



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



Office of Religious Education

Alexis Zamora, Director – alexis.zamora@stmichaelfm.org or 901-399-8804

Betty Siano, Religious Education Assistant

betty.siano@stmichaelfm.org 901 - 310-3290

Rocio Rodriguez, Religious Education Assistant

rocio.rodriguez@stmichaelfm.org 901-399- 8801

St Michael PRE Parent Commitment Form

The first week of class the students will bring a contract in their folder for parents to review and sign. We have also posted it below so you may refer to it throughout the year.

1. As a Catholic parent, I desire that my children know, love and serve God. I acknowledge that at their Baptism I promised to be the primary educator of my children in the faith, and I recommit myself to fulfilling this most important obligation.
2. I promise to drop off and pick up my child from classes and retreats at the indicated time. If I am continually late dropping off or picking up, my child may be removed from the program.
3. I commit to informing the religious education office of any changes in parent contact information.
4. I commit to providing the Religious Education office with all required forms (sacramental certificates, sponsor forms, Birth certificates, etc.) in a timely manner.
5. I commit to attending Holy Mass on weekends and Days of Obligation as a family. This is MANDATORY as part of the training of the young person. I will register my child's mass attendance weekly by scanning the QR code in the narthex after mass.
6. I commit that I will make PRE attendance a priority and my child will attend all PRE classes throughout the year. If my child has more than 4 absences, I understand that my child's sacrament may be delayed.
7. I understand that I cannot leave my child unattended before/after PRE, or in the church without supervision.
8. I commit to making sure that my child brings his/her material to class (book, notebook, folder, homework, etc.) each week. If my child loses their book, I will pay the replacement fee of \$30.
9. I commit to attend all parent sacrament meetings as required by our Diocese.
10. I commit to guide my child to set an example of maturity and respect towards staff, catechists, classmates, other families and school/church property. I will pay for any destruction of property and understand that this behavior could result in my child's removal from the program.
11. I commit to supporting my child to complete 12 hours of service for Confirmation.. I understand this is required for the second year of Confirmation Preparation.
12. I commit to helping my child prepare to receive his/her sacrament. I will take an active role by reviewing their weekly lessons, teaching them their prayers and discussing the faith with them. I understand that if the Catechist feels that the child is not yet ready to receive a sacrament, the catechist will inform the DRE and she will then consult with the Pastor for the final decision.

Overview

St. Michael Catholic Church follows the Diocese of Memphis guidelines for reception of Sacraments.

First Communion/First Confession/First Reconciliation– a candidate must be at least in the second grade to receive First Communion. A candidate must have been enrolled in religious education for at least one year prior to receiving the sacrament.

Confirmation – A candidate must be in the eighth grade or high school and express a desire for Confirmation. A candidate must have been enrolled in religious education for at least one year prior to receiving the sacrament.

St. Michael P.R.E. offers the following classes to prepare students to receive sacraments:

Tuesday Classes, 6:00pm – 7:30pm *Classes meet at Compass Community School on the St. Michael Campus*

- Year 1 First Communion (must be in 1st grade or older)
- Year 1 Confirmation (must be in 7th grade or older)
- Year 1 First Communion & Confirmation (must be in 7th grade or older)

No Sacraments are received during the First Year of Preparation

Wednesday Classes, 6:00pm – 7:30pm *Classes meet at Compass Community School on the St. Michael Campus*

- Year 2 First Communion (must be in 2nd grade or older and have completed Year 1 First Communion)
- Year 2 Confirmation (must be in 8th grade or older and have completed Year 1 Confirmation)
- Year 2 First Communion & Confirmation (must be in 8th grade or older and have completed Year 1 First Communion & Confirmation).

Saturday Classes, 4:00pm-6:00pm *Classes held in St. Leo. Hall, St. Michael Church basement*

- OCIC – Order of Christian Initiation for Children –Classes for children and youth aged 7 to 17 who have ***NOT been baptized*** and wish to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist). This is a second year class. The first year of preparation is in a regular PRE class.

