

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON PARISH

Religious Education
&
Sacramental Formation
Parent & Student Handbook
2017-2018

Religious Education and Formation Staff

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Religious Education

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish seeks to accomplish the fundamental tasks of catechesis outlined by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops:

- teaching the message of Jesus
- celebrating the sacred mysteries
- engaging students in prayer
- forming followers of Christ
- fostering community
- developing a sense of mission
- providing opportunities for Christian service.

HOME and PARISH INVOLVEMENT

Faith is God's gift to your child, but the realization of that gift takes place in the day-to-day living of family life. Our children are present in religious education class for approximately 30-34. hours a year. The seeds of faith will take root and grow only if you nurture them at home. We encourage you to take an active role in your child's spiritual growth.

At the same time, the Church, and the parish in particular, also has the responsibility of bringing all of its members closer to Christ. Our formation and catechetical team are here to support your efforts and to give communal witness to our faith in and love of Christ.

Parental Role

- Attend Mass with your children every Sunday.
- Pray with your child at home on a daily basis.
- Be positive and encouraging about classes, meetings and assignments.
- Make sure your child completes missed lessons.
- See that your child brings his/her textbook and Bible to class.
- Volunteer to help with classroom activities, carpool, office work, child care, snacks, transportation etc.
- Attend parent and family meetings and adult education classes.
- Feel free to call the Director of Religious Education if you have any concerns.

Grad 6 Family Life Values Meetings

Grade 6 students preparing for Confirmation are required to attend Family Life Values Meetings. These programs are designed to help apply faith learning to practical real world situations. All students must attend the programs with at least one parent. Dates of these meetings will be published at the beginning of the RE year. Notification of the meetings will also be sent via e-mail and published in the bulletin.

Grade 7 Retreat

Grade 7 students preparing for Confirmation are required to attend a single day retreat in the fall. The retreat will be held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and will include activities that grow student's faith, their identity as Catholics and integrate them in the Confirmation process. The retreat will be offered two different weekends, so the students may choose which retreat fits best into their schedule.

Confirmation Student/Sponsor Meetings

All students who are registered to be confirmed in the spring of 2018 are required to attend 3 Student/Sponsor meetings with their confirmation sponsor. If their sponsor is unable to attend this meeting, then a parent can attend with the student. Dates for these meetings will be published at the beginning of the RE year. Notification of the meetings will also be sent via e-mail and published in the bulletin.

Confirmation Retreat

All students who are planning to be confirmed in the spring of 2018 are required to attend a Confirmation Retreat. This is an overnight retreat held on St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Property. The retreat is held after the first of the year on two separate weekends so students have a choice. Dates for the retreat weekends are published at the beginning of the RE year.

Confirmation

Confirmation is usually held in the spring (May time-frame) The date of Confirmation is determined by the Bishop.

on a Saturday before First Communion and coincides with the Mass that was chosen for First Communion (*i.e.* Saturday evening Mass First Communicants attend Gathering Day in the morning; Sunday afternoon Mass First Communicants attend Gathering Day in the afternoon)

First Communion Mass

Families of students receiving First Communion will have a choice of two times to attend Mass: Saturday Evening at 6:30pm and Sunday Afternoon at 1:30pm. Families will make that choice at the Grade 2 First Communion Meeting. Masses are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Service Hours

All students who are enrolled in the Confirmation Preparation program (grades 6, 7 & 8) are required to complete service hours. Hours can begin to be accumulated beginning May 1 after the completed RE year. Signatures for the total service hours and the brief reflection must be turned in by the designated date in order for a student to move to the next RE level. A log sheet can be found under the **Education/Youth Sacramental Formation** tab at the parish web site: www.seasfw.org. Requirements are as follows:

Award certificates will be given to those students who complete at least 1.5 times the required number of hours.

Journals

RE Level	Number of Hours	# Different Activities (minimum)	Due Date
Grade 6	6	2	April, 2017 Last RE Class
Grade 7	12	4	April, 2017 Last Journal check
Grade 8	18	6	February, 2017 Confirmation Interviews

All 7th and 8th grade students will receive journals at the at the beginning of the school year. Journals are to be completed in addition to regular classroom work. Journals are to be completed by the student; however, they are encouraged to use parents or other knowledgeable adults as resources as well. The Director of Sacramental Formation will check journals on a regular basis. Dates for journal checks will be listed in the journal itself and announcements will be made via the bulletin and e-mail. All efforts are made to offer a variety of times on multiple dates to accommodate various schedules. It is the responsibility of the student to bring their journal during this time and have it checked. A completed journal with the appropriate checks is a requirement to move on to the next RE level.

