

**CHURCH OF THE VISITATION
CATHOLIC CHURCH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Parent and Student Handbook

Church of the Visitation Catholic Church Religious Education Mission Statement:

The mission of the Religious Education Program for children and youth is to provide education and formation in the Catholic faith, to hand on the Good News of Jesus Christ and to support and assist the parents in their role as the first teachers of their children in the ways of the Catholic faith, so their child/ren can develop a deeper understanding and practice of the Catholic faith.

Through their baptismal promise of raising their child/ren in the Catholic faith, parents have a right and duty to be intimately involved in this preparation. This includes modeling Christian practices and participation in Sunday Liturgy. "In this way the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she is, all that she believes." (Second Vatican Council)

Class times:

Kinder – 8th Grade

- ❖ Every weekday morning from 7:20AM – 7:50AM, following the Westphalia ISD school calendar. The Religious Education Building will not be open before 7:00AM. Parents cannot leave children until building is open.

High School – 9th – 12th

- ❖ Religion Class: every Sunday, after Sunday morning Mass, beginning the first Sunday after Labor Day.
- ❖ CYO: the last Wednesday of each month beginning in September.

Children with Specific Needs:

- ❖ All Catholic children are welcome into our Religious Education program. Parents need to inform us of any specific needs of their children so we may make any necessary accommodations.

Called to Protect for Children and Youth:

- ❖ Please see attached letter from the Austin Diocese.
- ❖ The Elementary classes will be integrated with the class curriculum.
- ❖ Jr. High and High School will have a special class, which will be announced during this school year.

Emergency Class Cancellation:

- ❖ In case of inclement weather, please listen to the local news. If Westphalia or Rogers ISD is cancelled, there will not be any Religion classes.

Goals:

- ❖ Provide quality instruction in Scripture, prayer, Catholic Dogma and Tradition
- ❖ Meet and respect children and youth at their individual levels of understanding and faith development
- ❖ Support the children and their families in their faith formation and prayer life
- ❖ Integrate prayer, Scripture and service into the Religious Education program and into the child's life
- ❖ Provide instruction and preparation for the receiving of the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation
- ❖ Welcome and involve the parents in the religious education of their children

Parent Expectations:

- ❖ Ensure that your child/ren attend religion class regularly and arrive on time. Any child arriving after 7:20am will remain in the chapel, so they do not interrupt their class.
- ❖ Pray with your family every day. Use the Family Prayer book. Remember: "The family that prays together, stays together."
- ❖ Attend mass each Sunday (Saturday obligation) and observe Holy Days.
- ❖ Talk with your child about why they are attending religion class, what you expect from them and how you expect them to behave during religion class.
- ❖ Review with your child any papers/lessons, prayers and anything else sent home from religion class.
- ❖ Read the church bulletin for future references. Schedule changes will be posted.

Student Expectations:

- ❖ Behave in a Christian manner, showing respect and being cooperative with adults, and other children. Any child causing any disruptions in class will be sent to the office (after discussing their behavior) will stay in the chapel. After the 3rd incident, the parents will be called to discuss their child's behavior.
- ❖ Attend class regularly and complete all classroom activities.
- ❖ Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
- ❖ Cell phones should be turned off and used only before or after class, but NOT DURING.
- ❖ Come to class dressed in a way that does not distract from the main focus of Religious Education-the teachings of Jesus Christ

Catechist Expectations:

- ❖ Provide a loving, Christian learning environment with clear goals and expectations.
- ❖ Prepare and teach the designated curriculum.
- ❖ Set an example in the classroom of Christian values and virtues.
- ❖ Communicate regularly with and involve the parents in the faith development of their children

Sacraments:

Baptism

The parents of infants or children wanting to baptize your child need to call Father at the rectory, regarding classes and required documents.

Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist:

- ❖ The First Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are received during the 2nd Grade. Children need to be enrolled in the Religious Education Program and be in their second year of Catholic Religious education.
- ❖ Baptism is a prerequisite for the reception of any of the other sacraments. A copy of the child's Baptismal Certificate needs to be on file at the Religious Education office.
- ❖ The family must be attending mass on a regular basis. (At least 6 months prior to receiving)
- ❖ Parents need to be registered members of the Church of the Visitation or have a letter of permission from the pastor of their registered Catholic Church.
- ❖ Active parent/family participation in the Sacrament Preparation Program: Attending mass regularly as a family, praying together, discussion of and working on the information provided and attending Religion Education class and the specific Sacrament Prep classes. The Sacrament Prep. Schedule will be announced in the bulletin.
- ❖ There will be a retreat for each sacrament, which each child will be required to attend.
- ❖ Reconciliation must be received prior to receiving First Holy Communion.
- ❖ Parents must attend the Parents' Meeting for each sacrament.

