



St. Michael Catholic Church
Religious Education (catechism)
Family Guide



Office of

Religious Education

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Catechism Classes

Second Year classes are on Wednesdays, from 6-7:30pm

First Year classes are on Tuesdays, from 6-7:30pm

All classes meet at Compass School, on the St. Michael Campus

Parent Involvement

"Parents are the first and most important catechists of their children. They catechize informally but powerfully by example and instruction. His active participation in the parish, his willingness to seek opportunities to serve others, and his practice of frequent and spontaneous prayer, make his professions of faith meaningful."

Sharing the Light of Faith
National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Our catechism program is specifically designed to educate and support parents in their effort to fulfill their important mission of raising their children in the Catholic faith.

The parish offers adult faith formation opportunities and events for our community throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to participate to: develop their own spirituality, demonstrate to their children the importance they place on growing in wisdom and grace before God, better prepare for their ongoing mission as their children's **primary catechists**, and lastly, enjoy the fellowship of the parish community.

Children learn best when they can connect the topic to their everyday lives. By making the Catholic faith a part of daily life and family decision-making, parents provide the vital link between what we learn in religious education and how children actually live their lives, now and in the future.

The following are some specific ways parents can be actively involved in their child's religious education:

- Attending Mass regularly on Sundays with the family is mandatory. This is the most important thing you can do to form a strong and lasting relationship between your child and God. Always by example is one of the most important things that parents can give their children. If faith is important to you, your child will also accept your faith. It's a good idea to ask your children, "How did God speak to you at Mass today, what did you learn?"

- This year they will have to scan a QR code that will be provided in the narthex of the Church. If you have difficulty scanning the code, the ushers will be there to assist you. If for any reason you do not attend Mass at St. Michael Parish, please provide the bulletin of the parish you attended.

- Ask your child what he or she is learning in the catechism and have him or her explain what he or she likes best. Our catechists follow a teaching guide and grade-specific teaching goals are set.



Religious Education Class Assignment



In the Diocese of Memphis, the preparation of the sacraments is a two-year process. A student must have been enrolled in catechism for a full year prior to the year in which they plan to receive their sacrament. Our diocese celebrates the sacraments of Reconciliation/Confession and First Communion in 2nd grade. Confirmation is celebrated in the eighth grade.

We have the following classes available in our Catechism Program:

- The FIRST YEAR in Religious Education, the student will be placed in their current grade level class - no sacraments will be received in the first year. (FIRST YEAR OF PREPARATION FOR SACRAMENTS) Children attending on Tuesdays.
- The SECOND YEAR in Religious Education, these students will be placed in a SACRAMENT PREPARATION class also depending on their grade level. Students will receive the sacraments of Reconciliation/Confession and First Communion or Confirmation.
- If your child has disabilities or special needs and is unable to attend classes, talk with your child's principal and catechist to develop a plan for your child. We want inclusion to be a success for everyone. And if for some reason during the year something is not going well, please contact the catechism director.

General Information About the Sacraments

Preparation for the sacraments is a two-year process

• **Confirmation Preparation:** The second year of Confirmation preparation are required to perform 12 hours of service during the school year. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL APRIL to complete the hours of service.

• **Sacrament Meetings for Parents:** At St. Michael's, we require parents of children who will receive First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation to attend parent meetings.

If any child misses a significant number of religion classes and/or parents do not attend parent sacrament meetings, it could result in a delay in receiving the sacrament.

Overview

Teacher - Catechist

We are blessed to have the participation of so many dedicated men and women who volunteer to be teachers (catechists) and assistants. Their service to our program is deeply appreciated and we ask that you give them patience and respect. Keep them in your prayers. This is a ministry of much patience, dedication, and love.

