

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2009-2010



Religious Education Program of Saint Mary

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“Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word”

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I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

WELCOME LETTER

“Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word.”

CATECHETICAL YEAR 2009-2010

“The aim of catechetical activity consists in precisely this: to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith.” (General Catechetical Directory, no. 66)

Dear Parent,

Welcome to the Religious Education Program of Saint Mary Parish.

The Religious Education Program of Saint Mary has a particular vision: To serve the formational needs of our young people so that the teachings and example of Jesus become a way of life for them. This formation process not only includes the “lessons”, but worship, prayer, discussion, service, charity, praise, and community- building. In partnership with families, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Religious Education Program of Saint Mary Parish works with much excitement towards this goal.

This handbook is one of many resources intended to assist your family as we pursue this goal together. With the weekly bulletin, the parish website with the Religious Education link (www.stmarybg.org), Religious Education correspondence through e-mail, and notes sent home with your child, this handbook offers materials and guidelines to help keep you informed. The Religious Education e-mail address, religious.education@stmarybg.org provides a convenient, vital link to communication. If you have any questions or concerns, or would simply appreciate more information, please contact us.

A variety of sessions are available for you and family to choose from for religious education for your convenience so that we can best learn together. Please read through this handbook carefully to be informed of the many programs and activities available.

“Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word” is the theme for this year. Prayerfully, we will connect with the presence of Christ in our everyday lives through study of the Word. It is a privilege to be in partnership with you as we learn and live the Word and Work of Jesus.

May the Lord continue to bless us all as we work, play and pray in His name!

In Christ,



Sharon M. Pawula
Director of Religious Education

P.S. Please be sure to read the whole handbook and discuss it with your child(ren). Both your signature and your child(ren)'s are required to verify. See the last page in the handbook, print it, sign and return with the youngest child in the RE program.

WHO CATECHIZES OUR CHILDREN?

Through prayer and example, every member of St. Mary's parish helps to form our children. Parents, however, are the most significant religious educators of their children. Through their words and example, they teach their children to grow in faith, knowledge, service, prayer, and love of the Lord.

In our Religious Education classes, adult volunteers share faith with our children through prayer, celebration, study, song, story-telling, crafts, discussion, film and personal sharing. Our catechists are people of faith who love God -- and children. They have made a commitment to serve our community by sharing the Good News with our young people.

Other volunteers also help to make formal catechesis possible: office volunteers, babysitters, aides, substitute catechists and many others. Their generous donations of time and service make our Religious Education Program possible.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in volunteering you are invited to call the Religious Education Office. The office staff will provide you with the volunteer forms, and the DRE can arrange for the interview necessary before you begin service in the program.

Parents, catechists, volunteers, our priests, deacons, professional staff, and the parish-at-large work together and support each other in this process of catechesis. Through our united efforts, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we help to shape our children's experience of the living God among us. Together we continue to grow in our relationship with the Lord and each other.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is the key to any successful relationship as well as Religious Education Program! Our primary sources of communication with parents and students are email, website, bulletin, letters, handouts sent home with the children, and the RE Quarterly Update. Please check your child's materials from every session to see if a note has been sent home! Be sure to check the bulletin every week for updated information. See the parish website with the R.E. link: www.stmarybg.org

The Director of Religious Education or catechists may call parents to share important good news, express concern about absences or behavior, or to pass on special information. Parents are **encouraged** to contact the DRE with questions, ideas and concerns, so that we can best work together on this faith journey.

This handbook is another important source of information. It can help you to simplify your planning, and better understand the Religious Education Program and vision.

Conferences offer other opportunities. A parent or guardian may set up an appointment with a catechist or with the Director of Religious Education. Call or write a note before coming. We cannot always be available to you just before, during or immediately after classes. We would like to be able to give you our full attention; help us out by making arrangements in advance! Catechists are busy right before and after classes with preparations and cleanup and cannot meet with you unless advance arrangements have been made. A catechist or the DRE might also wish to set up a conference. Ordinarily this would be done in advance by phone or in writing.

II. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

The Religious Education Office is located in the school. You must use the main entrance (#1) by the school office.

