

St. Aloysius Religious Education Program Handbook

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WELCOME

We are glad that you have chosen to participate in one of our parish religious formation programs. The religious formation of children is truly a partnership between family and Church. Ideally, the lessons lived in the home are reinforced by the work done in class and the principles taught in class are put to use in the child's everyday life at home. All religious formation is part of the process of conversion. Our goal, as a parish, is to help all of our children reach Christian maturity through a process of ongoing conversion that draws them ever closer to Jesus and the Church. It takes conversion of heart and mind and agreement between home and Church to keep growing in the Lord. We hope that the time your child spends in our program will enhance the religious formation that they experience at home with you.

Our parish Religious Education program is part of an overall lifelong formation process that includes (but is not limited to) your home life, Mass attendance, St. Aloysius Elementary & Junior High School, various Catholic High Schools, youth activities, RCIA and other adult formation opportunities.

The purpose of this handbook is to clarify the policies and procedures of our Religious Education Program. Details of our Sacramental Preparation policies are included because sacramental preparation for children is always linked to either the Religious Education or Catholic School program.

If you have any specific questions that are not covered here or if you need clarification, please contact me or Fr. Mark at the parish, 419-352-4195.

In Christ,

Jean W. Bargiel
DRE, St. Aloysius Parish

WHAT IS THE RE PROGRAM?

The St. Aloysius Religious Education program exists to teach the fundamentals of the Catholic faith to our parish children who do not attend Catholic school and to support their parents/guardians in providing faith experiences within the tradition of the Catholic Church. The pastor, director and catechists seek to promote a religious learning environment within the context of the Mass and Sacraments, which are our common faith experiences, so the children may come to know, love and serve God.

WHOM DOES IT SERVE?

St. Aloysius parishioners in grades 1-12 who do not attend Catholic School.

Parishioners from St. Thomas More and St. Louis, Custar are accepted into the Religious Education program on a very limited basis. St. Aloysius parish will provide catechesis for students preparing for 1st Reconciliation and 1st Communion if these students have explicit permission from their pastor and will celebrate the actual sacraments in their home parish. It is the family's responsibility to provide written permission from their pastor at registration.

We especially encourage your children who have celebrated Confirmation to continue to participate in formal Religious Education. As their minds and spirits develop they will need continued input from the Church in order to grow to Christian maturity. They certainly do not know all of the Math, Science and English they will need throughout their lives at the end of the 8th grade; neither do they know Jesus and His Church as well as they will need to throughout their lives.

WHEN ARE CLASSES HELD?

Students in grades 1-8 meet on Wednesday evenings from 7-8pm.

Class begins at 7pm. Please do not send children before 6:45pm.

High School students meet from 6:30-8:15 on Wednesday evenings.

In addition to the regular Wednesday evening classes, students in Sacramental Preparation classes and their parents or sponsors can expect a few extra classes on weekends or earlier on Wednesdays. (See "Sacramental Preparation" section on page 7.)

WHERE DO CLASSES MEET?

Classes meet in the St. Aloysius School classrooms and parish meeting rooms. The students are expected to respect the belongings and classroom projects of the St. Aloysius School students and staff. In exchange, St. Aloysius School students and staff are expected to keep desks and teaching areas clean and usable for the Religious Education students.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?

Attendance:

Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences each year. Excused absences are allowed for illness, family emergencies, and graded school events. Sports practices and events are not excused absences. Please plan carefully.

Please send a note ahead of time if you know your child will be absent, or send a note the next week if there is an unexpected absence.

Attendance reports are sent home quarterly. Please read the catechist's comments, sign and return them promptly.

Weather Policy:

Classes are **not** automatically cancelled when school is closed. Many times the weather clears long before our evening classes, in which case we will have class. A decision to cancel will be made no later than 4pm. We will notify radio & TV stations to make closing announcements or you may call the parish (419-352-4195). If we are having class and the roads near your home are not safe, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CLASS. Call the Religious Education office (419-352-4195 x111) and you will have an excused absence.

Pick up:

Be VERY careful in the parking lot. If at all possible, park and come inside to pick up your children.

1st and 2nd graders will be dismissed to a parent, carpool or older sibling at their classroom doors.

CYO Sports:

Students in the Religious Education program are eligible to participate in CYO sports. The fall season includes Cross-Country for grades K – 8; Girls Volleyball for grades 5 – 12; and Football, in cooperation with St. Rose, Perrysburg, for boys in grades 5 – 8. During the winter season the Athletic Board offers Basketball for boys & girls in grades 5 – 12. (Soccer may become available in spring 2009.) We will pass on registration information as soon as the Athletic Board makes it available to us.

