

DIVINE MERCY AFC

Parent/Student Handbook For Religious Education

2026-2027

Grades 1-11

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WELCOME to the 2026–2027 Year of Religious Education!

The parishes of the Divine Mercy AFC—St. Mary’s, St. Michael’s, and St. Paul’s—are dedicated to supporting parents in your role as the primary educators of your children and to supplementing the faith formation they receive at home. This Parent-Student Handbook explains our program and expectations.

Schedule

All students (grades 1–11) meet at the following times on Wednesday evenings, as indicated on the calendar. You are urged to have your children arrive five minutes before the assigned time:

- **St. Michael’s:** 6:15 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 - **St. Mary’s:** 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.
 - **St. Paul’s:** 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.
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Location: Entrance and Exit

- **St. Mary’s** – Enter through door #5 (gym parking lot entrance) and meet in the school cafeteria. Students should be in the cafeteria and seated at their designated tables by 6:30 p.m.
 - **St. Michael’s** – Enter through the main west entry doors and meet in the school cafeteria. Students should be in the cafeteria by 6:15 p.m.
 - **St. Paul’s** – Enter through the front doors of the church and meet in the church. Students should be in the church and seated by 7:00 p.m.
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Communication

The primary methods of communication will be through email and Flocknote. Please ensure you provide a current email address that you check weekly, as well as a current phone number. If your email or phone number changes during the year, please update our office as soon as possible.

Be attentive to your phone during class time so we are able to contact you if necessary.

Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary to ensure your child receives the full benefit of the faith formation offered in the Religious Education program. Furthermore, consistent attendance and participation are needed to ensure your child is obtaining the necessary knowledge to grow in their faith and receive the sacraments.

Religious Education attendance should take precedence over all extracurricular activities. If an absence is necessary due to illness or family needs, please text or call **507-441-0332** or email **dre@sesmschool.com**. Excessive or unexcused absences may impact sacrament preparation or prevent progression to the next grade level.

Family Expectations & Mass Attendance

Your parish's religious education program is meant to supplement your child's faith formation, which begins at home. A child who only encounters the faith on Wednesday nights is unlikely to find the experience fruitful or rewarding.

As stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the faithful are expected to follow these five main precepts:

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.
 2. Confess your sins at least once a year.
 3. Receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
 4. Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
 5. Help provide for the needs of the Church.
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Snow/Wind Chill Cancellations

If school is canceled or dismissed early on a Wednesday due to weather, there will be no Religious Education classes that evening. An email notification will usually be sent as well, but please also stay updated with school announcements.

Fundraiser

The Religious Education program will conduct one fundraiser each year to raise money for program expenses. All families are encouraged to participate.

Behavior

Class time for Religious Education is limited. Parents send their children to class so they have the opportunity to grow in their Catholic faith. A good learning environment requires attentiveness and cooperation.

Any behavior that deprives others of their right to learn or interferes with a catechist's ability to teach is considered disruptive. Students who are disruptive or behave in a manner unbecoming of a Christian student will first receive a warning from their teacher. If the behavior continues, the student will be sent to the Director's office and parents will be notified. Repeated offenses may result in parents being asked to attend class with their child or provide religious education at home.

Please remember that the teachers are unpaid volunteers who willingly give their time and talents to enrich your child's faith.

Additional Expectations

1. Candy, pop, gum, and other snacks are not allowed in the classrooms unless provided by the teacher. Please ensure students have eaten beforehand.
2. Students should move through the building quietly and respectfully.
3. Courtesy, cooperation, and respect are expected from students toward each other and the catechist.
4. The church is a place of reverence and prayer. Students must enter and leave quietly.
5. Students will be expected to pay for any damage they cause to the grounds or building, or clean up any mess they create.
6. Please respect the property of others, including desks, lockers, electronics, etc.
7. Dress appropriately and modestly. Hats are not to be worn in the building.
8. Students may not write on whiteboards, Smartboards, etc., unless part of class instruction or activity.
9. Students are expected to participate in class discussions and complete tasks assigned by their catechists.
10. Medications should not be brought to class.
11. Use the restroom and drinking fountain before or after class. Students will not be excused during class time.
12. Items that could cause injury to oneself or others are not permitted in the building.
13. Cell phone use during class is not permitted. If this becomes an issue, phones may be collected at the start of class and returned at dismissal.