OFFICE NUMBERS:

General Office (847) 537-9423

Fax Number (847) 808-0548

e-mail: religious.education@stmarybg.org

MAILING ADDRESS:

50 North Buffalo Grove Road

Buffalo Grove, IL 60089

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 3:00 pm,
and during class session times

We are closed on Saturday and Sunday (outside of session times) and when the school office is closed.

PERSONNEL:

DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Sharon Pawula Pre-K through 8th Grade
spawula@stmarybg.org

OFFICE SUPPORT STAFF:

Maria Rengers

mengers@stmarybg.org

Mary Jo Sanchez

msanchez@stmarybg.org

Sue Theodore

stheodore@stmarybg.org

Joan Wenzel

jwenzel@stmarybg.org

Stacey Onysio, RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD:

With Fr. Marc Reszel and Sharon Pawula, the Board consists of:

Janet Conlon, Mary Fisher, Kathy Myers, Maria Rengers,

Mike Sarlitto, Ann Wachter and Dorota Wolpiuk

The Board is interested in new members. For information, contact the Religious Education Office.

EMERGENCY CLOSING:

Generally, Religious Education classes are canceled when the day school cancels classes due to unforeseen circumstances, such as heavy snowfall, water or electrical problems. Check the R.E. web-site for current information. An email message will also be sent out. Please make sure the R.E. office has your current email address. Listen to WMAQ 670, WBBM 780, WMAQ all news 67, WGN AM radio 720, WBBM news radio 78, Fox 32, WLS, 94.7 FM, or CLTV news for closing information. For mid-day closings we also ask public schools to make an announcement to their students during the school day. Please do not call the R.E. or Rectory Offices.

PROGRAM MEETING TIMES

PRESCHOOL/K	Wednesday	4:15 - 5:15 pm
GRADES 1-6	Wednesday	4:15 - 5:30 pm and 6:45 - 8:00 pm
GRADES 7-8	Wednesday	4:15 – 5:30pm or Wednesday 6:45-8pm (2-3x month. See calendar for exact dates)
RCIC	Wednesday	6:45 - 8:15 pm
Summer Intensive	August 5-7, 10-14	9am-noon and G 1-6 6 Gospel Get-Together or Special Events G 7 7 Participation Units
Family Catechesis	9/13, 10/3, 11/11,12/6,1/9,2/17 (Ash Wed), 2/19, 3/21,4/17	Sat. 3:30-5:30 includes 4:30 Mass Sun 9:30-11:30 includes 9:30 Mass

Classes begin at the specific times listed in this handbook. Students may not enter the building more than fifteen (15) minutes prior to class time unless they accompany parents who help staff in Religious Education. The Religious Education staff will not supervise or be responsible for children who arrive more than fifteen minutes before classes begin. Playground supervision is not provided before sessions begin. Parents are responsible for the safety of their children traveling to and from the catechetical program. Children must wait in the hall outside their classroom until their catechist arrives. Students are expected to leave at the end of class. The Religious Education program of St. Mary will not supervise or be responsible for students left on premises after dismissal.

Visitors must sign in at the office upon arrival and before leaving. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit. Please contact the D.R.E. or catechist.

ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION

POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION: Religious Education Programs operated under the auspices of the Archbishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, admit students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin.

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES: The R.E. program of St. Mary shall assist the parents in selecting appropriate agencies or resources if it is unable to meet the particular needs of a student. At this time, St. Mary's does not have a SPRED (Special Religious Education) program.

REGISTRATION: Registration packets are available in April to all parishioners. Registrations for the upcoming catechetical year are due in May. Registration is accepted late for those families moving into the area whose children were participating in a religious education program or Catholic school prior to moving. New parishioners should contact the Director of Religious Education for more information.

INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTH AND SPECIAL NEEDS: When parents register a child, they are asked to provide information which will help us better care for the child in case of a medical emergency. THIS INFORMATION IS VITAL TO YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY AND WELL-BEING. Parents must be certain that all names, phone numbers, and details regarding special medical

situations are correct and updated when a change is made. This information is used only when necessary.

Information regarding special learning challenges are also necessary if the catechist is to help your child learn in the most positive and effective manner. Please do not withhold information which might enable us to serve you and your child better.

If you have any questions, please call the Director of Religious Education.

PRIORITY FOR ADMISSION: The order of priority for admissions is ordinarily as follows:

1. Children of catechists, aides and other program volunteers.
2. Children of parishioners.
3. Children of non-parishioners, if space is available.

