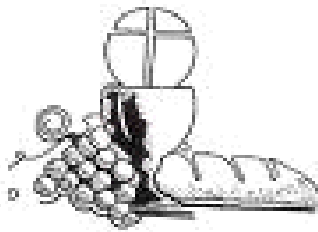


St. Thomas More Parish

Religious Education

Parent/Student Handbook
2011- 12



Religious Education Administration

Reverend Michael J. Yadron, Pastor

Reverend Richard C. Holy, Associate Pastor

Mrs. Sandi Morgan, Director of Religious Education

8501 Calumet Avenue
Munster, In 46321
(219) 836-8610

from the director...

September 7, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Please allow me to express my gratitude in serving the St. Thomas More Community. The opportunity to share in the faith lives of your children, as maturing Catholics, is a privilege. Together with parents, it is our goal in the Religious Education Office to foster personal and spiritual growth within each young person attending our Religious Program. To accomplish this goal, we need to walk this faith journey united as a community.

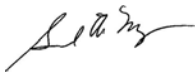
“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children.”(CCC 2223) “*Education in the faith* by the parents should begin in the child’s earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.” (CCC 2226)

It is our responsibility, as mature Catholics to help empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today. Our baptismal call is to educate and draw the youth to participate in the life, mission and work of the Catholic faith.

Most of us have questions about the Catholic faith. This is true whether we are Catholics from infant baptism or converts from another faith. The faith formation program provides opportunities to find answers to these questions.

Our hope is to meet your family where you are on this faith journey and walk with you as you take your next step. Our goal is to serve you on this endeavor in Christ. Please do not hesitate to call or email. If I can render any assistance to you, I will do so happily.

Peace and Blessings,



Mrs. Sandi Morgan
Director of Religious Education
smorgan@stm-church.com
219 836-8610 ext.332

Mission Statement

St. Thomas More Religious Education fulfills its commitment to every person through:

- Welcoming all to share the Good News of Jesus
- Instructing the baptized in Sacred Scripture and Tradition
- Encouraging family participation at Mass
- Helping families to develop a deeper prayer life at home
- Fostering Christian maturity
- Inviting non-baptized to seek baptism in the Catholic faith
- Embracing cultural diversity
- Nurturing catechists in education ministry
- Creating a safe environment in which to know, love and serve the Lord.

Policies of STM Religious Education

Family life in Christ:

Establishing a relationship with Jesus is an important aspect of your child's growth in faith. By asking your child to quietly and privately spend a few minutes a day with Jesus, you will enhance their faith life.

Additionally, through example of saying grace at the dinner table and the Hail Mary, Our Father or Glory Be at bedtime, good prayer habits are nurtured.

Liturgy and Prayer life:

Family participation at Sunday Mass is an obligation and opportunity to thank God for His many blessings on your family. Through worshipping as a faith community, we build our spiritual life as God's people. By maintaining a rhythm of attending Sunday Mass, we create a steadfast faith life. Children tend to follow the example of parental role models. If you want your children to attend Mass when they are older, it is wise to form a rhythm with them now!

Sacramental Preparation

Parent meetings for Candidates preparing for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation are mandatory. Meeting dates will be published in the bulletin and on the Religious Education calendar **The date for Confirmation will be announced as soon as the Bishop notifies us.**

All information for Sacraments will be distributed and discussed at the parent meeting.

Policies of STM Religious Education

Sacramental Preparation

Students are required to receive two years of catechesis prior to receiving a sacrament. For example, an 8th grade Confirmation candidate must have completed 6th and 7th grade catechesis and be currently enrolled in 8th grade catechesis. First Communion candidates must have completed 1st and 2nd grade catechesis and be currently enrolled in 3rd grade catechesis. Students must be baptized in the Roman Catholic faith. If your child is behind in Religious Studies please call our office. We can help your student.

Dress Code:

Students are expected to be dressed appropriately for class. STM does not allow clothing which would denote any affiliation with gang associations. This includes, but is not limited to, colors, clothing, earrings, hair styles, gestures, or signs.

