



St. Patrick Religious Education

Family Handbook

Grades 1-8



Mission Statement:

The mission of the religious education program of St. Patrick Catholic Church is to assist the parents, the primary catechists, in providing religious formation in the Catholic faith for their children. In the process, our goal is to evangelize the entire family in order to make them active members in our community of faith, centering their lives on Christ and His teachings.

2017-2018 Catechetical Year

Introduction

“Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 2222-2226). They have a unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators, or catechists. They catechize primarily by the witness of the Christian lives and by their love for the faith” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, pg. 234).

In the Scriptures, God commands parents to educate their children in faith: “Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with your whole heart, and with your whole being, and with your whole strength. Take to heart these words which I command you today. Keep repeating them to your children” (Deuteronomy 6:5-7).

Parents catechize their children primarily through the lived experience of the faith and through conversations often brought about by specific occasions. The parish Religious Education program exists in order to support you in your role as the primary catechists of your household by providing a systematic presentation of the basics of the Catholic faith. When this systematic presentation resonates with the child’s lived experience of the faith in the home, it becomes deeply meaningful and lasts a lifetime.

The systematic presentation of the faith in a gathered setting requires certain policies and guidelines to ensure a smooth program operation. St. Patrick Parish’s policies and guidelines are contained in these few pages. Please read them over and use them as a reference throughout the catechetical year.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's participation in our program, please contact us and we will be happy to discuss your questions or concerns.

Parish Office Hours

Monday-Friday - 9:00am – 4:30pm

Mrs. Nancy Longo
Director of Religious Education

512-759-3712
re@stpatrickhutto.org

Social Media

Religious education:

Twitter: @stpatrickhutto

Instagram: @stpatrickhutto

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stpatrickhuttofaithformation/

Website: <http://www.stpatrickhutto.org/religious-education>

Family Faith Resources: <http://www.stpatrickhutto.org/family-faith-resources>

During Religious Education Hours

If you have an emergency and need to speak with the Director, she is not always at her desk. Try calling her cell phone: 562-822-8779.

Sacrament Years and Records

Baptismal Certificates

A baptismal certificate is required for each child, as well as a certificate for those who celebrated First Communion at another parish. Please submit this information as soon as possible—students in sacrament years cannot receive their next sacraments until St. Patrick Parish can verify their reception of the previous sacrament. All sacramental records are kept on file in the office of the parish where the sacrament was received, and parishes will mail the certificate(s) to a parent if you call and request one.

First Reconciliation and First Communion

Second grade is the usual grade for children to receive these sacraments. Children must attend Religious Education in First and Second grade in order to receive these sacraments. Parent meetings, home preparation, and regular attendance at Religious Education are required. If your child was not baptized in the Catholic Church, please inform us immediately so that we can facilitate his/her reception of these sacraments with his/her class. If your child is older than second grade and has not received First Reconciliation or First Communion, we will provide additional classes for them within their peer age group classes. There are additional classes for parents as well.

Celebration of Sacraments

Please remember to keep the Sacrament as the center of your celebration. As your child receives First Reconciliation and First Communion, remember that receiving the sacraments of the Church is entirely about your child's growth in faith and the relationship s/he shares with Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Please keep these special days in the life of your son and daughter holy by showing reverence to the Sacrament being received. **If you feel your child is not ready to receive a sacrament, please call us.** Families will receive information on meetings, home preparation, dress requirements, etc. Full and Active Participation is expected for sacramental preparation programs.

Program Policies and Guidelines

Child Protection Policy

The Diocese of Austin and St. Patrick Parish take your child's safety seriously. Each Catechist and Volunteer completes an in depth application with references (which are checked out), as well as attend a class on Ethics and Integrity in Ministry - prior to beginning their ministry. Annually, a review of this policy is presented to our Catechists and volunteers.

Children are also given 3 modules each year on "Protecting God's Children".

- The resources are available for you to look at before your child takes the class.
- You also have to sign a permission slip for your child to attend. We will remind you when the class will be taught. If you do not want your child to attend, or you want to join us for the session - you will have those options.

Attendance for child and parent

- Children are encouraged to attend all 26 sessions.
- Parents are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to join us in the **FAMILY** nights – where the whole family can have fun and learn more about their faith.
- There will be 7 Family nights during this school year. If you cannot make it for any reason, please find another parent to be your child's host.
- Thank you in advance for your efforts to prioritize religious education amidst busy family schedules. When planning family trips, please check the calendar to see when classes are not in session.

