

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA



SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK

2008-2009

FOREWORD

To St. Catherine of Siena Parents:

Old Testament scriptures instructs us to "Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. Emphasize this with your children; speak of My Laws to them at home and abroad, whenever you are busy or at rest." (Deut. 6:7-8)

Jesus in the New Testament tells us to "welcome the little children, for such is the Kingdom of God." (Luke 18:16-17)

In light of these words, the administration and staff of St Catherine's School of Religion desires to assist you in your responsibilities by providing your children with me best possible religious education.

This handbook states our goals and objective along with practical information. We need your support and cooperation with the contents, so please read it thoroughly.

A note about cell phones: One way that we show respect for others is by our attentive presents. In the Classroom, this means that students will give their entire attention to the teacher and the lesson. All cell phones will be collected upon entering the classroom and returned when class is over.

Thank you for choosing St. Catherine of Siena School of Religion for your child(ren).

To St. Catherine of Siena Students:

The administration and staff at St. Catherine School of Religion desires to provide you with the best religious education possible. We also offer you our prayers as well as our service so that you can develop your God-given gift of nature and grace.

In order to accomplish this task, we need your cooperation was the student rules and responsibilities stated in his handbook.

God Bless You,

The Administration and Staff
St. Catherine of Siena
School of Religion

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SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

Introduction

Our School of Religion is unique, contemporary and oriented to Christian service. It is unique because of its commitment to the three-fold purpose of Christian education and by its design and operation which foster the integration of Jesus' message with the rest of learning and living.

It is contemporary because it enables its students to address with Christian insight the multiple problems, which face individuals and society today. And it is oriented to Christian service because it helps students acquire the skills, virtues and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others. All those involved in our School of Religion - pastors, parents, teachers, administrators and students - must earnestly desire to make it a community of faith which is indeed, "living, conscious, active" (To Teach As Jesus Did, 106) and one which strives to spread the Good news.

THE NATURE OF THE SCHOOL

The Religious Nature

Our School of Religion plays an integral role in the implementation of the Church's mission of message, community and service.

Message

We present. Christ's message of salvation through Christian witness, though the Word of God, through the Church's teachings, and through the encouragement of students to participate in the sacramental life of the Church.

Community

The community derives its vitality from experience of prayer and worship, union with the spirit and commitment to Gospel values. We challenge our student to grow within the community, not just intellectually, but also by demonstrating by word and action the self-worth of each person; and thus, share in the Christian vision of life centered on Jesus Christ.

Service

Students are awarded the opportunity to assist those in need on parish, community and global levels. This service, while reaching out to others, also fosters within the school a community of Christian-in-action. Social consciousness and a practical application of Christian teaching.

NATURE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Administration

The general management policy of St. Catherine's School of Religion is found in the Policies and Procedures Manual of the Office of Education of the Diocese of Wilmington. Specific policies necessary for the management and good order of our School of Religion are developed by the Director of Christian Formation in accord with the diocesan directives and in consultation with the staff.

Curriculum

Curriculum guidelines are developed by the Office of Education of the Diocese of Wilmington through specific curriculum committees. These courses of study are implemented throughout the school by the individual teachers under the direct supervision of the principal.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

There are three major themes that should be included in every religious education program. These are:

Theme 1 - The Importance of Personal Prayer

People can pray together in community if they know some common prayers. So, it is necessary that some of the Church's prayers be understood and memorized. Among these are the Sign of the Cross, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Apostles' Creed, an Act of Contrition, and the Rosary.

But there is more to prayer than memorizing common prayers. Talking with God spontaneously and familiarly, and listening to Him is prayer. Formal prayer, suited to the student's age and capacity, should be explained and encouraged. By religious education, he/she is led on to a more mature prayer ... meditation, contemplation and a deeper union with God.

Theme 2 - Participating in the Liturgy (Public Prayer)

As members of the Catholic community, students are called to participate actively in the liturgical celebrations of the Church. Religious education must, therefore, involve the student in that community's liturgy. Liturgy itself teaches. It forms the individual. It forms the community. The Mass, the Church's "greatest prayer" is the highest, most noble form of the Church's liturgy and all students are obligated to attend Mass on Sunday and Holy Days. The young people of the Parish are greatly influenced by the example of their parent and older brothers and sisters. (It is essential, therefore, that parents attend Mass regularly. Especially on Sunday and Holy Days.)

Theme 3- Familiarly with the Holy Bible

The life of prayer is nourished by reading the Bible, which is in itself a form of prayer. The Word of God is life giving and it nourishes and inspires, strengthens and sustains. It is the primary source, along with tradition, of Church teaching. St. Paul's words should describe the Catholic student of religion:

Ever since you were a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living, so that the person who serves God may be fully qualified and equipped to do every kind of good deed." (2Tim 3:15-17)

The importance of tradition is described in the Second Vatican Council:

"Scripture and Tradition stand together as the "one sacred deposit of the Word of God, each is committed to the Church. This Tradition, which comes from the apostles, developed in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit."

