



Parent Handbook

*This handbook can be found at www.smdpcatholic.com
under Religious Education > Parent Resources Tab*

Because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the Church (Canon 226, §2).

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St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church Office
5495 Elliott Road, Lake Charles, LA 70605

Look for us on the Web: www.smdpcatholic.com

Like us on Facebook: @smdpcatholic

Religious Education Team (337) 478-3845

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Emergency Communication during School Hours

- ✓ Drive to St. John Elementary and pull into the pick-up lane
- ✓ Approach the Security Team Volunteers for assistance

Classes are held at St. John Elementary

- Grades 1-8: Wednesdays, 5:30-7:00 pm
- Grades 9-11: Wednesdays, 6:00-7:30 pm

Religious Education Resources

The *Bible* (NAB version published by Saint Mary's Press)

- Grades 1 through 4 use *The Catholic Children's Bible*
- Grades 5 through 8 use *Break Through!*
- Grades 9 through 11 use *The Catholic Youth Bible*

The *Gold Book, Prayers, Beliefs, and Practices of our Catholic Faith*, published by the Diocese of Lake Charles (can be found at smdpcatholic.com click on Religious Ed then Parent Resources)

Additional Curriculum:

- **First through Eighth Grade Classes:** *Faith and Life*, published by Ignatius Press
<http://www.ignatius.com/promotions/faithandlife/>
- **First through Fifth Grade Classes** also use: *REVEALED* by Ruah Woods
- **Sixth through Eighth Grade Classes** also use: *Theology of the Body for Teens* by Ascension Press
- **Ninth through Eleventh Grade Classes** also use: *Witness to the Gift* (The USCCB's *Adaptation of Doctrinal Elements* is the curriculum's framework) **AND** *YouCat* **AND** Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*

Policies and Guidelines for Classroom Learning

Amendments to Policies and Guidelines

The St. Martin de Porres (SMdP) Religious Education (RE) Department reserves the right to make changes to the policies and procedures as needed throughout the year.

Attendance

In order for the St. Martin de Porres RE program to assist the students in learning the faith, students are expected to attend classes regularly. The SMdP RE Staff recognizes there will be unavoidable absences due to illness and other important reasons.

- To fulfill the diocesan guidelines, students are expected to attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled classes.
- Parents should notify the RE Staff when their student will be absent. If several absences are expected (i.e. for a lengthy illness), parents may choose home learning so that no disruption occurs in the child's education.
- Students who do not attend school or are checked out of school due to illness should not attend RE on that same day. Students should be fever-free, without the use of fever reducing medications, for 24 hours before attending RE classes and activities.
- An excessive number of absences could result in a child being dropped from the class.
- Students should arrive at least 5 minutes before class time. If your child is tardy, bring the student to a security volunteer to be escorted to class. If security personnel are not visible at the drop-off point, it is the parent's responsibility to walk the student to entrance and knock on the door.
- Excessive Tardies: First offense is a warning, second is a call home, third is an automatic send home with an absence. Makeup work to excuse the absence may be assigned by the grade level coordinator.
- Do not leave your student unattended.
- Guests are not allowed to attend classes unless they are invited speakers.

Makeup Assignments

Students may have their absence excused after makeup work has been turned in and the Coordinator verifies the work is complete and correct.

- **Grades 1-4:** Makeup work consists of memorizing grade level expectations from the Gold Book.
- **Grades 5-8:** Makeup work will be determined on an individual basis.
- **Grades 9-11:** Makeup work will be determined on an individual basis.

Closings Due to Inclement Weather

The SMdP RE program follows the Calcasieu Parish School Board (CPSB) weather cancellations. Parents will be notified via Flocknote text messages. Refer to **Communication** (page 5).

Safety Procedures

- Tobacco, drugs or weapons will not be brought to class. All students and volunteers will show respect for our students, volunteers, other adults, school, and church property by following this policy. If this policy is broken, a parent will be called to remove the student from the property.
- Safety drills for shelter in place and evacuation will be held.
- All parents, students, volunteers, and visitors are required to follow the directions of our Safety Volunteers.

Use of Electronics

- Cell phones are to be turned off and turned in to classroom volunteers during classes or events.
- Games and other electronics are not to be brought into the classroom.

Food, Gum, and Beverages are not to be brought into the school or classroom.

Dress Code

As witnesses to the faith, students and volunteers are expected to clothe themselves modestly and respectfully.