Class placements are usually decided on a first-come, first-served basis.

For the admission of transfer students, parents must present the proper documentation from the program previously attended. Records from the previous religion program, including all sacramental records, should be sent to the Religious Education Office of Saint Mary.

HOME STUDY: When a new child is transferring in or if there are extenuating circumstances, it may be necessary to complete a year of religious instruction at home to be properly prepared to enter class and sacrament preparation. As community formation is so important, home study option is only used when absolutely necessary, and is set up with the DRE. Tuition for home study is \$40.00 to cover cost of materials and time.

TRANSFERS WITHIN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS: Sometimes, due to medical or pastoral crisis, or due to change in family status, a parent wishes to transfer a student into a different session. In this situation, the parent must contact the Director of Religious Education in writing in advance, stating the request and the reason for requesting the transfer. We cannot guarantee that such an internal transfer is possible, but we will try to meet your needs within the confines of parish program vision and policy.

Any student in any Religious Education program transferring to another parish due will, upon the family's request, be given a letter detailing the curriculum, the student's participation, and any appropriate documentation to date.

FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTRACTED RESPONSIBILITIES: Good stewardship of time, talent, and treasure makes organized ministry possible. Together we pool our resources, ask the Holy Spirit to bless them, and then distribute them according to the greatest need and the common good of the faith community.

Families involved in the Religious Education Program are asked to give of their time, talent and treasure.

All three are necessary to support and maintain our formational ministry to young people.

The Religious Education program of Saint Mary, like Saint Mary's School, is partially subsidized by the parish. Tuition helps to cover expenses such as; student texts and resources, workbooks, films, cassettes and classroom supplies. It also helps to provide for teacher texts, resources, training

opportunities and more. The Religious Education program has to pay for its share of utility usage and facility maintenance as well. Tuition is an important source of financial support.

If the total tuition amount cannot be paid at the time of registration, a partial payment of \$50.00 per child will hold the current tuition rate. Special arrangements can be made if this is not possible. **NO CHILD IS DENIED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BECAUSE OF A LACK OF FUNDS.** If you need financial assistance, please contact the Finance Manager at the rectory, 847-541-1450.

TUITION: Current tuition fees for children in Preschool through 8th grade are \$185.00 per child for parishioners. Parishioners' families with 2 children pay \$370.00, 3 children pay \$530.00 and those families with more than 4 children pay a maximum of \$555.00. After May 3, the tuition rate is assessed an additional \$50.00. From year to year, tuition is subject to change.

In addition to tuition and the parish subsidy, the Religious Education program receives financial support from:

- The Holy Name/Men's Club
- The Women's Club
- Private donations

We encourage and appreciate your participation in parish events and groups which do so much to benefit our children.

CUSTODY ISSUES: If parents are divorced or separated, the Religious Education Program presumes that both parents have access to the children unless one parent can provide evidence that he/she has the sole right. If parents cannot agree on custody issues, the Religious Education Program may require parents to make other arrangements for the child. It is better to have matters settled at the beginning of the year than to wait for a conflict to arise.

EXPECTATIONS

BEHAVIOR AND PARTICIPATION: From the time the students arrive at St. Mary's for instruction, we expect them to show respect and consideration for the catechists, volunteers, and each other. We also expect them to show respect for property, whether it belongs to themselves, other students, catechists, volunteers, the school, or the parish.

Behavior in the classroom should be appropriate to a learning and praying environment. Each of our volunteer catechists spends time planning a lesson that will enrich our children's faith development. It is important that the lesson be shared in an atmosphere that is conducive to prayer, learning, discussion, safety, and fun.

Students must come to class on time with their text, class materials and any homework which has been assigned. Personal items, including food, not directly related to religious education, should not be brought to class. If necessary, students coming directly from school may leave their book bags in the back of the classroom during sessions.

Participation through discussion and listening, as well as following directions, is also expected. Students assist volunteers in keeping the classrooms clean and neat. Students are expected to complete any assigned work, or work missed due to absence.

Parents are expected to bring children and teens to liturgy every weekend. Students need to learn about our faith as well as how to practice it. Parents are also expected to attend parent meetings. Parental support is vital to an effective program.