Attendance & Tardiness:

Please call the Religious Education Office at 836-8610 ext. 336 if your child should be ill. Students should not miss **an extended number of classes** within the school year. If students miss more than two classes per semester, parents and student must speak with the catechist. Students are required to be in the classroom at 4:30. Severe **tardiness and or absenteeism** could result in repeating the class.

ATTENTION **BULLY FREE ZONE**

Bullying:

Bully behavior is not allowed at St. Thomas More.

Policies of STM Religious Education

Bully Free Zone

We strive to provide a safe environment for all students. Every student has the right to learn their faith without fear of threat, injury or violence (physical harm to another person).

Discipline policies may vary upon the circumstances. The pastor and director have final recourse in all discipline cases. The following are considered bullying behaviors: pushing others around, calling others names, spreading rumors, talking behind others backs, excluding others from your group, writing unkind notes about others, telling people not to like someone, bossing others, hitting, kicking or hurting others laughing at others in a mean way, sexual harassment, cell phone bullying or cyber bullying this includes “facebook and twitter” bullying.

Bullying May Result in withdrawal from St. Thomas More Religious Education Program.

Discipline:

Parents are a wonderful source of positive motivation and reinforcement for student cooperation. Please continue to positively reinforce the need for productive behavior. A big thank you, in advance, for your help in forming a safe and positive environment.

In accordance with our Catholic values and mission statement, we promote respect for others, self and property of others at all times. Student’s conduct should be formed by Christian values. Expected behavior, but not limited to these, are full participation in the STM religious education program, respect for catechists, aides, monitors and all helpers. Maintaining appropriate behavior during the class time, using appropriate language and mannerisms when addressing our ministers of education, caring for

Policies of STM Religious Education

school and personal property and refraining from the possession of weapons or potentially harmful (or illegal) substances of any kind. Students are expected to observe STM policies as well as classroom procedures (determined by catechists). A student's failure to observe these will result in disciplinary action.

Very serious situations are determined on a case by case basis by the Director and Pastor. Some, but not limited to, are as follows: bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, physical injury, vandalism, possession of illegal substances, weapons of any kind, fighting, gang behavior. These can be grounds for immediate removal from our program.

If a student is a victim of bullying they should report the bullying to a parent, teacher or the director. If you are afraid to report bullying in person you may send an email to Mrs. Morgan or Mrs. Herr in the office. This will be taken seriously.

Cell Phones:

Cell phones are never to be used in the classroom for texting, emailing or talking. If a cell phone is used during class it will be retrieved from the student and a parent will be required to pick it up from the Director.

Cancellation of Class:

If classes are canceled, an announcement will be made over WJOB 1230AM radio. The Munster schools are also notified.

Dismissal:

Children's safety is a primary concern. Grades K-4 are dismissed at 5:57 pm and grades 5-8 are dismissed at 6:00 pm.

It is important that your student is picked up on time! When you are late, students become worried and office workers are detained.

Early Dismissal:

Rare occasions should occur to cause your student to leave class early. If this happens, send a note to the catechist stating time of pick up, reason and signature of parent must be included. **Parents must come into the office to pick up the student on an early dismissal. Students will meet the parents in the office.**

Policies of STM Religious Education

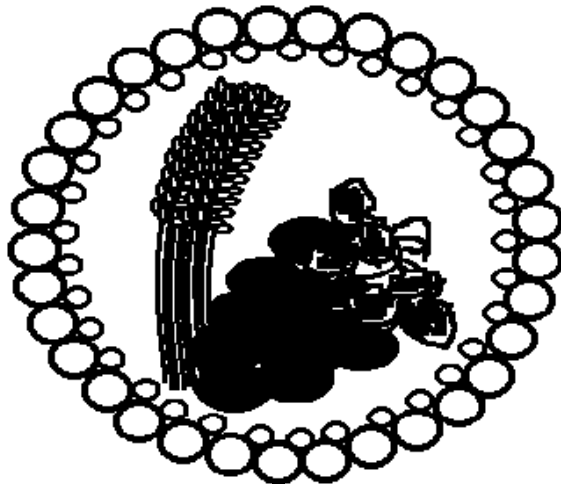
Illness or injury at school:

If a student becomes ill or injured at school, the parent or guardian is called. If a parent is not available, the person listed as the emergency contact will be notified. **It is important to update your phone numbers.**

Guardianship: A child will be released to their parent unless the Office has a copy of a court order giving one parent sole custody.