Class Time

All PRE classes start promptly at 6pm and end at 7:30pm. Arrive at 5:40pm so that your child arrives on time. But the doors will not open until 5:40pm. An adult must drop off children in front of the gym door and make sure that an adult is present. (They cannot be left alone or in the park) At 6:30pm all exterior doors will be locked for the safety of our students. Students who arrive after 6:00 p.m. must enter through the gym doors and drop off the child to their assigned classroom. If you arrive after 8pm you will have to park and enter through the front door.

Attendance

- Please make attending PRE a priority! We want your students to be there EVERY week! We have a limited number of hours each year to meet our requirements, so each class is important.
- When absence is unavoidable, request a "make-up" lesson from your child's teacher to complete at home; this will help continuity of the curriculum for the child.
- When your child is absent, send us a letter with your child saying why the child was absent or a letter from the clinic. They are allowed to miss only 4 times.
- In the rare event that you need to pick up your child early from classes, you should park and stop by the front office to ask about the child. We will call the child's name over the intercom and send them to the main office. You will be asked to sign for your child's departure and present identification. For the safety of the child, we will not allow a child to leave the building alone.

Inclement weather

In the event of inclement weather, we will send you a notice via text message via FLOCKNOTE and on St. Michael Memphis Catholic Church's facebook. Use your best judgment to decide whether you should venture into severe weather.

Drop-off and pick-up procedures

The safety of our children is very important to us! **To ensure safety in a busy parking lot, follow these rules:**

- Children are released to their parents/stepparents/guardians at the school gym exit at the time of dismissal. If your child should NOT be released to any of these individuals, official documentation specifying legal custody MUST be provided to the Director of Religious Education.
- Make a sign with your child's name on it that you will have to put on the front of the windshield of your car.
- The Forrest Ave trail is for pickup and drop-off only. You can't park and leave your car on the road. Review the traffic flow maps on the [website www.stmichaelmemphis.org](http://www.stmichaelmemphis.org)



Safety

- All school facilities are equipped with cameras to monitor hallways, stairs, entrance doors and outdoor areas
- Parking lot gates and main entrance doors will open 5 minutes before classes end. And we'll start calling names. You must exit the line after dropping off your child.
- A guard service will patrol the exterior of the school campus during catechism hours to assist with the safety of our program. We ask that parents do not help in traffic. It is a program of more than 200 children every Tuesday and Wednesday and to maintain order we need your cooperation.
- **Fire Drills**: For the safety of our students, we will be conducting a fire drill at the beginning of the PRE school year to make our students aware of emergency exits and safety procedures in the building.

Communication

The Office of Religious Education will communicate with families in these ways:

1. Email/Text via Flocknote
2. WhatsApp group of your catechist
3. Distribution of newsletters or brochures during the sessions.
4. The Weekly Parish Bulletin
5. We're just a phone call away! Please contact the Office of Religious Education if you have any questions or concerns at 901-399-8804 or call the church office at 901-323-0896.



Tasks / Assignments

- Each student will have an PRE folder that they will bring home and take home. There you will find the lesson that were taught that day.
- If your child has an absence, the assignment for that lesson will be included in the folder. Please have your child read and complete homework and bring it to PRE with them the following week.
- Catechism monthly report to be signed by parents.

Behavioral expectations

The children in our PRE program are well-behaved, which is expected and appreciated! However, if there is a problem, the catechist, principal, and parents will handle it individually.



- The catechist will deal with normal discipline problems. If a problem persists, the student may be sent to the PRE office for a short "wait time."
- If a child's behavior is too disruptive to remain in the classroom, the child may be asked to complete the lesson in a separate space, supervised by adults.
- An ongoing problem may require a phone call to the parent and the Principal, catechist, or other staff member may request a conference with the parent and child.
- If the problem persists, we may ask the child's parents to attend class with the child until the child has the ability to attend classes independently.
- If for any reason your child disrespects any individual in the catechesis program or destroys anything in the building or room, he/she will be expelled from the program. And the parent will be asked to pay the expenses.
- Chewing gum is not allowed during classes. We ask that you talk to your children and tell them to leave the gum at home. No food or drinks are allowed either.