Any student who disrupts the lesson with conversation that is not applicable to the subject matter or with activities that are inappropriate will be referred to the Director of Religious Education for disciplinary action. Any student whose actions make the environment uncomfortable for other students, or who threatens the safety of any members of the class will be referred to the Director of Religious Education for disciplinary action.

Saint Mary Religious Education will not tolerate the use or presence of any type of drug or drug paraphernalia, alcohol, tobacco, gun, knife (weapons), on the premises and/or to all sponsored activities affiliated with Saint Mary. Individuals found with such materials will be subject to the requirements of state and county law. Possession of such materials is grounds for immediate dismissal of a volunteer, and suspension of a student from the program.

Cell phones must be turned OFF when in the school building. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the confiscation of the phone by the D.R.E.

Pets, (dogs or cats etc.), are not to be brought onto the premises. For safety reasons, we ask your cooperation.

DISCIPLINE: The word "discipline" comes from a word meaning "to learn". Discipline is exercised when a student's behavior is inappropriate, and the student needs to learn another way to behave.

Behavior which is referred to the Director of Religious Education will result in the child reporting to the Religious Education Office.

If necessary, a parent will be contacted to pick up the student. In the case of a very serious behavior problem and/or continuing problems, the Director of Religious Education will set up a conference with the catechist, parent(s) and student to see whether continued participation in the program is possible and effective.

If a student damages or destroys parish or school property, the student's family is held financially responsible.

As suggested by diocesan policy, we reserve the right to inspect a student's personal property when there is a reasonable belief that the student is violating the rules, regulations and policies of St. Mary Parish and/or Religious Education Program.

ATTENDANCE: Children are expected to attend all sessions. When a child is absent, he/she misses the activities and instruction planned by the catechist, as well as the interaction with classmates. Absences are detrimental to effective instruction. Participation with families in out of class parish activities is an important component of the Religious Education Program.

The parents or guardian should contact the Religious Education office in advance to report an absence.

Sometimes absences cannot be avoided. If a child is absent for any reason, the child and/or parents are expected to find out what material was covered and what homework was assigned at the missed session. The student is expected to have completed all missed class and homework when he/she returns to class. In this way, absences will be less disruptive to the formation process.

Tardiness is not acceptable. It makes it difficult for the individual student to learn, and it disrupts the classroom dynamic. If there are extenuating circumstances which result in tardiness on a regular basis, the parent or guardian must contact the Director of Religious Education to discuss what can be done to help change the situation.

Early dismissal is strongly discouraged. If it is absolutely necessary, however, the request for early dismissal of a student must be given in writing by the parent or guardian on the form provided in this handbook. (For more copies of this form, stop in the R.E. Office.) A child will not be released to anyone other than a parent or guardian without this written permission.

In the case of early dismissal, the parent/guardian must come to the front office of the school to sign the child out. Students are not to be dismissed from the classroom, nor are they to wait outdoors for their ride. We ask your cooperation with this so that we can better protect the safety of all students.

Frequent absences, early dismissals or tardiness could result in a student having to repeat a grade level of Religious Education.

Students in Grades 1-8 who have more than 3 absences in one year must complete make-up activities/assignments to be credited with the year of formation.

All make-up assignments are handled through the Religious Education office. Please call to make an appointment with the Director as soon as possible.

The parish policy requires successful completion of at least 2 years of formation classes before the celebration of First Eucharist and First Reconciliation. It also requires the completion of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade formation in either a Catholic school or Religious Education program to enter the Confirmation preparation program. (Grade 8 religious education can be done concurrently with the 8th grade Confirmation Preparation program.)

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL, AND SUPERVISION

Arrival and dismissal practices require everyone's cooperation for the sake of our children's safety. The parking situation is especially awkward. To help meet these challenges, the Religious Education program generally follows the procedure used by the day school for on-campus sessions. Remember that students are not allowed in the building until 15 minutes before sessions begin. Also, students are not dismissed to other students without written permission from all parents involved. Call the Religious Education Office for more details on how to make arrangements.

