

ST. FRANCIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICIES

FAITH FORMATION BEGINS AT HOME

As part of their commitment at Baptism, parents promise to raise their child in the faith. Parents are the primary and foremost teachers of their children. As such, parents and families are integral and vital members of our Religious Education and parish communities. Family participation includes, but is not limited to, participating in intergenerational learning opportunities, discussing the faith with their children, practicing prayers with their children, and attending periodic adult learning sessions.

If a family determines that they must home school their children regarding Religious Education, they must abide by the Diocesan Policy Relative to Home Study Option for Catechesis. If this option is deemed necessary by a family, please contact the Religious Education Coordinators for more information. Note that this is not a long-term situation, but a temporary one, giving permission for the home study option for one year at a time.

MASS

As Catholics, the Eucharist is the “source and summit of the Christian life.” Without the Eucharist, we are spiritually starving. Regular attendance at weekly Mass and on Holy Days of Obligation is essential.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend each scheduled class and event. If a student cannot attend, they will timely inform a Religious Education Coordinator, and complete and return take home work or attend a make up class. The method of make up is at the coordinator’s discretion, depending on the number of other students needing make up and the material involved. Note that frequent unexcused absences will be reported to the pastor and a meeting may be required regarding continuing in the program.

COVID-19 POLICY

Staff, Catechists, and families shall monitor and abide by the guidelines (particularly regarding isolation and masking after a positive COVID test) promulgated by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Diocese of Springfield relative to COVID-19. All classes are in person.

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Should a class or event need to be postponed or cancelled due to inclement weather, alerts will be sent via email and Flocknote, and will be posted on the parish Facebook page. If necessary, classes will be rescheduled and the new date circulated in the same manner.

ACCOMMODATIONS

If a student or family member requires accommodations due to any disabilities, please inform the Religious Education Coordinators. This information will only be shared with coordinators, the catechist, and the pastor (if applicable).

RESPECT

All students and families will treat one another, the catechists, and Religious Education Coordinators with dignity and respect. Should an issue arise that cannot be adequately addressed by the catechist, the Religious Education Coordinators will discuss the issue with the parents/guardians. If the situation does not resolve, the pastor will be informed and a meeting may be required regarding continuing in the program.

COMMUNICATION

It is important that there be effective and courteous communication between families, catechists, and the Religious Education Coordinators. Families should be sure to provide current contact information. Families should also fully review any e-mails, texts, or other communications from the coordinators. Students in 7th grade and above will also provide their contact information and receive communication through the Flocknote system, particularly as they are beginning to take responsibility for their own faith and growth.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Learning and growing in faith is a lifelong endeavor. As such, it is important that students participate in Religious Education each year. Additional learning is needed for those in sacramental preparation. For First Reconciliation and First Communion, students must attend Religious Education in both 1st and 2nd Grades. For Confirmation, students must attend in 7th, 8th, and 9th Grades. St. Francis Church recognizes that Confirmation is NOT “Catholic graduation,” and teens post-Confirmation participate in our Micah 6:8 program.

Students preparing for Confirmation who attend Pope Francis Prep. or St. Mary’s High may complete their sacramental preparation at school and receive the sacrament at St. Francis. Second grade students who attend Catholic school are welcome to participate in our program. They will have the option of receiving their sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist at St. Francis or with the parish associated with the school. Their preparation for the sacraments will be received in their schools. Families with children in parochial schools should register as part of the Religious Education program here at St. Francis, foregoing any fees.