

RELIGIOUS FORMATION HANDBOOK



CHURCH OF SAINT CECILIA

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Mission Statement:

St. Cecilia Religious Formation Program, under the leadership of our Pastor, Director of Religious Education, and the Catechists, is a people called by God the Father and led by the Spirit, to proclaim with courage and joy, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior. Men and women of deep faith proclaim this Gospel, in a humble spirit of service, to encourage their students to seek closer union with our loving God through study and action.

Philosophy:

Religious formation is a supplement to the training and teaching that parents do at home. We strive as a community to help you prepare your child for life as a Catholic Christian in a world whose values are often diametrically opposed to Christ's gospel. We hope to give our young people the basics of their Catholic faith, but more importantly, to nurture in them that gift of Faith that God gives each of us to enable them:

- ◆ to make decisions large and small that reflect Christ-like attitudes;
- ◆ to show them how to build healthy, loving relationships;
- ◆ to awaken in them an awareness of the needs of others, and encourage them to actively respond;
- ◆ to help them become comfortable with prayer as a personal and communal experience;
- ◆ to foster a sense of belonging to a community of believers, both as givers and receivers.
- ◆ to foster a sense of belonging to a community of believers, both as givers and receivers

Definition:

You will notice that in some places our program is referred to as religious *education* and in some places as religious *formation*. Religious *education* is a traditional phrase that denotes *classroom* teaching and learning. Religious *formation* denotes a more inclusive approach to teaching and learning that includes classes and text, and also the experiences of prayer, service, weekly Mass, family activities, and interaction with other members of our parish and other Catholic students. Religious formation is ongoing—from birth to death. It does not follow a school calendar, and there is no graduation! Although we will be using both phrases, our emphasis will be on the total package of religious formation.

Admission Policy:

The Religious Formation Program at St. Cecilia Catholic Church welcomes all members of the parish as well as Catholic non-members and anyone else interested in understanding the Catholic Church and its teachings.

Curriculum:

All curriculum books and resources are available for viewing in the Parish Library. Communicating with your students catechist is the best way to be informed about what resources are used in their classes.

Each week when students bring home handouts or the lesson from class, please look over the work carefully. Talk to your child about the lesson and encourage his/her effort. Remember that sharing your faith with your children is the greatest gift you can give them. Because there is not always time to complete the seasonal lessons in the classroom, please invite your children to discuss what they learned in their Religious Education class. Family time that encourages reflection, faith sharing, and prayer is a rewarding experience and source of spiritual enrichment for the entire family.

Sacramental Preparation:

In the sacraments of Christian initiation, we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.

Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness and brings us to the dignity of adopted children, a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence, we are called and are indeed the children of God.

By signing us with the gift of the Spirit, Confirmation makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to him before all the world and work to bring the Body of Christ to its fullness as soon as possible.

Finally, coming to the table of the Eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in the universal sacrifice, that is, the entire community of the redeemed offered to God by their High Priest, and we pray for the greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God's family.

Thus, the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to His full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Sacramental Guidelines:

- Baptism is usually celebrated for infants. Parents are asked to call the Parish Office (**918-341-2343**) to make arrangements for viewing a video and scheduling a time for the baptism. It is recommended that this be done prior to the birth of the baby so as not to delay the scheduling of the Baptismal ceremony.

If the children are no longer infants, parents are to call Father at the Parish Office (**918-341-2343**) to make arrangements for Baptism. Children need to be baptized before beginning preparation Classes for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion.

- First Reconciliation and First Communion are usually celebrated during the second grade year, at age 7-8. Parents, catechists, and children/candidates work together to ascertain basic understanding and readiness for this sacraments. Older children who have not received these sacraments may prepare with either the Sunday sacrament class (Grade 2) or a separate group according to their age level and their previous religious education experience.

Children learn the value of the sacraments by the example of parents. As you, the parent, continue to deepen your appreciation of the sacraments, you will be better able to share your insights and help your child prepare for his/her reception of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Parents are **required** to attend all parent meetings and a prayer day which is scheduled as a parent-child experience for each sacrament. Missing any of these sessions requires that you visit with Father in order to be excused.

- The sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Tulsa is presently celebrated during the 11th or 12th grade of high school. Attendance at Confirmation classes, Life Teen sessions, a retreat experience, and involvement in Christian service are all required parts of this preparation.
- Students preparing for any or all of the aforementioned sacraments **must** have been ***enrolled in and attended*** religious education class the preceding year. All exceptions must receive approval for admittance from the Pastor or Director of Religious Education.

Class Fees:

The “Books and Materials Fees” for all students Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 are as follows:

1 Child	\$20.00
2 Children	\$40.00
3 or more Children	\$50.00

Additional fees for students preparing for the sacraments include:

First Communion & Reconciliation	\$20.00 per child
Confirmation	\$25.00 per child

NO STUDENT WILL BE DENIED ADMITTANCE DUE TO INABILITY TO PAY.

Contact the Religious Education Office for more details.

Class Schedule:

Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 children meet between the Sunday Masses from 9:45 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. (Pre-K is for those children who are one year prior to kindergarten.)