SUMMER INTENSIVE: Dismissal will be in the lot behind the school. The children will stay with their teacher until picked up by the responsible adult. (If other than parent, written notice must be submitted.) All students must wait with their catechist behind their room sign. Children should stand quietly by their room sign and check out with the catechist/aide when picked up by an adult. An adult or traffic attendant must walk the student to the car. *IMPORTANT: All traffic must flow from South→North at arrival and dismissal. Please enter through Buffalo Grove Road or Lake Cook Rd. entrances. DO NOT use Church St. entrance. There is NO PARKING between the school and the cemetery. The church parking lot is reserved for volunteers only. Parents are not to stand around the doorway. Parking is available by the Activity Center or football field.

WEDNESDAYS: Students in Wednesday classes can be dropped off and picked up only in the parking lot behind the school. The drop-off/pick-up area is marked by cones and signs with room numbers. There is no playground supervision before sessions begin. When dropping off, please **DO NOT PARK BEHIND THE SCHOOL BUILDING.** Dismissal for Preschool and Kindergarten classes will be at 5:15 from their classrooms. Parents should park by the Activity Center or football field and go to their child's classroom. Older children (Grades 1-8) dismiss at 5:30 in the lot behind the school. The children are lined up by class. Dismissal for the evening session is at 8:00 pm (Grades 1-8) in the lot behind the school. Follow the direction of the Traffic Attendants. Cones mark off a lane where adults can stand by the room sign and check-out their child for pick-up. All students must wait with their catechist behind their room sign. Children should stand quietly by their room sign and check out with the catechist/aide when picked up by an adult. An adult or traffic attendant must walk the student to the car. *IMPORTANT: All traffic must flow from South→North at arrival and dismissal. Please enter through Buffalo Grove Road or Lake Cook Rd. entrances. **DO NOT** use Church St. entrance. There is **NO PARKING** between the school and the cemetery on Wednesdays. The church parking lot is reserved for volunteers only. Parents are not to stand around the doorway.

FAMILY CATECHESIS: Park by the Activity Center to prevent getting blocked in or blocking other cars in the parking lot.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

For safety's sake, **STUDENTS MAY NOT BE DROPPED OFF OR PICKED UP FROM BUFFALO GROVE ROAD OR CHURCH STREET.** Drivers who insist on such unsafe practices could be asked to withdraw their children from the program.

Cars may enter from the parking lot entrances by the Parish Office Building 'driveway' off Buffalo Grove Road, or from Lake Cook Road. Cars must exit at Church Street, as they do after weekend liturgies.

THE LANE CLOSEST TO THE CEMETERY IS A MOVING TRAFFIC LANE AT ALL TIMES. Never park in this lane. The parish has also added a fire lane around the perimeter of the church. This must also be kept clear at all times.

PLEASE DRIVE SLOWLY AND LOOK FOR CHILDREN! Sometimes students forget to look before they walk or run.

These safe arrival and dismissal practices require everyone's cooperation.

Thank you for your support.

III. CURRICULUM

Grades Pre-K thru 8th

This brief overview is intended to give an idea of the general scope and sequence of the Religious Education program of Saint Mary. Prayer, scripture, and church teaching form part of every session at every grade level. Methods of formation include worship, lecture, discussion, film, craft-making, role-playing, singing, reading, story-telling, writing and more. Catechists work hard to provide appropriate activities to facilitate learning.

Children are expected to participate in Religious Education every year. This expectation is not only a part of parish policy, but reflected in diocesan policy as well. The Universal Church in fact, mandates ongoing formation for all its members. With this in mind, the curriculum is scoped and sequenced so that every level builds on the experience and study of the previous year. Just as mathematics and language arts cannot be successfully taught and learned on a sporadic basis, neither can religion. Religious Education program of Saint Mary offers a variety of sessions to meet the needs of our busy families.

Diocesan policy suggests a minimum of two years attendance in a formal class before the reception of the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation.

Saint Mary policy supports diocesan policy. It also requires that students wishing to register in the High School program participate regularly in religious education classes in grades 6, 7, and 8, or attend Catholic grade school one of those years. The foundations in scripture and Church introduced in these years are necessary before a student can fully and effectively participate in the high school program. This is especially true for students who wish to be confirmed.

It is the mission of the R.E. program of Saint Mary Parish to work in partnership with all parents living our Baptismal call in Jesus. Sharing in the celebration of the Mass each week fosters the growth in faith that is supported in the R.E. sessions. Regular attendance at Mass either on Saturday evenings or Sunday mornings is expected and is most beneficial for the child(ren) and families. Children's Liturgy of the Word is also offered at 9:30 AM masses each week.