Participation in CYO sports does not replace attendance at Religion classes; in fact, attendance at class is a prerequisite for participation in CYO sports.

Home Schooling

Home-schooling parents have the responsibility to register their household with the parish and state their wish to catechize their own children. The parish will respond by providing parents with a copy of the “Home-based Religious Education Guidelines” from the Diocese of Toledo and any other materials called for in that document and by setting up mutually convenient times to meet and discuss relevant issues. Students whose parents have registered as home-schoolers are eligible to participate in Sacramental Preparation programs and in CYO sports. For administrative purposes home-schooled children are considered part of the Religious Education program.

Children with Special Needs

It is the plan of St. Aloysius parish to provide the most appropriate religious formation possible for children with special needs. In order to do this it is very important that parents work closely with the Director and volunteer catechists to be sure that their child is receiving what they need. Parents have a much clearer idea of what their child can and cannot do. The staff needs parents’ help to make any appropriate adaptations for their child. Any literature or information from their child’s other teachers that parents can share is greatly appreciated.

HOW DO I REGISTER?

Pre-registration is held each year from the 1st of April to the last class in May.

Registration goes through the summer.

Late Registration begins after 3 weeks of class.

Current students will receive a registration packet in class which they should return as soon as possible. Younger siblings who are beginning classes may be added to the bottom of the current form.

Forms for new students are available at the entrances of church or by calling the parish office.

Fees:

Pre-registration Through last day of class in May
\$45.00/family

Registration From the last day of class in May
through the third week of class in
September \$55.00/family

Late Registration after the third week of class in
September \$65.00/family

\$15.00 per child in Sacramental preparation classes.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION POLICIES

- ✠ Baptism is normally celebrated in infancy
- ✠ First Reconciliation is usually celebrated in the first semester of the 2nd grade
- ✠ First Communion in the 2nd semester of the 2nd grade
- ✠ Beginning in 2009, Confirmation will be usually celebrated in the spring of the 8th grade year

Sacramental preparation begins in the fall of the previous year for all sacraments. For example: Students who celebrated sacraments in 2006-2007 were registered for and attending classes from the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year.

Attendance at regular classes is a pre-requisite for participation in specific sacramental preparation programs.

Students who have passed the usual age for celebrating sacraments are welcome to begin preparation when they are ready. Please contact the Director of Religious Education for individual information.

First Communion and Reconciliation. Normally only students who have completed a previous year of catechesis are accepted into preparation for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Students in the 2nd grade (or later) who have not completed a year of catechesis are asked to attend their grade level class for the 1st year and to attend special sacramental preparation classes during their 2nd year of catechesis along with their grade level class in order to prepare for the First Communion and Reconciliation.

Confirmation: It is our expectation that Confirmation candidates will be St. Aloysius parishioners who have a regular history of attendance in our parish Religious Education program or parish school. Students who have not attended Religious Education classes for two or more years between 1st Communion in the 2nd grade and Confirmation in the 7th grade have missed a lot of content. Preparation for Confirmation involves a significant amount of personal acceptance of Church teaching. Students who have not been a part of the Religious Education program are unlikely to have a sufficient understanding of Catholic doctrine to be able to make that personal profession of faith. It would be unfair to students who come back to the Religious Education Program in the 8th grade, and to their classmates to assume that they would be adequately prepared to celebrate Confirmation without further study.

Additional Sacramental Preparation Sessions

2nd grade parents preparing for Sacraments will have at least 2 parent sessions offered during the year, one family workshop and a rehearsal for 1st Communion, in addition to regular grade level classes.

In addition to their regular grade-level classes, Confirmation candidates and their sponsor or parent will attend 6 Confirmation classes, one per month October through March. These classes begin at 6:30pm and end 8pm. A parent session explaining the Confirmation program is held in the spring and again in the fall.

The parish will make arrangements for the students to participate in a Confirmation retreat, usually in the fall. Junior High Confirmation students are expected to attend.

2nd grade and older children preparing for Baptism and baptized children older than the 2nd grade preparing for First Reconciliation and First Communion will attend at least 4 extra classes in the fall and 6 extra classes in the winter. The exact number of classes and their schedule will depend on the size and make-up of the class and the catechist's discretion.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Jean Bargiel (419-352-4195).