- Caps, hats, and hoods are to be removed during class.
- Pajamas, revealing tops (such as tank tops and muscle shirts, halter tops, crop tops, etc.), “sagging” or low-cut pants are not permitted.
- Any clothing (shorts, skirts, or dresses) shorter than 7” from the floor when kneeling must be worn with sliders consistent with this 7” length.
- If yoga pants or leggings are worn, the shirt must be finger-tip length and/or cover the backside. Alternatively, athletic shorts may be worn over leggings.
- A warning will be given to the student and the parent if the dress code is violated.
- The student will not be permitted to remain in the classroom if there is a 2nd offense.

Discipline

The SMdP Religious Education program includes volunteers who generously give their time and talents so that the students entrusted to their care can grow in their relationship with Jesus and in living our Catholic faith. As educators of the faith, we expect all students to conduct themselves in a Christian manner. Behavior or attitudes contrary to one’s Christian calling are unacceptable. Parents will be contacted if necessary.

Communication - St. Martin de Porres RE Team uses a variety of communication tools.

- Flocknote is used to send text messages and emails informing parents, volunteers, high school students and their sponsors about class changes, cancellations, or other important reminders.
- Personal emails, phone calls, or text messages are used when appropriate.
- St. Martin de Porres website - www.smdpcatholic.com *Note: Photos to highlight our program, posted by SMdP RE Staff, will not have the names of the students listed or “tagged.”*

First Penance and First Eucharist Sacramental Policies

Jesus began his work on earth by calling people to repentance and faith. "Reform your lives and believe in the gospel." (Mk 1:15) Toward the end of his earthly life we read about Jesus' institution of the Sacrament of Eucharist: "Then Jesus took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.' And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.'" (Lk 22:19-20)
Conversion means turning from sin toward him - present in his Church, in the Eucharist, in his works, and in our neighbor.

(Adapted from the Diocese of Lake Charles diocesan policies and guidelines for the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist:
<http://live.lcdiocese.org/sacramental-preparation>)

In keeping with diocesan policies and guidelines, the St. Martin de Porres Religious Education team has established the following policies for First Penance and First Eucharist:

As the primary teachers of the Catholic faith, parents are expected to:

- ✓ model the Catholic faith for their student, especially by regularly attending Mass and participating in the life of the Church.
- ✓ **attend the parent meetings, retreats, and celebrations of the Sacraments of First Penance and First Eucharist or complete the home learning activities associated with these events.**
- ✓ help their students learn the prayers, beliefs, and practices from the *Gold Book* up to and including second grade expectations.
- ✓ work with their student on the home study materials and review procedures for receiving these sacraments.

As learners of the faith, students are expected to:

- ✓ attend Mass regularly.
- ✓ have consistently attended an approved religious education program in the year prior to the sacramental year or have completed appropriate remedial work as approved by the SMdP RE Department.
- ✓ consistently attend religious education sessions during the sacramental year.
- ✓ complete, in a timely manner, any makeup work for classes and activities missed.
- ✓ participate in retreats, rituals, rehearsals, and liturgies for the reception of these sacraments.
- ✓ learn the prayers, beliefs, and practices from the *Gold Book* up to and including second grade expectations.

Confirmation - Sacramental Policies

"The sacrament of Confirmation impresses a character and by it the Baptized, continuing on the path of Christian initiation, are enriched by the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church; it strengthens them and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses to Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith."
(Canon 879)

Sacramental Preparation

- Candidates are expected to successfully complete all Diocesan 8th grade requirements before starting 9th grade.
- Remote preparation for Confirmation (9th and 10th grade years) may be received either in the parish program or in Catholic Schools.
- Immediate preparation (11th grade) takes place only in the parish program.

In keeping with Canon Law of the Catholic Church (Canon 874) and with diocesan policies and guidelines found in the *Red Book of Confirmation*, the St. Martin de Porres Religious Education policies for immediate preparation for Confirmation are:

As the primary teachers of the Catholic faith, parents are expected to:

- ✓ attend parent meetings, rituals, and the Confirmation Mass.
- ✓ model the Catholic faith, especially by regularly attending Mass and participating in the life of the Church.
- ✓ assist their students in meeting the expectations listed below.

As candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation, students are expected to:

- ✓ have consistently attended an approved religious education program in the previous two years or completed approved home learning or remedial work.
- ✓ select a sponsor who models the Catholic faith and meets guidelines found in the *Red Book*.
- ✓ learn prayers, practices, and beliefs of the Catholic Church found in the *Gold Book*.
- ✓ regularly attend Mass and participate in the Sacraments of Eucharist and Penance.
- ✓ consistently attend the classes and activities planned for the course and complete, in a timely manner, any assignments or makeup work for classes and activities.