Catholic students, therefore, should be well instructed in Tradition, as well as Scripture.

The three themes described are considered to be a very important part of our religious education program and will be vigorously pursued.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: "It is necessary that the authentic teachings of the Church, and only those, be presented in religious instruction as official Catholic doctrine."

With this in mind, only texts approved by the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington and containing the "nihil obstat" and the "imprimatur" of a Bishop are used in the Parish religious education program.

Note: The nihil obstat and imprimatur are official declarations that a book or pamphlet is free from doctrinal or oral error.

CURRICULUM PHILOSOPHY

St. Catherine of Siena School curriculum strives to teach students Gospel values, incorporating the hope of giving the world educated Christians who will work to bring peace and justice to all humankind, and thus, build the Kingdom of God on earth.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Doctrine

Grade 1

- Our church community
- Our Loving God
- God's son, Jesus
- The Holy Spirit

Grade 2

- We gather as believers.
- We ask God's forgiveness.
- We celebrate Eucharist.
- We go in peace.

Grade 3

- The Church is One.
- The Church is Holy.
- The Church is Catholic.
- The Church is Apostolic.
- The Church has a Mission.

Grade 4

- God the Father
- Jesus; the Son
- The Holy Spirit
- The Church
- Social Justice

Grade 5

- The Sacraments
- Baptism, Confirmation
- Eucharist
- Reconciliation
- Holy Orders

Grade 6

- We Answer God's Call
- God Saves and Delivers Us
- God Invites Us into His Kingdom
- God Reminds Us To Do His Will
- God Promises Eternal Life

Grade 7

- Celebrating Jesus

Grade 8

- Celebrating Church

Instruction

Classroom instruction utilizes large and small group instruction designed to meet be students' ability in accordance it diocesan guidelines. The instructional plan is designed and implemented by the classroom teacher.

GOALS

1. To enhance and strengthen the attitudes and values of the Catholic Faith within our school of religion.
2. To encourage the students to develop a good conscience based on Christian principals.
3. To develop a concept of self worth for each child so he/she recognizes him/herself as a child of God.
4. To promote the genuine feeling of a caring community among students and faculty (emphasis on respect for self and others).

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM

The Diocesan Guidelines for Sacramental Catechists call parents to prepare their own children for their first reception of the Sacraments. Our life of faith is an ongoing journey with the Lord.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation Program prepares the child during the second grade for his/her reception of this sacrament. At this time, the children are introduced to the concept of what an unloving act is; how it affects others; and how they can seek forgiveness for those acts and make things right through the sacrament of Reconciliation. At the end of this preparation period, the sacrament is offered to the children. The parents play the most important role in the preparation of the child for his or her first reception of the sacrament.

Education sessions dealing with the general idea of sin and morality and the New Rite of penance are given to the parents in three sharing sessions.

The Sacrament of Eucharist Program prepares the child during the second grade for the reception of his/her First Eucharist. After attendance at religious education classes for two years, and the participation of parent in our special program, the parent, child and DRE decide if the child is ready to receive the sacrament.

The Sacrament of Confirmation Program prepares the child for his/her confirmation into the faith. "Any baptized and properly catechized youth who is in the catechetical program for at least 2 years or has reached the age of fourteen is ordinarily to be considered a prospective candidate for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Confirmation, however, is not to be regarded as an automatic achievement of eighth graders. (The Liturgical Commission and Chancery Staff of the Diocese of Wilmington, Page 3.)

Requirements for Reception of Confirmation

1. Regular attendance in the parish religious education classes or catholic school.
2. Participation in the special Confirmation Preparation Sessions.
3. Attendance of parents at the parents' sessions.
4. Giving of service by the candidate.
5. Faithful attendant at Sunday Liturgy.

Sacramental Policy

We encourage all parents or guardians to attend parent sessions for the sacrament their child is preparing to receive. If it is impossible for you to attend on the scheduled dates, please contact the Director of Christian Formation for an alternative.

Any child (not in a Catholic school) who wishes to receive a sacrament must attend Parish Religious Education classes one year prior to receiving plus the year of reception of the sacrament. If there is a problem with lack of attendance, we will notify you personally by mail and set up a meeting to discuss this situation

STUDENT EVALUATION

Grading System

Student grading and the report card are forms of student evaluation. The report card is issued two times a year: November and April for grades 1 through 8.

Homework - Study Time

Homework is seen as an opportunity for recall, review and enrichment for the student. Students are cautioned to use a quiet place conducive to study for homework-study time. The required time allotment for assignments suggested by the Diocese of Wilmington is:

- Grades 1 and 2 - 15 minutes
- Grades 3 and 4 - 29 minutes
- Grades 5 and 6 - 30 minutes
- Grades 7 and 8 - 35 minutes

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The children are brought to St. Catherine's School of Religion in the hope that they will learn about Jesus Christ and His Church. To further this end, we ask the full cooperation of all students and of all parents in helping us maintain orderly, disciplined conduct which alone would be conducive to maximum learning. This will be evidenced by an atmosphere of respect and regard for the teachers who so generously give of their time and effort, and for the other students in the school.