Confirmation:

- ❖ Confirmation is held at the Church of the Visitation every other year. Preparation begins in 8th and 9th Grade **OR** 9th and 10th Grade. Any Student interested in receiving the sacrament of Confirmation must be at least 14 years of age and have at least two years of the above-mentioned Catholic Religious Education.
- ❖ Candidates are required to:
 - Have made their First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion prior.
 - Attend the Sacrament Preparation Program.
 - Fulfill service hours.
 - Complete the Confirmation Booklet.
 - Attend a Catholic sponsored retreat for Confirmation Candidates.
 - Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to receiving Confirmation.
- ❖ Parents must attend the Parents' Meeting for Confirmation.

Call the Director of Religious Education if you have any question related to receiving these sacraments, Linda Lorenz 254-715-0573.

Attendance:

- ❖ Faithful class attendance; full participation in all the Religion Education Program activities and attendance at weekly and Holy Day liturgy are essential for the successful completion of each grade level.
- ❖ Roll call is taken at the beginning of class. Have your child arrive on time, so not to disrupt the learning of others.
- ❖ Special events, such as, but not limited to, singing during special Sunday Mass, are an integral part of the Church of the Visitation Religious Education program and all students are expected to attend.
- ❖ If your child is absent from class it is the parent's responsibility to teach the missed lesson and to turn in to the teacher any missed work.

Sick Policy:

- ❖ If your child is sick, has a temperature or vomiting, please keep them home that day.

Come Prepared:

- ❖ Have your child use the bathroom or get a drink BEFORE going to class
- ❖ Feed your child BEFORE coming to class so they can concentrate and are happy.

Parent Involvement:

Any parent who wants to be involved in the Religion Education Program is encouraged and welcomed to do so. Help is always needed to substitute, help teachers with special activities, holidays, prepare for different Family Meetings and High School refreshments and praying for the Religion Education Program, the children and catechists and their families. Anyone interested in helping can contact your child's teacher or Linda Lorenz.

Please take the time to show appreciation and gratitude to the Religious Education teachers. These good people give of their time and talents and come every morning/evening to help fulfill the promise you made at the baptism of your child/ren, that you would raise them as a Catholic. Please also, teach your child/ren to respect and appreciate their teachers.

If you have any questions or concerns with the program, or a catechist, please call and talk to Linda Lorenz
254-715-0573

Addendum

Church of the Visitation
Religious Education Program
2016-2017

Please remember our Catechists are volunteers, who come every morning or on Sunday mornings, because they care for your children. We are simply an extension and reinforcement, of your promise, which you accepted at baptism to raise and teach your child/ren the Catholic Faith.

Elementary and Jr. High Classes:

- Classes begin on August 22, 2016 at 7:20 am.
 - Mass will be on Wednesday mornings unless otherwise announced by notes sent home or posted in the Church Bulletin. Please have your child/ren dress appropriately.
 - Please have your child arrive on time. When children come into a classroom late it disrupts the entire class.
 - Any child causing any disruptions in class will be sent to the DRE (after discussing their behavior, with me, they will remain in the chapel as not to interrupt class again).
This will not be a play/visit time but a very quiet prayerful time. These children will be counted absent since they will not be in class in the learning environment.
- After 3 times of misbehavior, the parents will be notified.
- A child who is dropped off at the Religion Building for class and then needs to leave early for any reason, (make up test, band practice, etc.), a note or a phone call from a parent is required.

Outreach and High School Classes:

- Classes begin on the Sunday after Labor Day, September 11, 2016 at 9:00 am (after Mass) and will end at 10:15 am.
- Snacks and drinks, not a full breakfast, will be provided. These are donated, so if you would like to provide Granola Bars, Honey Buns, Crackers, etc. Sodas and Waters, it would be appreciated.
- The 9th & 10th graders will be preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. This will be their second year of a two-year preparation program, so it is very important for them to attend all classes.
- There are a few Sundays when your child will be involved with volunteer activities, such as: Church Picnic, Decorating the Religious Ed Christmas Tree, etc. Please stay updated of these activities and class days and holidays in the Church Bulletin.

CYO MEETINGS:

- CYO is for all students 7th grade through 12th grade.
- The first meeting will be on Wednesday evening, Sept. 28, 2016, 7:00 pm.
- Meetings are on the last Wednesday evening of each month.

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