As chosen mentors for the Confirmation candidates, sponsors are expected to:

- ✓ model the faith by regularly attending Mass and participating in the life of the Church.
- ✓ be a Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.
- ✓ have completed at least the sixteenth year of age.
- ✓ not be the father or mother, or a person in the parental role, of the candidate.
- ✓ participate in the classes and activities indicated for sponsors, discussing the faith with their candidate.

Children with 504 Accommodations or Other Special Needs

- At registration, parents should notify the SMdP RE Department of any learning differences that will affect their student's learning potential during our classes so accommodations may be made.
- If the students' needs cannot be accommodated within our regular classes, the SMdP RE Staff will help locate an appropriate program and will provide assistance with specialized home learning.
- All personal information will be kept confidential by the RE Staff and those working with the students.

Catechesis Through Home Learning

- If Catholic parents choose to provide catechesis for the children in their home, that catechesis must be both complete and authentic. (*Code of Canon Law* #226, §2)
- Parents who choose home-based catechesis must adhere to all guidelines for catechists as outlined by the diocesan bishop. (*Code of Canon Law* #776 and #774, §1)

Home learning within the SMdP RE Program is at the discretion of the grade level coordinator and with the approval of the pastor. If home learning is authorized, parents must:

- ✓ be a parishioner of SMdP.
- ✓ register their student(s) with the RE program and pick up teaching resources and the home learning plan provided by the grade level coordinator.
- ✓ teach from all of the following:
 - Catholic Bible
 - The SMdP or diocesan-approved curriculum for that grade level
 - Gold Book (*Prayers, Beliefs, and Practices of Our Catholic Faith*)
 - The home learning plan provided by the grade level coordinator
 - Safe Environment curriculum approved by the Diocese of Lake Charles
- ✓ turn assignments and documentation in to the grade level coordinator by the deadlines indicated on the home learning plan.

Exceptions for Home Learning

- Homeschooling is not an option for sacramental preparation grades (see **Sacramental Policies**).
- During times of pandemic, home learning may be necessary for some sacramental preparation.

Questions and Concerns

You may communicate your questions or concerns about the SMdP Religious Education program using the following procedure:

- ✓ First, contact the Coordinator of Religious Education for your student's grade level.
- ✓ After talking to the Coordinator, if questions and concerns still persist, contact the Director of Religious Education in the church office (337) 478-3845.

