

Rules and Regulations

Parish Registration

- Please note that filing out registration forms for your child to be a part of our religious education program does not register your family in our parish. A child prepares and receives sacraments in their church parish so it is very important that you fill out a registration form for St. Mary's Parish. If you are not sure if you are registered with our parish, contact our office manager, Donna Williams and we will be happy to check for you.

Communication Methods

- You may receive periodic information regarding upcoming events, special prayer service, etc. via email, letters, class handouts, phone calls, and Sunday bulletins.

Role Of Parents

- It is a fact that a person does not “get religion” simply by attending a one hour class once a week for 8 months a year. Faith formation is a life process that takes place in the home, at weekly mass, and in class.
- Parents share in students’ development as true Christians and strong Catholics. The Church reminds us that you, the parents, are the primary catechists of your children, both by word and example. It is important that you model the behavior and example you want your child/children to manifest. They need to know that prayer, rituals, and the liturgy are an important part of your life.
- We ask you parents to SHARE
 - Stress the importance to your child of learning about his or her faith. Ask them about class and support the lesson through your interest.
 - Help your child actively practice his or her faith by attendance at Sunday mass, class, and daily prayer.
 - Accept primary responsibility for the religious education of your children. Religious Education classes exist for the purpose of assisting you in your Catholic Christian responsibility to your children.
 - Reinforce and support the Catechist who are serving this community with their time and gifts. They are sharing their faith and have a right to expect your support and the respect of your child and proper conduct in the classroom.
 - Encourage good attendance at Religious Education classes and the memorization of prayers.

Parent Involvement

- We maintain an “open door” policy. If you would like to attend one of your child’s gathering/class, we ask that you notify the teacher/catechist and the DRE or Youth Minister prior to arriving. You are always welcome!

Attendance

- If your child is going to be absent from class, please call the office at 712-336-1742 or email the DRE at stmarysyouth@q.com so we don't call you to say your child is not here. Leave a message with your child's name, grade, and reason for the absence or lateness. It is the responsibility of the child/parents to gather information on what assignments need to be completed.
- All absences/lateness/leaving early will be recorded on the attendance sheet and your child's records. When there is an excessive number of absences that have been reached or are anticipated (as in the case of scheduled surgery) the DRE or Youth Minister will work with parents and the student on options for completing the course of study. For the sacramental years, students are only allowed 3 absences. The classes will need to be made up and the receiving of the sacrament may be postponed. No student will make or receive a sacrament if they have not attended the religious education program for at least one year prior to the year of the sacrament being received.

Arrival/Departure of Students

- Please be conscious that being on time is an act of charity for all. Having your child here on time allows the least disruption for class time. It is also important that you pick up your child on time and for us to end on time to respect your time and to respect the time given by volunteers.
- No child will be dismissed early from the class without prior approval of the DRE or Youth Minister.

Discipline Policy

- Our Religious Education program is designed to assist parents with the faith formation for their children, as well as foster values and behavior that are in accord with Catholic Church teaching. This program cannot allow behaviors that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals, including, but not limited to, obstinacy, improper language, bullying, fighting, physical, emotional, or psychological intimidation, vandalism, demeaning behavior such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, and harassment. This list is not exhaustive. Such behaviors violate the central teaching of our faith and will not be tolerated in any form. Conduct by children or parents/guardian or anyone acting on their behalf that is incompatible with the educational and religious mission of the Parish will be grounds for disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, immediate dismissal of the student, as well as reporting the incident or the appropriate legal authorities where deemed necessary.

Bullying

- Bullying involves actions or words against another for the purpose of inflicting physical or emotional harm or discomfort or damage to a person's reputation that is intimidating or

threatening and affects the learning and class environments. The following describes types of bullying but is not an exhaustive list.

- Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, or throwing something
 - Getting another person to hit or harm a student
 - Teasing, name-calling making critical remarks or threatening in person or by other means, including text messages.
 - Demeaning and making another the victim of jokes
 - Making rude and /or threatening gestures
 - Excluding or rejecting the student
 - Intimidating (bullying), extorting or exploiting
 - Spreading harmful rumors or gossip
- If bully is threatening harm, a student should tell a Catechist, adult volunteer, and/or the DRE/ Youth Minister immediately.

Harassment

- Harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation means conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, harr, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble persons when:
 - Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's volunteer status or employment or advancement or of a student's participation in parish programs or activities;
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee or student is used as he basis for decisions affecting the volunteer, employee, or student;
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee, volunteer, or student's performance of creating an intimidating or hostile working or learning environment;
 - Harassment as set forth may include, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse
 - Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature
 - Implied to explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.
 - Demeaning jokes, stories, or activities directed at a student, volunteer, or employee.

Discipline Procedure

- Minor discipline problems will be handled directly by the catechist in the classroom. In the event that further disciplining is necessary, after ONE verbal warning, a –3 strikes you are out policy will prevail.
 - The **first** time a disruptive behavior occurs, the student is dismissed from class and reports to the DRE's office. A Discipline Form/Student Agreement Sheet is filled out and signed by the student, parent, DRE, and Catechist and kept on file.