NOTE: Children in Grades 2 and 3 who have not made their First Reconciliation and First Communion will prepare to receive these two sacraments. First Reconciliation will be in December and First Communion will be in April or May depending on the date of Easter.

NOTE: Parents are asked to accompany their students from Pre-K through Grade 4 in and out of the building. We also request that students arrive and be picked up on time.

GRADES 9 through 12 meet on Sunday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Grades 9 through 12 gather for LIFE TEEN. LIFE TEEN is a Catholic-centered youth ministry program open to high school students of all faiths. It is rooted in the Eucharist. LIFE TEEN reaches teens on spiritual, educational, social, and emotional levels.

NOTE: Students in grades 11 and 12 wishing to be confirmed in the Spring will also prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation classes will meet once a month on Sunday after 11:00 a.m. Mass beginning in September .

Class Attendance:

It is expected that each student attend class on a regular basis. The continuity of the lessons is interrupted by frequent absences, making the classroom experience more difficult for the student and the teacher.

Parents are asked to notify the office in advance if a student will be absent. If there is no notification and a child is absent, a phone call is appropriate and may be made.

If a student is tardy, he/she is to check in at the office before going to class. Because we have only a short amount of time for class, it is important that children are on time.

Parents of high school students who will be driving themselves to class are also asked to call Ashton Kirton at **918-530-9686** and inform the Life Teen leaders if the student will be absent from a Life Teen session. **This is very important for safety purposes.**

Class Cancellation Policy:

Our **BAD WEATHER POLICY** will be as follows:

Sunday morning Religious Education classes, listen to Tulsa Channel 2, KJRH or Channel 6, KOTV on TV to see if classes have been canceled. Use your own judgment if they have not been canceled.

- **If time permits—catechists will use their class list to call students and/or emails will be sent out by RE staff to parents when classes have been canceled. (It is the parents' responsibility to make sure the RE office has a current email address.)**

For **Sunday evening Life Teen**, a decision will be made whether or not to have class by 4:00 p.m. If class is canceled, a calling committee will be activated. If you do not receive a call or hear an announcement, use your best judgment.

**CALL THE R.E. OFFICE
BETWEEN 8:30 A.M.—4:30 P.M. Monday—Friday
FOR ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

Student Rules of Conduct and Behavior:

Respect for all persons and property is the focus of our entire Christian understanding of creation and the sacredness of life.

- Students are to show respect for all persons and property by using respectful language and appropriate behavior before, during, and after classes.
- Students are asked to respect the whole community gathered by refraining from running in the building and unruly conduct inside and outside of the building.
- Textbooks are to be treated well. If a book is lost or destroyed, the student will be required to purchase a new book at cost.
- If a problem occurs, the following procedures should be followed:
 1. Student will be sent to DRE office and may be asked to call home.
 2. Parent has a conference with teacher. If the teacher requests, the student shall be present.
 3. If no result or solution to problem, DRE is requested to be present.
 4. If no result or solution, the pastor is informed.

Student Drop-off / Pick-up:

Picking up your child on time is very important. On Sunday mornings, several of the teachers need to get to Mass after class.

Pre-K through Grade 4 students are to be escorted to their classroom by a parent, guardian, or Grade 6 or older student upon arrival. The responsibility for supervising students will be assumed by the Religious Education staff after the child enters the classroom.

For the safety of the children, elementary students (Pre-K through Grade 4) will not be dismissed from their classes until a parent / guardian or older sibling (Grade 6 or older) returns to the classroom for them.

No student will be dismissed from class early unless a parent or guardian picks up the child from the classroom. We ask that the parent report to the office before going to get the child.

For their safety, older students who have been dismissed from class and whose parents are not in the parking lot, **must return** to the building to wait for their parents to arrive if a parking lot attendant is not on duty.

Emergency Plans:

Fire Evacuation Procedures: Evacuation procedures are required by the Fire Marshal's office.

1. The instructing teacher will lead students from the building following the procedures and route which are assigned to each classroom. The co-teacher or assistant will follow the class with the class list and close the classroom door. This will be done silently. (In the event of smoke, those evacuating the area should **CRAWL** to the exit).

2. Once the children are assembled in the designated areas, the teachers are responsible for checking the class list. Any children who are out of class (bathrooms, office, etc.) will be taken to their class at the assembly area by the office staff.

3. Office personnel will check all non-class rooms.

4. **NO ONE MAY RETURN TO THE BUILDING UNTIL THE "ALL CLEAR" HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.**

Domestic Release: Without **written** permission from a custodial parent or legal guardian, no student may leave the premises or event with any one other than the custodial parent or legal guardian.

Tornado/Severe Thunder Storm Warning: In the event of a tornado or severe storm warning, the following actions will be taken:

1. The instructing teacher will lead the students from the classroom to the designated shelter area nearest their door. The co-teacher or assistant will follow with the class list.