Students with Special Needs

If your child has disabilities or special needs and is unable to attend classes, talk with the Religious Education Office to develop a plan for your child. We want faith formation to be a success for everyone. Please keep in touch with the Office of Religious Education throughout the year so that we can meet your child's needs.

Sacrament Information for Parents

The parents of students in the second year of preparation who will receive First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation **MUST** attend parent meetings. This is a requirement from our Diocese.

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 of the child receiving the sacrament.

For students in the second year of Confirmation Preparation, 12 hours of service are required. We will let you know of service opportunities during the school year. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL APRIL** to try to complete the hours of service!

Teachers - Catechists

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 Times

All PRE classes start promptly at 6pm and end at 7:30pm. Arrive at 5:40pm so that your child arrives on time. Please 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 parking lot) 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 the signed classroom. If you arrive after 6:30pm you will have to park and escort your child into the building through the front door.

Attendance

- You must 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 provide continuity of the curriculum for the child.
- If your child is absent, send us a note with your child the next week explaining why the child was absent. 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 for 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.

Learning Our Catholic Prayers, Practices and Beliefs - We Need Your Help!

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.

Our program requires students to memorize basic traditional prayers. We will work on these prayers in class, but we can not do it alone. **Families must also work on these prayers at home!** The prayers may be learned in Spanish or English.

FIRST COMMUNION YEAR 1 • Sign of the Cross • Glory Be • Our Father • Hail Mary • Genuflecting and blessing ourselves with Holy Water

FIRST COMMUNION YEAR 2 • Know all Prayers and Practices from Year 1 • Act of Contrition • Ten Commandments • Seven Sacraments

CONFIRMATION YEAR 1 • Know all prayers learned in First Communion Year1 and Year2 • Hail Holy Queen • I Confess • St. Michael Prayer

CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 • Know all prayers from Confirmation Year 1 and before • Nicene Creed • 5 Precepts of the Church • 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Consult the church website www.stmichaelformation.org, "Faith Formation" to see a complete list of these prayers. Some prayers have several versions – students may memorize the version most familiar to them.

Inclement weather

In the event of inclement weather, we will send you a notice via text message via FLOCKNOTE and on St. Michael's [facebook page](#). Always use your own best judgment to decide whether you should venture out in severe weather.

Safety & Security

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.



Security Guards hired by St. Michael Church will patrol the exterior of the school campus during catechism hours to assist with the safety of our program. Parents should obey both the security guards and our volunteer traffic team. This is a program of more than 200 children every Tuesday and Wednesday night 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. Reminders in student PRE Folders
3. St. Michael Weekly Parish Bulletin
4. St. Michael Facebook page
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.



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 in the following ways:

- The catechist will deal with normal discipline problems. If a child's behavior is too disruptive to remain in the classroom, the child may be sent to the PRE office for a short "time out" from the classroom. There they will complete the lesson in a separate space, supervised by an adult.
- An ongoing problem may require a phone call to the parent by the Catechist or DRE. A conference with the parent, child and DRE may be scheduled.



- If the problem persists, we may ask the child's parents to attend class along 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 may be expelled from the program and must pay for any damages.

Cell Phone Policy

Upon entering the classroom, students will be asked to put their phone on silent and place it in a basket on the teacher's desk. The phones stay there throughout the class and students may pick up at the end of class.

If a student uses a cell phone during class 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 Kindergarten through High School



"Power to Protect" is an add-on to the VIRTUS program that many of us have participated in. With VIRTUS, adults were educated to identify the warning signs of child abuse. In the "Power to Protect" program, our children receive ageappropriate 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 during one class, usually in the fall. Parents have the opportunity to view all materials and download a parent handbook on our parish website www.stmichaelmemphis.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 by the DRE. 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 St. Michael's PRE program.

Some volunteer opportunities:

- Hall monitors during classes
- Substitute teachers
- Traffic Volunteers Before or After Class
- Help with First Communion and Confirmation Retreats