St. John Elementary
5566 Elliott Road

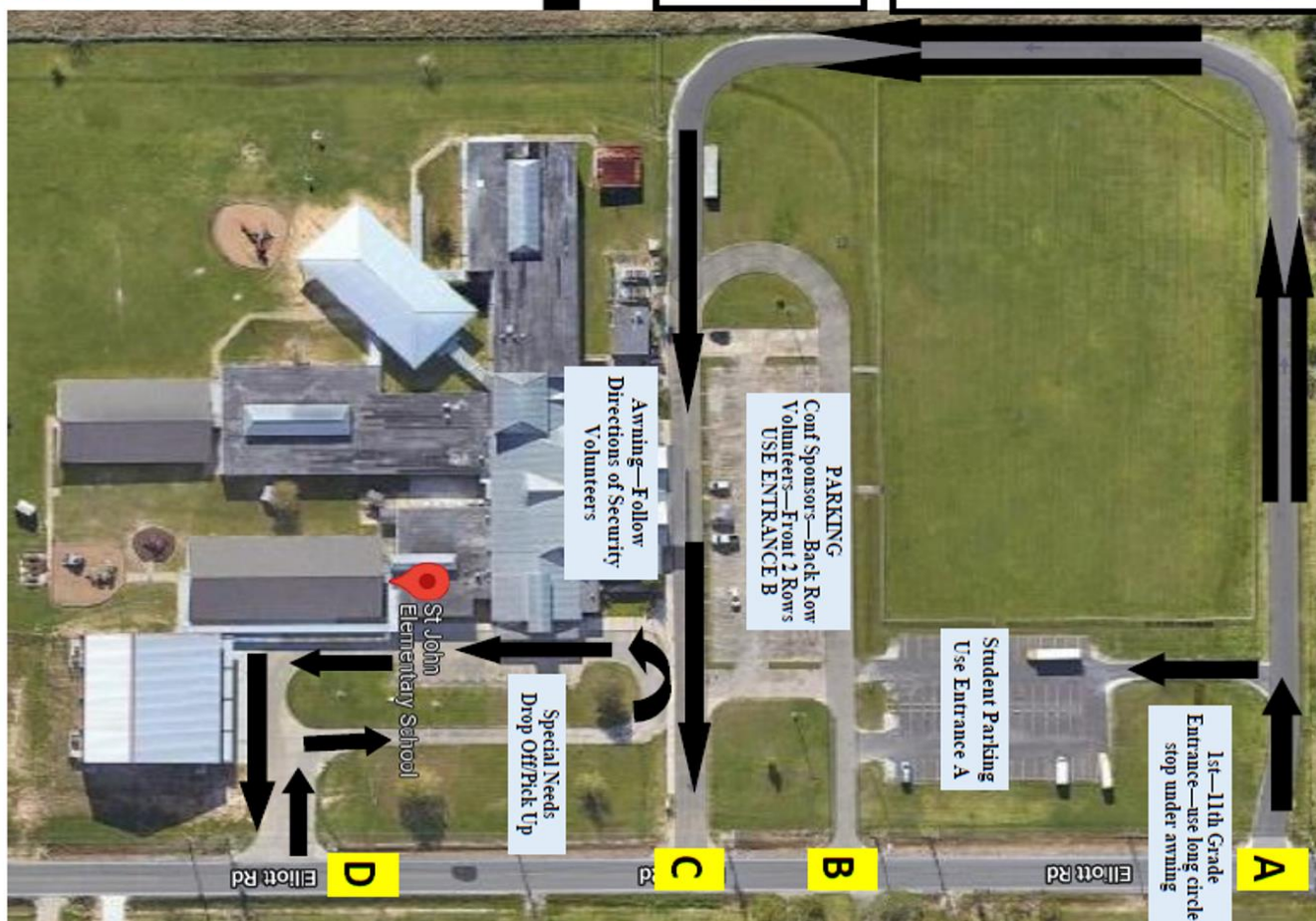
WEST ↑

Wednesday
Night

Grades 1-8 / 5:30 to 7 pm
Grades 9-11 / 6 to 7:30 pm

SOUTH

NORTH



Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

To ensure safety please follow these rules:

- ✓ When dropping off and picking up your child(ren), please be patient and follow the instructions of the Security Volunteers as they direct traffic. Children move slowly and not all classes dismiss at the same time. This means you may have to wait a minute or two before it is your turn to drop off or pick up your child(ren). **Impatient drivers make the drop off and pick up process unsafe for both the children and the Security Volunteers.**
- ✓ Drivers should not use cell phones during drop-off and pick up.
- ✓ Students must be supervised at all times while they are on campus.
- ✓ Students are to arrive no sooner than 15 minutes before class.
- ✓ During governmental health advisories, parents should not leave until their student's temperature has been determined to be below 100.4°.
- ✓ Students must be greeted by security volunteers before parents leave.
- ✓ Students are to be picked up within 15 minutes after class.
- ✓ The student's SMdP RE name card is to be displayed in the front windshield (passenger side).
- ✓ Carpool drivers picking up or dropping off for another family must have that student's SMdP RE name card.

- ✓ In the event that the student's SMdP RE name card is not in the vehicle for drop off or pick up, the driver will be asked to pull out of line, park in the parking lot, and walk in to the St. John Elementary Cafeteria with their driver's license. An SMdP staff member, or appointed designee, will verify that the driver is listed as an emergency contact for the student using the driver's license. If the driver is not listed as an emergency contact, the SMdP staff member will begin phoning the parents to secure permission to release their child(ren) to the driver.
- ✓ Licensed high school students are allowed to drive themselves to class and park.
- ✓ All drivers must follow the instructions of security staff and posted signs.
- ✓ All drivers must use the drop off and pick up lines. No driver is allowed to park and walk in to pick up a student or have a student walk out to the parked car.
- ✓ Students are to exit and enter vehicles on the passenger side.
- ✓ Drop off and pick up students only in designated areas.

Early Pick Up

- No student is allowed to leave RE during class time unless the parent or guardian has notified a RE Staff member **in advance of class, NOT a volunteer.**
- Safe Environment regulations indicate the RE Staff must verify who is picking up the student.
- In the event of an emergency that necessitates picking up a student early, ask the security volunteer monitoring the drop off and pick up area to contact a SMdP RE Staff member to facilitate the verification of the driver's identity and the student's dismissal.