2. Children will be instructed to sit quietly on the floor.
3. Once students are seated, the teachers will check the class list to ensure that all students are accounted for.
4. Teachers will then be seated on the floor with their students.
5. The office staff will make a final check of all rooms, and classrooms to be sure they are vacant and close all doors.
6. In the event of an impending direct hit, teachers will instruct students to assume a huddled position by pulling knees toward their chest and curling their head downward toward the knees, placing their hands over their heads.
7. Teachers and students will remain quietly in the shelter area until the “ALL CLEAR” has been given by the office staff.

Medical Information:

If your child has a health problem, it is very important that you share this information with both the child’s teacher and the Director of Religious Education. **Please see that your child’s medical form is completed and returned each year.** It is the parents’ responsibility to notify the Religious Education Office (918-341-4238) if changes should occur during the year.

Medical Emergency Procedures:

- Location of First Aid Kit: Education Work Room
- Minor cuts and bruises may need a band aid and TLC. If more than minor, the parent or emergency number will be called by the DRE/CRE or other responsible person.
- Gloves will be used when there is bleeding.

Medications:

It is recommended that medication be taken at home before arrival for class.

- A “Medical Information Form” must be on file for necessary medicine/treatment of every student in the program. No aspirin or other medication may be given without a parent’s **written** permission.

Telephone/oral permission is not valid.

Picture Publication:

Sometimes pictures are taken of the students for special publicity in the newspaper or a brochure. If parents object to having the picture of their child/children published, please notify the DRE **in writing**.

Internet Site:

The web site, **www.FaithFirst.com**, helps make religious education more than just the printed word. You can visit this web site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is for students of all ages and for parents, too. Because the web site is **FREE**, no password is required.

Field Trips/Service Trips:

Each trip off the premises must have a purpose. Parents will be sent a “Field Trip/Service Trip Permission Slip” with the expectations of the trip, time leaving, returning, mode of travel, etc. Other circumstances such as “near a lake”, etc. will be indicated.

- No one under 21 years old may drive.
- No alcohol/drugs will be allowed.
- Approval for any field trip must be made by the DRE.
- Parent’s written permission on a “Field Trip/Service Trip Permission Slip” must be obtained before a child may go. Students who lose or forget their permission slip can not receive permission over the telephone. Only the **pre-printed and signed** permission slip for that specific event is acceptable. A note simply stating a child has permission to go **will not** be accepted.

- It is important to remember that a field trip is a privilege and, as such, each student must earn the right to go by appropriate conduct, behavior and attitude throughout the year.
- Students are not required to go on field trips. Those who do not participate in field trips will be provided with appropriate activities in the classroom.
- A student with excessive absences from class or continued misbehavior in class may be denied the privilege of going on field trips.

Note: For the safety of all, no younger children may accompany a parent or the chaperone when they are chaperoning field trips.

Parent/Catechist Responsibility:

The Teachers/Catechists in our Religious Formation Program are volunteers. They have participated in Diocesan preparation programs as well as in-service teacher meetings. They provide the needed services of teaching and supervision when your children attend Religious Education classes. Please give them your support and reinforce their efforts by helping your daughter or son in the memorization of prayers or basic doctrine, in participation at Mass each week and in being an active participant in learning about the Good News of Jesus.

The Catechist will:

- Follow local/Diocesan policy.
 1. Corporal punishment is any punitive touching. All corporal punishment is forbidden.
 2. Search and seizure: If there is a suspicion of wrongdoing (weapons, drugs, alcohol), the teacher will ask the individual to cooperate. If the student refuses, the teacher will contact the DRE, then the parent. If there is no cooperation, DRE may exclude the student from the program.

- Complete the necessary forms as outlined by the Diocese of Tulsa on *www.virtusonline.org*. These forms and a background search will be completed every five years.
- Attend VIRTUS Training Session.
- Take attendance weekly.
- Have a sign in the teaching room stating: If the teacher must leave the room in an emergency, students please remain seated.
- Maintain supervision of students.
- Report suspected child abuse/neglect to DHS (1-800-522-3511) and DRE.
- Respect copyright laws.
- Prepare lessons for each week.
- Be in the classroom at least 15 minutes prior to the students arriving.

Chaperones/Volunteers:

Any field trip or service activity sponsored by the St. Cecilia Religious Formation Program must be chaperoned by adults whether they are parents or volunteers. Chaperones/volunteers must be eighteen (18) years (out of high school) or older. Chaperones/volunteers are required to complete the necessary forms as outlined by Diocese of Tulsa *Procedural Manual for Screening and Hiring*. These forms will be updated every 3-6 years and kept in a locked file in the Parish Office as long the chaperone or volunteer is working with children and for six (6) years following his/her services.

Chaperones/Volunteers who drive, need to be made aware that if they transport children in their vehicle, they are taking full responsibility and liability if an accident should occur. Chaperone/Volunteer drivers must be twenty-one (21) years or older and must also read, fill out, and sign the above-mentioned forms, in addition to the Chaperone/Driver Form.

Suggested number of chaperones per student:

2 adult chaperones for every 5 students from K-4th grade

2 adult chaperones for every 7 students from 5th-9th grade

2 adult chaperones for every 10 students from 10th-12th grade