Student Role

- Bring your textbook and Bible to class each session and take it home afterwards.
- Complete all assignments neatly and on time, including those missed because of illness.
- Follow the behavior code. (See page 4 of this handbook.)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Student Registration

- Registration begins in June. Registration forms are sent to families of students presently enrolled in the RE program and must be completed and returned each year.
- Registrations will be processed and students assigned to classes after the completed registration form, fee and any other required documents, such as baptismal certificates, are received in the Religious Education office, or other arrangements are made.
- Completion of the registration form requires that the Religious Education Agreement is initialed and signed by a parent.
- Students are placed in classes by the Director of Religious Education and not by individual teachers. Any requests or changes must be referred to and approved by the DRE.
- Students being confirmed in the spring of the current Religious Education year (2018) must provide information regarding their sponsor before their registration will be accepted and they will be placed in a class.
- Families may, with good cause, and with the prior approval of the pastor and Director of Religious Education, participate in home-based catechesis. Approval must be requested before July 31, 2017.

Parent/Guardian Financial Support

- Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the Religious Education program are financially responsible to the parish. An annual fee will be charged to help cover the cost of the program. The program fee must be paid – or other arrangements for payment made with the Director of Formation – prior to the student being placed in a class. The fee for 2017-2018 is \$125.00 for one student, \$200 for two students, with a maximum of \$250.00 per family.
- Families who participate in home-based catechesis are required to buy and use textbooks and other materials that are used in the parish Religious Education program and to pay an administration fee of \$25 per family.

Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure

Families who participate in the parish religious education program are expected to practice stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

- Time and talent is service to the parish and/or religious education program. Many opportunities are listed on the Stewardship Pledge Form.
- Treasure is financial contributions for the needs of the parish, the Church and charity.
- Parents must complete a pledge form each year with subsequent fulfillment of the pledge.

Catechist Requirements

- Catechists shall be living within the rules of the Catholic Church. He/she shall be a Christian example through witness and prayer.
- Catechists are required to attend training meetings to prepare them for this ministry.
- Catechists are encouraged to participate in educational programs offered by the parish and diocese.

Student Behavior Code

- Students are to be respectful and courteous toward catechists, volunteers, classmates, and visitors.
- Students are expected to treat books and materials with care, and to respect parish property and the personal property of others.
- Students may not bring electronic devices to class. Cell phones may be used after a class is over. If a device is used during class, it will be confiscated and returned only to the parent.

Students are responsible for their own actions and will be held accountable for disrespectful and harmful behavior toward others and damage to property.

Disciplinary Action Procedure

If, in any given class period, a student repeatedly distracts the catechist or other students, the following procedure will be put into action.

1. Catechist speaks to student privately.
2. The student is sent/brought to the office. The student will discuss the incident with the Director of Religious Education and decide upon a strategy to correct the problem. He/she will also offer apologies as required.
3. If the student is sent to the office a second time, parents will be notified by phone.
4. If the student is sent to the office a third time, or if the incident is serious, the student will not be permitted to return to class until a conference has been held with the parent(s), Director of Religious Education, and the catechist. The student will be included when appropriate.

- Parents/guardians, sponsors and students are required to attend the preparatory meetings scheduled prior to reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. Before receiving this sacrament, students must complete sacramental preparation materials with their parents and sponsors.
- Students who enter the program in Grades 3–8 and have not received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Eucharist and/ or Confirmation must attend Religious Education classes for one full year prior to preparation for each sacrament.
- Students who are in grades 7 or 8 and above who are entering the Confirmation program for the first time will be evaluated on a case by case basis by to determine path of catechesis. Previous catechesis and reception of other sacraments will be taken into account. Evaluation will be done by Director of Youth Sacramental Formation and Director of Religious Education
- **Failure to complete the requirements outlined in this booklet may result in the delay of a student receiving a sacrament.**
- **Students with special needs are welcomed into the program. It is imperative that parents and staff work together to provide an environment, possibly on an individual basis, where students with disabilities can receive the sacraments.**

FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION REQUIREMENTS

Parent/Child Meetings

Parents, Guardians and students are **required** to attend the preparatory meetings scheduled prior to the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. This includes the following:

- Grade 1 Family Gathering (Fall and Spring)
- Grade 2 First Reconciliation Meeting
- Grade 2 First Communion Meeting

Dates of these meetings will be announced via e-mail and publication in the bulletin.

First Reconciliation and First Communion Sacramental Preparation Materials

Before receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, students will be provided with materials (usually in workbook form) that are to be completed at home with their parents. The completion of these materials will be checked during their religious education class.

Parish Reconciliation Service

Usually in mid-November, students will celebrate their first Reconciliation at a parish service. Multiple priests will be in attendance to facilitate this event and parents and older siblings are highly encouraged to participate in the sacrament at this time also.

Gathering Day and Practice

All students receiving their First Communion are required to attend Gathering Day which is a time of retreat, preparation and practice for the students. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help during this time. This event usually takes place

Sacramental Formation for the Reception of Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sacramental Formation Program at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is to provide the children of our parish an environment that is both educational and spiritual where they can embrace the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation fully.