- The **second** time, the student will report to the DRE's office and the parent will be called to come pick up their child. Another –Discipline Form will be filled out, signed and will be kept on file as well.
- The **third** time, the parent will be contacted and before the next class period the parent will choose from one of the three options:
 - Parents may volunteer to teach a group in which their young person is a participant.
 - Parents will receive leader guides and training to home school their student. A follow-up quiz will be given by the DRE for each lesson left in the year.
 - Parents will accompany their student to his/her class to assist with instruction and behavior.

Health & Safety

- First Aid
 - Whenever a student is injured, or complains of feeling ill, catechists will send the student to the office and the parents will be notified. In the event of an injury, an –Incident Report will be filled out and sent home for the parent/guardian to sign and send back to the DRE to keep on file.
- Food & Drink
 - Food, drink, candy, or chewing gum is **NOT** allowed in the church. Nor in classroom unless it is part of the curriculum and under the authority of the catechist and DRE. These create a distraction and a mess in our classes that we do not need to clean up after.
 - Catechists are encouraged to create a sense of community within their classroom through social interaction including celebrations however; the program strongly discourages frequent celebrations that include food & beverages. Water bottles are permitted when the weather requires frequent hydration. Snacks, if needed will be kept to a minimum and distributed at the end of class. Any eating tied with our classes/curriculum will be done in the parish hall. Food Allergies will be considered at all times.

Food Allergies

- Please report on your registration form and notify the RE Office if your child has any food allergies which we should be aware of. (Catechists may hold a party/celebration as part of class, which may include food and drink.)

Contraband

- Gum, food and beverages, though considered contraband, do not carry the same weight as others mentioned below and should be consumed before entering the building. If necessary, the office will dispose of these items and parents will be reminded of our policy.
- Student items considered contraband include, but not limited to toys, electronic games, beepers, MP3 players and I Pads, lap- top, iPods, and cellphones (during class). These items may be confiscated and returned to students' parents/guardians

after discussion with the catechist and DRE. A student's laptop may be in the classroom, if necessary, but not out being used. Catechist/Adults in the classroom may use these or have these devices as part of a lesson.

- It is unlawful for minors to be in the possession of weapons (which include but not limited to guns, matches, cigarette lighters, knives, or other sharp objects), drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products. Participants found to be in the possession of such products may be suspended from the program. Depending on the contraband confiscated, the proper legal authorities will be notified.
- In the event that a student is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his/her possession, the DRE will be notified. Parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to assist with any search deemed necessary. Parental refusal to cooperate may result in the participant's dismissal from the program.

Cell Phone Policy

- Cell phones will need to be turned off or on silent during class time. Teachers may collect any phone used or out during class time and returned after class. We only have 60 minutes of class time, which leaves the other 23 hours of the day for them to text their friends. It is recommended that cell phones stay at home or in their cars during religious education class time. Catechists reserve the right to collect phones as students enter class or ban phones from class entirely if they so choose. We have phones available if they need to use one during class time or events. The DRE/YM will also have a cell phone for emergency use.

Medications

- Catechists are not to administer any type of medication. Tylenol and Ibuprofen will only be administered with parent knowledge and prior approval.

Fire Procedures

- All classes will leave the building through the nearest exit. Catechists are responsible for knowing the location of the nearest exit and for keeping track of their assigned students. The students will line up/gather outside in the south church parking lot, away from the entrances where the fire trucks will be located.

Tornado Procedures

- All students will move in the lower level classroom area until an "all clear" has been issued.

Protocol 2002/Safety Plan

- The purpose of our Religious Education Safety Plan is to provide an environment in which our students are in a safe and caring facility so that they will have the opportunity to grow and learn, and integrate Gospel values in their lives. Protocol 2002 happens when there is an event that occurs in the religious education program which results in the need for

students to stay in classrooms with teachers. The event may range from an intruder in the building, a medical emergency, a fire, or a gas leak.

- Emergency Procedures
 - DRE, YM and the Office Assistant will have parent contact information.
 - Call 911
 - Lock doors and post person at each door to allow for exit and entry of Personnel.
 - If evacuation is necessary, children in the church and classroom area will be evacuated through the closest and safest exit and assemble in the south church
 - Bad Weather/Snow Emergency/Cancellation
 - Potential bad weather is always hard to call. Religious Education Classes are cancelled when the public schools cancel or dismiss early due to inclement weather conditions on Wednesdays. If the weather deteriorates in the afternoon on Wednesday or a threat of bad weather such as extreme wind chill, a decision will be made by **5:30PM for all the classes on Wednesday**. If it is necessary to cancel classes; announcements will be made on **KUOO (104FM) and KICD (107.7FM and 1240AM)** radio. We will also send out an **e-mail** about weather related announcements.
 - Weather announcements for **Sunday morning** classes, will be **made by 8:30AM**. Announcements will be made on the radio as well as an email. As always, your child's safety is most important, so if you feel the weather is too bad for your child to attend please keep your child safe and either email the DRE or call the office and leave a message with receptionist or ext. **#10**. Please be sure that classes are taking place before leaving your child at the church when weather is questionable.

Field Trips

- Parents will be notified and asked to sign a form granting permission for field trips. These forms are to assure the safety of your child/children. Parents have the right to ask that their child not participate. Any youth not participating in the field trip is asked to remain home during the event. Students whose behavior does not meet required standards can be denied participation in field trips. Parents may be asked to drive or supervise. **Virtus Awareness** training and a Liability waiver signed is necessary to chaperone/drive for our youth. Also, all drivers transporting students must be pre-approved by the Sioux City Diocese.