Cell phones

Cell phones should not be seen or heard during class hours. If a student uses a cell phone during class (texting, playing games, taking photos, etc.) the teacher has permission to take it and then return it to the student at the end of class. If the problem persists, you may contact the parents.

VIRTUS "Power to Protect" Program for K-M through High School



"Power to Protect" is an add-on to the VIRTUS program that many of us have participated in. With VIRTUS, we were educated to identify the warning signs of child abuse. In the "Power to Protect" program, our children receive age-appropriate instruction on how to set important boundaries for personal safety. This program consists of a brief video introduction for each grade level and a series of discussion points. The material is developmentally appropriate for each age group and includes content and activities that reinforce the message.

The St. Michael's Catechism program will present these lessons in the fall during the class. Parents have the opportunity to view all materials and download a parent handbook on our parish website www.stmichaelsmemphis.org. Parents have the opportunity to "opt out" of this program on their registration form each year. They can also download an "opt-out" form that will be provided to them in October. Please call the Religious Education office if you have any questions.

VIRTUS Training for Adults

The protection of God's children is a mandate of the bishops of the United States and, therefore, of the Diocese of Memphis. Anyone who has regular contact with youth must attend the Virtus Training Program and agree to a background check. All of our teachers and assistants attended the training and accepted the background check as required.

Volunteers - You can help!

Parent involvement over the years has contributed significantly to strengthening San Miguel's PRE program. The active participation of parents is needed. There are numerous opportunities to get involved and participate in your child's faith formation. For more information or to sign up, call 901-399-8804.

Some opportunities are as follows:

- Corridor guards during classes
- Traffic Volunteers Before or After School
- Help in First Communion and Confirmation Retreats
- Etc. Etc.

Prayers

Our Catholic tradition is rich in many forms of prayer. Children are able to understand from their preschool years that prayer is talking and listening to God. Our ministry as parents and catechists is to bring our children into a deeper relationship with God, and prayer is essential to this goal.

Consult the church website www.stmichaelfmempis.org for prayers to know under PRE.

St Michael Catholic Church Parent Contract for PRE

The first week of class the students will bring a contract in their folder. We have also written it below so you can review before receiving the one that will come back signed to PRE.

- ___ **Student Safety:** We promise to drop off and pick up my child at the indicated time. If I don't arrive on time 4 times, my child will be removed from the program.
- ___ **Attendance at Holy Mass:** We commit to attending Holy Mass as a family every Sunday or Saturday. It is MANDATORY as part of the formation of the young person. I will adhere scanning the QR code after mass.
- ___ **Attendance and Absence from Class:** We are committed to the 2025-2026 Catechesis program that my child attends all classes. I agree that it can only be absent 4 unjustified times. If there are more than 4 absences, I understand that the sacrament of my child will be delayed.
- ___ **Delays:** I understand that I cannot leave him/her alone at PRE, or in the church without supervision.
- ___ **Work Material:** We agree that my child must bring his/her material to class (book, notebook, folder, ect.) If you lose the book you will have to pay \$30 for another book.
- ___ **Formation:** We commit to attending Formation meetings, to help my child in his or her growth of FAITH. (We will notify you via text of meeting dates.)
- ___ **Behavior:** Your child must not show disrespect to the program or pierce. If there is destruction of property, I understand that I will pay for the damages. I also understand that he or she could be removed from the program.
- ___ **Support:** I pledge to support the Catechesis program when required.
- ___ **Hours of service: (only for second year of confirmation)** We are aware that my child will have to do 12 hours of service by a required due date. I understand completion of service hours is required to receive his sacrament of confirmation.
- ___ **Evaluation to Receive Sacrament :** We are committed to helping my child be ready to receive his or her sacrament. I commit to helping my child practice their prayers and reviewing what they learned in class. I understand that if my child is not ready to receive the sacrament the catechist will inform the DRE and will consult with the Pastor.