additionally, this year of preparation includes work to be done at home. **All homework must be completed and returned before the individual will be approved for the sacramental celebration.**

To all returning catechetical ministers, students and families, I look forward to seeing you soon. To all new participants in the religious education program, I welcome you. To all members of this parish community, I encourage your comments, ideas and suggestions.

**Religious Education Classes begin on Sunday, September 7.
Religious Education calendars are available at the time of registration.**

Faith-filled volunteers are essential to the success of our faith formation ministry. If you can teach a group of children on Sunday morning or Tuesday afternoon, can serve as a substitute, are willing to watch children who arrive early on Tuesdays, please contact Irene at ilucas@ourladyofmercychurch.org or **814-899-6132**. Several mandated clearances must be obtained before anyone can volunteer with children.

May you continue to deepen your love for God and one another. May the remaining weeks of the summer season bring many blessings.