Illness or Injury Outside of Religious Education

If your child is ill or unable to attend class for any other reason, please do not send him or her to Religious Education. If your child will not be in attendance at Religious Education for an extended time due to illness or injury, please let us know, and we will make arrangements for him/her to remain current with his/her class.

Procedures During Religious Education Classes

- When you arrive:
 - Read signs on door – a quick way to know what is going on or coming up soon.
 - Please sign your child in at table – only parents may sign. Anyone else needs a note.
 - Supervise your children to the restroom and water fountain. (Even if they don't need to go.)
 - Students will sit in church in rows marked with grade level signs until a catechist or aide comes to sit with the class. Please stay with your child until someone else is there.
 - Catechists and Aides wear a name tags – good person to ask questions
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- Parents will sign students out at the classroom – **ONLY PARENTS** – unless you have a note. (NOT neighbors, siblings, friend,...)
 - Parents must provide a written note if someone else is taking a student – please get note to us before. (Don't have a stranger bring us a note saying it is from YOU.)
 - If people are carpooling **ALL** year, only one note is necessary at the beginning of the year.
 - This is for the **SAFETY OF THE CHILD**.
 - Any students **NOT** picked up 7 minute after class – sent to me with sign-out clipboard.
- If we have notes to go home with parents, we will try to give them to you when you sign students in – if we miss you, we will attach it to the sign-out clipboard for you to pick up then.
- If your child is receiving sacraments **THIS** year or **NEXT**, they must **FAITHFULLY** attend classes **THIS** year and **NEXT**. Faithfully attend means make 75% of classes.

- If your child is receiving sacrament THIS year, there are 2 MANDATORY PARENT MEETINGS and 2 Parent/Student Workshops. Please make arrangements for child care for younger siblings so you can spend some one-on-one time with your child who is making the sacraments. Dates are on the calendar we will give you.

Fire Drill procedures / Evacuation maps

- Leave the building for a fire drill – EVERYONE – even helpers/moms. Just follow the directions given you.

Prayer packets

- I have a packet of prayers that students should know by grade level.
- Parents were given one last year. Please practice prayers with students at home. We build on the faith you teach in your home.
- If you need a new one, you may pick one up.

Service Projects

- Year-long project - students are encouraged to do good deeds. Parents are asked to give students a penny for each good deed. Students will bring their pennies to RE and put them in a jar at the sign-in table.
 - Fall money will purchase an item(s) off the angel tree.
 - Spring money will go to VBS scholarship
- Fall project – Bags of Hope
 - Each grade level is assigned an item to bring to donate to the Bags of Hope.
 - Letters will go home (from the sign-in table) explaining process
 - 7th and 8th graders will assemble bags
 - Bags will go on sale to the parents the evening we assemble them and at weekend masses
 - Extra items will be donated to the Hutto Food Pantry
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- Spring Project – Prayer Blankets
 - Money from the sale of the Bags of Hope is used to purchase fleece
 - Parent volunteers cut “fringe”
 - Students will tie the “fringes” and pray
 - Blankets are donated to Dell Children’s Hospital

Miscellaneous

- Bad Weather Day
 - If there is no school that day due to bad weather, we will not have RE in the afternoon.
 - If the weather gets bad AFTER school and you feel it is unsafe to drive, do not drive

Cell Phone Policy

All students’ cell phones must be turned off (not merely put on silent) and put away during Religious Education classes. The catechists are equipped to make a telephone call if there is an emergency. Each catechist has the home and emergency contact phone numbers for each of their students. After classes are dismissed at the end of class, they may take out their cell phones, turn them on, and use them.

Dismissal

Early Dismissal

If your child must leave early, a dated and signed note must be brought in that day. Your child may not leave the building until you come to the classroom to sign her or him out. Children will not be permitted to wait in the parking lot for early dismissal. Your child will be waiting for you in the Classroom.

Regular Dismissal

Please come to the classroom and sign your child out. If you have designated someone else to sign them out, we must have that name on our emergency form.

Conclusion

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS

- To attend Mass every weekend and be active members of the parish
- To register their children and send them to each Faith Formation session
- To encourage the proper attitude in their child
- To help develop the love of God
- To help develop respect for themselves and each other
- To cooperate with leaders to improve their child's behavior
- To volunteer as needed in the classroom or outside activities
- To assume responsibility for any willful damage done by their child to church property

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENTS

- To attend Mass each weekend and be active members of the parish
- To arrive at class on time
- To be courteous and respectful of other students and leaders
- To respect the authority of the leaders
- To respect the rights and property of others
- To participate in class discussion and projects
- To be prepared for each session as needed