For this reason we will insist upon good behavior from all students and will request withdrawal from the program of any student whose disruptive conduct may deem this necessary.

Preventive Discipline Policy

A. To prevent inappropriate behavior in students. teachers will:

1. Endeavor to be consistent, firm, loving and fair with regard to enforcing the school and classroom rules.
2. Circulate among the students as much as possible in the classroom.

3. Use non-verbal communications when possible when students are.
4. Remind students before an activity of the good behavior that is expected of them.

B. To practice appropriate behavior students will:

1. Respect the authority of the administration, faculty and staff, as well as the rights of other students.
2. Strive to develop the Christian values of honesty, courtesy, proper and clean language, respect for school property and the personal property of others.
3. Strive to develop proper habits of study, peaceful cooperation, and constructive methods to express disagreement.
4. Realize their own self-worth and contributions, along with their strengths and limitations.

IMAGINE

I AM A VALUABLE PERSON
MAKE RESPONSIBLE CHOICES
ACT RESPECTFULLY
GIVE GOOD EXAMPLE
I AM A CONSIDERATE PERSON
NOTICE THE SPECIALNESS OF OTHERS
ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER

IMAGINE! You, me and all of us working together. **IMAGINE!**

School Rules

The following are guidelines for our students:

1. Before class begins students are expected to talk in normal or subdued tones in their respective classrooms.

2. Quiet tones are required in the school entrance and hallway, on the stairway, in the lavatories. It is understood, of course, that a reverent silence is always to be kept in church.
3. For the purpose of safety, students are to walk, not run, in the buildings. Walking, not running is of special importance on the stairs.
4. NO GUM is permitted in the school building.
5. Out of respect for be teacher and other students, cell phones will be collected at the beginning of class and returned when class is over.
6. Serious offenses include:
 - Damage or defacing of school proper or the property of others.
 - The possession or association with alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, or other such substances on school property or in any activity conceded with the school in any way.
7. ALL VISITORS should reported the office.
8. Student should be respectful at all times to faculty, staff and one another.
9. Students must wait outside the room for the teacher. They may not go in alone.

10. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

This is our policy with any child attending the School of Religion:

First Offense: Consider the first offense to be the time when the problem is first brought to the attention of the Principal.

Second Offense: The problem is brought to the attention of the parent, who then confers with the Principal.

Third Offense: Expulsion until such time then a change can be assured.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Emergency School closing and Dismissal:

On occasion when class must be canceled due to inclement weather conditions, please listen to .the following radio stations for announcements:

WDEL-AM	478-2700
WILM-AM	656-9800
WJBR-FM	791-4100

Regular Dismissal:

In the interest of safety, students are to leave the school by the front door. Please drive very slowly through the parking lot.

A written permission note from the student's parent is required for a student to walk home, or for students to leave our school with an individual other than the parents. This note should be presented to the school office the evening this permission is desired.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is of great importance if students are to experience the continued sequential teaching needed to attain their goals. If a child misses more than three classes, there is strong possibility that he/she may have to repeat the year.

Excusable Absence:

Parents are to notify the CFO before 4:00 PM in case of a student's absent. If not, calls will be made from the school office to inquire about students' absence from class.

The acceptable reasons for absence are illness of the student, death in the immediate family, exceptionally urgent reasons and family educational trips.

Notes to Parents:

Before a teacher sends any note to a parent, this should first be seen by the Principal.

Arrival Time for Teachers:

Teachers should be in their classrooms 15 minutes before their class begins. Many children arrive at this time, and they should not be in the classrooms unsupervised at any time.

Arrival Time for Students:

Please do not drop off your children before 6:15 PM. They will be unattended and we are concerned about their safety. If you arrive early, you may wait with them in your car.

Lateness:

Class sessions begin at 6:30PM. Students who are late for school are to report to the school office before going to class.

Care and Release of sick and/or Injured Children:

No sick or injured child will be released from school without his/her family being contacted and an adult escort is provided.

Unless a pupil's life is obviously in danger and/or immediate emergency is necessary, the parents of the pupil should be consulted before any definite treatment is arrange.

If a dire emergency situation does not exist, the child will be retained in school under supervision.

Use of Telephone:

Students may only use the phones for very serious reasons, i.e., in cases of emergency and only with the proper permission.

Communication:

1. Each family will receive a calendar and handbook.
2. A newsletter will be sent home weekly.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Volunteerism:

As indicated in our school philosophy, parent participation and cooperation is of great importance if school goals are to be accomplished.

- Parent volunteer serves take many forms, i.e., classroom mother, office helper. These are truly invaluable.
- Attendance at scheduled meetings is urged.

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

Parent-teacher conferences occur as needed during the school year. Conferences may also be held at the request of the parent(s) or the School of Religion.