Drop Off and Pick Up for All Grades

- Approach on Elliott Road only from the north to prevent traffic congestion where cars are entering and exiting from the various parking lots.
- Use driveway A, the furthest north driveway.
- Line up in two parallel lines—keeps cars from backing up onto the main road.
- Follow the instructions of the Security Volunteers as they direct traffic.
- Let children out of the vehicle from the passenger side only and under the awning—not before the awning.
- When exiting use driveway C, negotiate a “Right Turn Only” onto Elliott Road (towards the south).

Drop Off and Pick Up for Special Needs Students

- Approach on Elliott Road only from the south to prevent traffic congestion where cars are entering and exiting from the various parking lots.
- Use driveway D, the furthest south driveway.
- Follow the instructions of the Security Volunteers as they direct traffic.
- When exiting use driveway D, negotiate a “Right Turn Only” onto Elliott Road (towards the south).

Parking for Confirmation Students (Licensed to Drive)

- Approach on Elliott Road only from the north to prevent traffic congestion where cars are entering and exiting from the various parking lots.

- Use driveway A, the furthest north.
- Make an immediate left-hand turn into the Student Parking Area.
- Every Student Vehicle must have a Car Tag showing their authorization to park.
- Follow the instructions of the Security Volunteers as they direct traffic.
- When exiting, use driveway B using caution. It will be dark.

Safe Environment - Keeping Your Children Safe

“The Diocese of Lake Charles recognizes the God-given dignity of every human being and condemns all forms of abuse or neglect of people of all ages. In regard specifically to minors, it is the policy of the Diocese of Lake Charles that abuse or neglect of minors is totally reprehensible and intolerable behavior. Any such conduct is to be considered, by its very nature, completely contrary to Christian morality and therefore is contrary to the duties and employment of all personnel serving within the Diocese and cannot be justified.” (DoLC Policy 701)

To report an occurrence of child abuse within any diocesan activity or by any diocesan personnel or volunteer, a victim or other person aware of abuse may contact the Victims Assistance Coordinator at the Diocese of Lake Charles office by calling (337) 439-7400. All conversations with the Victims Assistance Coordinator will be confidential. As an alternative, a victim or person aware of abuse may contact the Diocese directly by calling the Vicar General at (337) 439-7400.

Obligation to Report

Any person who has actual knowledge of or who has reasonable cause to suspect an incident of abuse or neglect of a minor by any personnel or volunteer of the Diocese of Lake Charles shall comply with all applicable reporting requirements of state law and all applicable federal and local laws, if any, and shall report to the Diocese as follows:

- A verbal report shall be made immediately to the chief administrative officer of a school, church, agency or other institution or organization and to the pastor of the parish wherein the incident is alleged to have occurred. As soon as possible, but within a period of time not to exceed five (5) days, a written report must be submitted by the pastor to the Diocese.
- Should any person wish to make an allegation of abuse on a minor by a priest, deacon, or other religious such as a nun or brother, that person is to contact the office of Child and Youth Protection of the Diocese of Lake Charles at (337) 439-7400.

The safety of the children and youth in our parish is of utmost importance to us. It is the policy of St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church to comply, to the best of our ability, with the guidelines and requirements set forth by the Diocese of Lake Charles.

- All RE staff and volunteers receive Safe Environment training annually.
- Students will receive Safe and Sacred training as part of their religious education.
- Parents will be provided with the parent portion of the *Safe and Sacred* curriculum when their students receive this diocesan-required teaching in RE classes.

We ask parents and guardians to help us keep their students safe by complying with all regulations as stated in this handbook regarding building access and adult supervision

Youth Ministry

The purpose of youth ministry at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church is to mold children of God into disciples of the Roman Catholic Church through spiritual, community-building, and service-oriented activities and events.

The weekly SMdP bulletin, Flocknote, and our SMdP Facebook page will provide updates on youth activities.

If you are interested in volunteering or for more information, contact:

Dr. Colin Broussard at (337) 478-3845

cbroussard@smdpcatholic.com

A Parent's Prayer

Loving God,
You are the giver of all we possess,
the source of all our blessings.
We thank and praise you.
Thank you for the gift of our children.
Help us to set boundaries for them,
and yet encourage them to explore.
Give us the strength and courage to treat
each day as a fresh start.
May our children come to know you, the one true God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.
May your Holy Spirit help them to grow
in faith, hope, and love,
so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.
May their ears hear your voice.
May their eyes see your presence in all things.
May their lips proclaim your word.
May their hearts be your dwelling place.
May their hands do works of charity.
May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,
Your Son and our Lord. Amen

Catholic: Prayer for Catholic Families. Loyola Press: Chicago, 1998