Books: Students receive their books the first day of class. Students are responsible for their books. Replacement books cost \$30.00.

Homeschool agreements for catechism are available on a discretionary basis to accommodate and supplement classes. The director must approve these agreements.



Religious Education Fall Schedule **2011-12 4:30 pm—6:00 pm**

SEPTEMBER

7/8	First Faith Formation Classes
	Catechist meeting in Cafeteria 4:00-4:20 pm
14/15	Class
18	Catechetical Sunday
	<u>All Catechists blessed at 10:00 a.m. Mass</u>
21/22	
22	Class Parent Confirmation Meeting 7:00 in gym
28/29	Class

OCTOBER

5/6	Class, Mass confirmation Commitment
12/13	Class
13	<u>Parent First Penance/First Communion Meeting</u> <u>7:00 p.m., Gym</u>
19/20	Class
26/27	Classe

NOVEMBER

1	No Class All Saints Day (Holy Day of Obligation)
2/3	Class
9/10	Class
16/17	Class
23/24	No Classes—Thanksgiving Vacation
30	Class Advent Lessons

DECEMBER

1	Class
6	<u>TUESDAY--Confirmation Retreat-</u> <u>All Eighth Graders 8:15 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Gym</u>
7	No Class
8	No Class-(Holy Day of Obligation) Immaculate Conception
14/15	Last Class before Christmas Break
21/22	No Classes Christmas Break
28/29	No Classes Christmas Break

Religious Education Fall Schedule 2011-12

JANUARY*

4/5 Classes Resume
11 & 12 Class **Report cards sent home**
 Safe Environment grades K-4
18/19 Class
25/26 Class

FEBRUARY

1/2 Class
8/9 Class
15/16 Class
18 First Penance 9:30 in Church
22/ 23 No Class Ash Wednesday Please attend Mass to
 Receive Ashes. Lent Begins.
29 Class

MARCH

1 Class-Classroom lessons: Lent Preparation
7/8 Class
14/15 Class
21/22 Class
28/29 No Classes Spring Break

APRIL

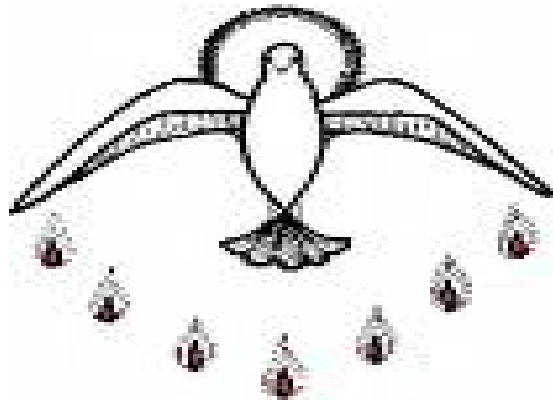
4/5 No Classes Please attend Holy Week Liturgies
8 Easter Sunday (Holy Day of Obligation)
11/12 Class
18/19 Class **Report Cards sent home.**
25/26 Last Class for all **except Third Grade**
 First Communicants

***The Bishop will set the date for the Sacrament of Confirmation in January.**

2/3
9/10
16/17
19

MAY
Third Grade classes only
Third Grade classes only
All First Communicants Both Days for Practice
First Holy Communion 10:00 am.





Saint Thomas More Parish
Religious Education

8501 Calumet Ave.
Munster, IN 46321
(219) 836-8610

www.stm-church.com