GRADE LEVEL PROGRAMS

PUBLICATIONS AND TEXT:

<i>Preschool ages 3 and 4:</i>	Ignatius Press series-“Who Am I?”
<i>Kind. & grades 1-6:</i>	Sadlier Publication series—“We Believe”
<i>Gr. 7:</i>	Loyola Press- “Finding God Following Jesus”
<i>Gr. 8:</i>	Loyola Press- “Finding God Celebrating Church”
<i>Gr.2:</i>	Will also use a special Eucharist text-“God’s Gift Eucharist” and a special Penance text-“God’s Gift Reconciliation”
Family Catechesis PS-8	Resources for Christian Living(RCL) series- “Faith First”, legacy edition

MAIN THEMES AND TOPICS:

AGE 3: (PS 3)	One God. Encourages respect for family, friends, the church, and other people God has given us.
AGE 4: (PS 4)	Made in God’s image: our relationship with God. Encourages self-respect, emphasizes the "special-ness" of each of us individually and as members of God’s family.
AGE 5: (Kindergarten)	Respect of all of God's creation. Emphasizes developing our relationship with God the Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit, and our relationship with others, especially family and the Holy Family.
GRADE 1:	The Trinity. Lays the foundation for future study of morality, and a deeper sense of identity with the Catholic Church. Emphasis is given to living as responsible, loving and caring Christians.
GRADE 2:	The Mass, how to live as Christians, and sacraments, especially Baptism, Eucharist, and Penance. The bulk of the program focuses on Jesus, especially in the Eucharist. Children are prepared for reconciliation and the communal reception of Eucharist.
GRADE 3:	Church, The Apostle’s Creed, the sacraments. Scripture and the marks of the church are covered.
GRADE 4:	Morality. Curriculum centers on in-depth study of the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments, Jesus as the example of how we should live, and the Holy Spirit as a source of help and guidance. Children prepare for communal celebration of the sacrament of Penance.
GRADE 5:	Review of the sacraments, with greater emphasis on them as sacred signs and celebrations. The Trinity, moral living and Church are studied at this grade level.
GRADE 6:	Salvation History. The story of the Old and New Covenants, the story of human relationship with God through a basic Catholic Christian approach to scripture study forms the core material.
GRADE 7:	Jesus the Christ, the gospels. Students study the New Testament in greater depth. Living a moral life as a follower of Jesus. Participation units to interact in our community are a requirement of this program.
GRADE 8:	Church. The students are offered choices within the themes of church history, the mass, morality, and using scripture to make meaning of how we are the church today.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR CHILDREN (RCIC)

For many reasons, children do not always celebrate the sacraments in the common sequence or time frame familiar to many Catholics. For this reason, St. Mary offers young people in Grades 2-12 and their parents a special process for the child's reception of any or all of these sacraments not yet received: Baptism, Eucharist, Penance, and Confirmation. One or both parents goes through this process with the child. The beginning of each session includes a large "group family" experience, then the large group is split up into smaller groups: parents, younger children, and older children. Each session closes with a large group event.

There will also be opportunities to participate in special liturgical rites throughout the year.

Topics for study include:

Creation and the Fall
Jesus as Messiah
Prayer

Salvation History
The Holy Sacraments
The Mass

The Trinity
The Formation of the Church

Children receive Baptism and/or Eucharist and/or Confirmation at an Easter liturgy. Penance is celebrated during the Lenten season.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION AND RECEPTION

Children are prepared for sacramental reception of Eucharist and Penance as part of the curriculum of the Religious Education program. All baptized persons not forbidden by Canon Law are entitled to receive Eucharist. Catechesis, however, is recognized as a vital element in helping form children to prepare for, and more fully participate in this sacrament. Children having reached the age of discretion are to be prepared for sacramental reception of Eucharist and Penance, even though Penance is annually required only of persons, of the age of discretion or older, who have committed grave error.

St. Mary prepares children for the sacramental reception of Eucharist as part of the Second Grade program. Children also study Church teachings and practices concerning Penance. Opportunities are offered for second graders to receive communally. In Fourth Grade, students review sacramental teaching and practice of Penance at a deeper level than was done in Second Grade.