We strive to provide a setting that encourages conversion of heart through focus on prayer, Christian service and learning to live a life that proclaims the Word in speech and action. We believe that families are crucial to the development of a child's faith and welcome the privilege to walk this journey together.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN GENERAL

- Sacraments are, first and foremost, acts of Jesus, in union with the members of His Body, the Church. The Church, therefore is responsible for determining the specifics of sacramental preparation and celebration
- It is understood that families of children who are wishing to receive any of the sacraments are participating in the basic life of the Church in the following ways:
 - Attending weekend Mass
 - Praying as a family
 - Participating in Religious Education Classes or Catholic School
 - Living on a daily basis a Catholic lifestyle appropriate to one's age and spiritual development.
- Students must regularly attend classes in a Religious Education program prior to and during their sacramental years. **(For complete details regarding attendance, please see page 7 of this handbook.)**
- Students must complete grade 1 to celebrate Reconciliation and Eucharist in Grade 2.
- Students must complete grades 6 and 7 to receive Confirmation in Grade 8.

Homework

Students will, receive homework either to prepare for an upcoming class or to reinforce information being studied. It is the responsibility of the student to complete homework assignments and return them to their catechist on their due date. If homework is not being completed on a regular basis, the catechist will notify the Director of Religious Education and, in turn, the parents will be notified. **If homework has not been completed on a regular basis, then the grade will not be considered complete.**

Safe Environment Policy

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Religious Education Program follows diocesan policies and procedures regarding safe environment for students. Everyone involved in the program is expected to treat others in a Christian manner.

- All volunteers working with youth undergo a thorough background check and training.
- All students will receive age-appropriate instruction as directed by the diocese. If you **do not** want your child(ren) to receive this information in class, please notify the Director of Religious Education before classes begin in September.
- Any harassment—whether physical, verbal, or sexual—should be reported immediately to the Director of Religious Education or Pastor.

Reports to Parents (Grades 1-8)

A Report to Parents is sent at the conclusion of each semester or session. The information contained in the report includes class attendance, attendance at required meetings, completion of homework, and notes from the catechist about conduct. This report encourages contact and communication between the Director of Religious Education, catechists, and parents.

Photography/Video Policy

Students may be photographed or videoed by church or media personnel while attending Religious Education and/or at the reception of Sacraments. The photographs or videos may be used for parish or diocesan publication, parish bulletin or website, or for television, newspaper, or magazine coverage. Students will NOT be identified by name. **If parents do not wish to have their children to be photographed or to be videoed they should contact the Director of Religious Education.**

Special Needs

Students with special needs are always welcome in Religious Education classes and arrangements are made for aides, or for a modified curriculum as needed. Information about special needs shall be provided to the Director of Religious Education. This information is held in confidence and shared only as necessary with the child's catechists.

Curriculum

All basal and supplemental texts and materials are available for review in the RE office.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ATTENDANCE

BAD WEATHER POLICY

If St. Elizabeth School cancels school or closes early due to bad weather, Religious Education classes are also cancelled that day. If Sunday classes are cancelled, the announcement will be noted on the parish website www.seasfw.org and will run in the cancellations on local TV channels. Directions to sign-up for flocknote alerts will be available at the beginning of the year and on the website as well.

POLICIES and REQUIREMENTS

CLASS TIMES

- Grades 1-8
Sunday Morning, 11:00am – 12:15pm
Sunday Evening, 6:00 – 7:15pm
Monday Afternoon, 4:45– 6:00pm

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

Arrive prior to your class start time. It is important that classes begin on time and that everyone is present for opening prayer.

Grade 1—Grade 8

Students will normally be dismissed through carpool. If you wish to come in to meet your child, enter Door 2, wait for class to dismiss, and exit using Door 2.

CARPOOL PROCEDURE

Students will be dismissed at the far school entrance. Line up along the curb beginning at the far end of the building. Display your carpool number in the windshield or passenger window. Do not leave large spaces between cars. Be careful to watch for pedestrians in the cross walk. Please follow all directives of the carpool facilitators.

GOALS and PURPOSE of ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Students are expected to attend all scheduled religious education classes and sacramental formation meetings/events. Please plan travel, family events and sports participation accordingly. Please recognize that class time includes many activities such as prayers, videos, and group discussions that cannot be made up. **It is important that students attend every class.**

If special circumstances occur that require several absences or an extended absence, please contact the Religious Education office as soon as possible. **Communication is very important in questions regarding attendance.**

Acceptable Attendance

- **If your child is sick, do not send him or her to class. Call the RE office or e-mail the DRE, Kelsey Spoltman, at kSpoltman@seasfw.org or call 432-0268 ext. 118 before class if possible.**
- **Because grades 1-2 & 6-8 are considered sacramental formation years, students may not miss more than 2 classes. Additional absences may delay reception of the sacrament(s).**
- **Students are required to make up all work covered during missed class time. This is in addition to turning in the homework that was due for that class. Make-up work can be found on the parish website, www.seasfw.org.**

Procedure when a Student Is Tardy

Students who arrive after class has started should go directly to their assigned classroom where they will be marked tardy on the attendance record. Time missed from all classes will accumulate and could result in an absence.

Procedure when a Student Must Leave Early

Arrangements for all early dismissals need to be made with the DRE prior to class. Do NOT ask the catechist to dismiss a student early or go to the classroom to pick up a student. Students must be met at the RE office. Time missed from all classes will accumulate and could result in an absence.