The foundations for Confirmation preparation are actually laid beginning at the time of baptism, throughout the young person's elementary and junior high religious formation. There is a high school preparation program for Confirmation as well as a program for grade 8 students which is separate from their RE or school religion class through the Youth Ministry program of St. Mary Parish.

Parents are key to healthy sacramental formation and catechesis of their children. For this reason, parents are required to attend sacramental meetings and special celebrations held each year. These are included in the general program calendars. Reminders will also be sent home and posted in the parish bulletin. Children preparing for sacramental reception are required to attend all classes, practices/rehearsals and to participate as fully as possible. It is also expected that the children attend Mass with their family on a regular basis. Active, consistent parent and child participation is key to effective sacramental formation.

Children who have received no sacramental preparation and are in Grades 3 through 12 are required to participate in a special, intensive catechetical program designed for their needs. For information on this program, refer to the description under "**RCIC**" Section in this handbook. (above)

OTHER SPECIAL PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CHILDREN

Below is a brief description of some other formational opportunities open to children and their families. For more information, please read the bulletin, or contact the Religious Education Office or Parish Office.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD takes place at the 9:30 Mass each Sunday. The children have the opportunity to hear the Word of God in age appropriate words. They are also encouraged to share their views so that each child can participate in the experience.

OTHER CHILDREN'S LITURGIES are planned for Christmas and Easter, as well as other important feast days. These Masses provide a chance for children to celebrate liturgy in new and exciting ways. In addition, there are high school teen masses four times each year.

CHILDREN'S AND TEEN CHOIRS help to provide music. They are open to all children. Call Mary Pietro, the Music Director for more details at 847-550-9048. The Teen Choir (High School Teens) sings at the 4:30 Saturday Mass.

ALTAR SERVER TRAINING is offered annually. Contact Sandi Seidl, Liturgy coordinator at 847-541-1450. Read the bulletin for announcements regarding training sessions and information.

THE PARISH ACTIVITY BOARD OFFERS SPORTS OPPORTUNITIES to children in both the School of Religion and the Grade School. Information and forms will be sent home with students in the Religious Education program. If needed, additional information will also be published in the parish bulletin.

FAMILY SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES are offered to all families in the parish at large. The Parish Bulletin includes a variety of activities which support and encourage families who wish to offer Christian service together. Use the parish web site to keep updated on participation opportunities.

HOSPITALITY Gather for coffee, juice and good conversation. See Bulletin for details.

GOSPEL GET-TOGETHER Activity and Discussion to make the Gospel message come alive. Group discussion with adults and children once a month. Check the bulletin for details.

IV. FORMS

EARLY DISMISSAL FORM

Grades Preschool-K thru 8th

I request that my child(ren):

_____ in _____
(Name) (Room number)

_____ in _____
(Name) (Room number)

_____ in _____
(Name) (Room number)

_____ in _____
(Name) (Room number)

_____ in _____
(Name) (Room number)

be dismissed from Religious Education classes early on _____
(date)

at _____.
(time)

The person I have authorized to pick up my child(ren) is

(name of authorized person)

who is _____.
(relationship to child)

I understand that this person must present legal identification and must sign out the children before they will be released. I also understand that the children will be released from the school office only.

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTRACT

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This is your copy of the rules and regulations booklet for the Religious Education Program of St. Mary.

In order that you might better understand the philosophy and requirements of the religious education program, it is important that you thoroughly read this booklet and review the guidelines with your child.

STATEMENTS IN THIS HANDBOOK ARE SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT WITH OR WITHOUT NOTICE. THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL ATTEMPT TO KEEP YOU INFORMED OF ALL CHANGES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE; HOWEVER, SOME CHANGES MIGHT BE MADE IMMEDIATELY DUE TO UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THE SLIP BELOW which indicates that you and your child support the rules and guidelines included in this booklet. If you are viewing the handbook online, please print, sign, and return to the RE office.

Sincerely,

Sharon Pawula
Director of Religious Education



PLEASE CUT HERE AND RETURN TO THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE AT THE NEXT CLASS.

We agree to support the rules and guidelines included in this booklet.

Parent/Guardian

Date

PRINT LAST NAME HERE PLEASE

Signature of Student	Date	Grade and Room Number