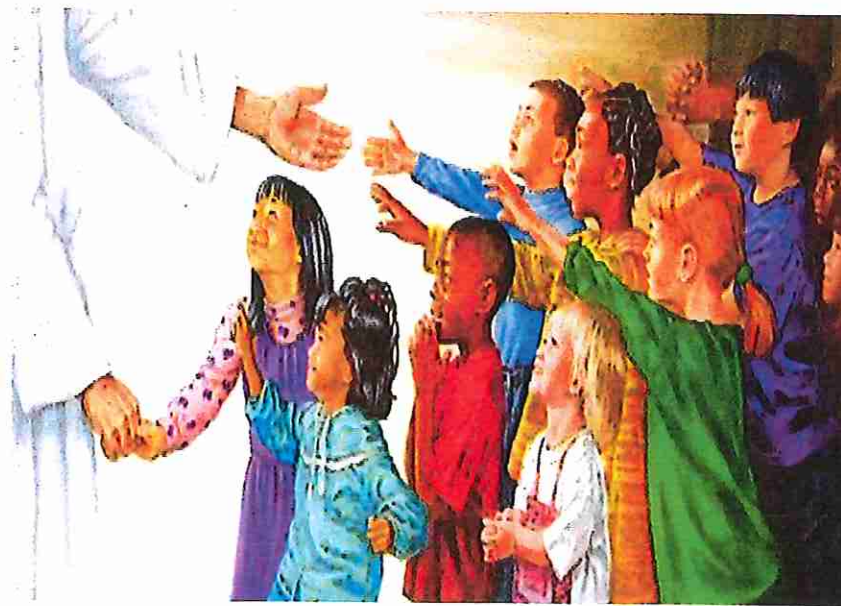


Saint Mary - Saint Michael
Religious Education - Faith Formation
Family Handbook



A message from Sue.....

Welcome to Saint Mary and Saint Michael the Archangel Religious Education-Faith Formation Program. As we begin our adventure as a combined program, I pray we will be successful and grow together in faith with our children.

All our Catechist have been trained in Protecting God's Children, have all state required clearances and are eager to assist you and your child with Faith Formation.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child. We promise to do our upmost in developing and helping them grow in their personal relationship with God. What they learn in class should become a way of Christian life at home, school and for the rest of their life's journey. The best way for this to occur is to talk and practice our faith with them. You as a parent are the most influential person in their faith formation. Please take advantage of this awesome challenge.

The *Family Religious Education- Faith Formation Handbook* is posted online on both parish websites. Hard copies are available upon request.

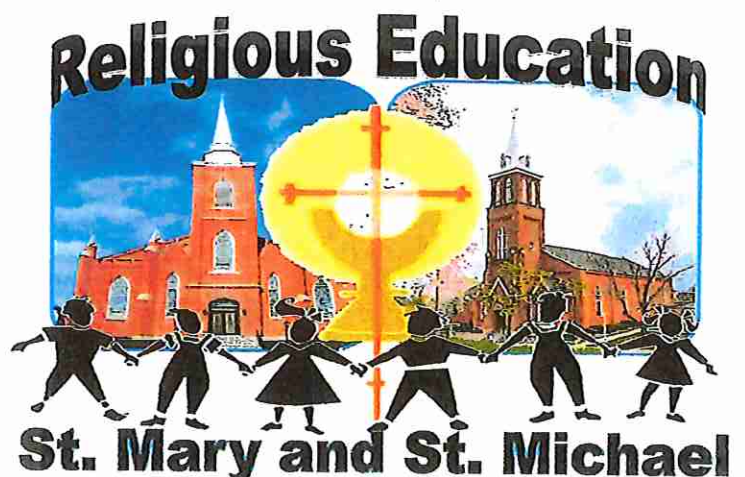
If at any time you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me via text, phone call or e-mail.

St.Michael Rectory Office # 814-695-0912
email: Steske@dioceseaj.org
Cell # : 814-934-2180

Blessings,

Sue Teske

Sue Teske DRE
Saint Mary- St. Michael

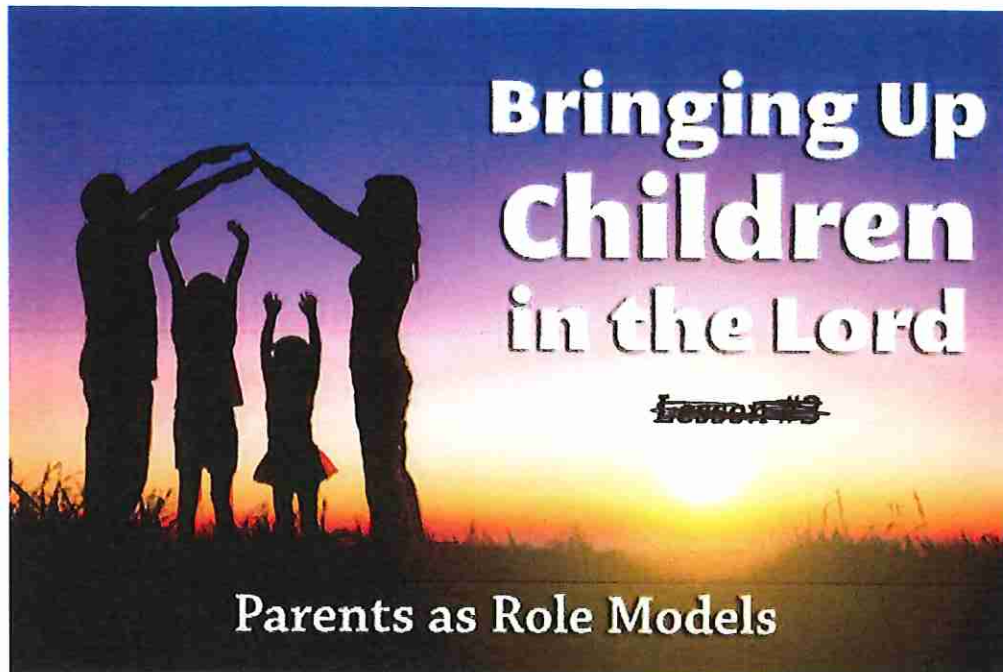


Saint Mary - Saint Michael *Mission Statement*

Our mission is to convey the faith as revealed by the Word of God, the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. Our goal is to assist families in fostering lives that are conformed to Christ through the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father. Special emphasis is placed on developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer and the preparation for a lifetime of full participation in the sacramental life of the Catholic Church.



Role of the Parent(s)



- Parents have an obligation to involve their children in the life and mission of the Church. They should fully participate in:
 - The spiritual life of the church
 - The service of the parish
 - Diocesan youth events
 - The catechetical and faith formation opportunities on the parish and diocesan levels

Goals of the Program



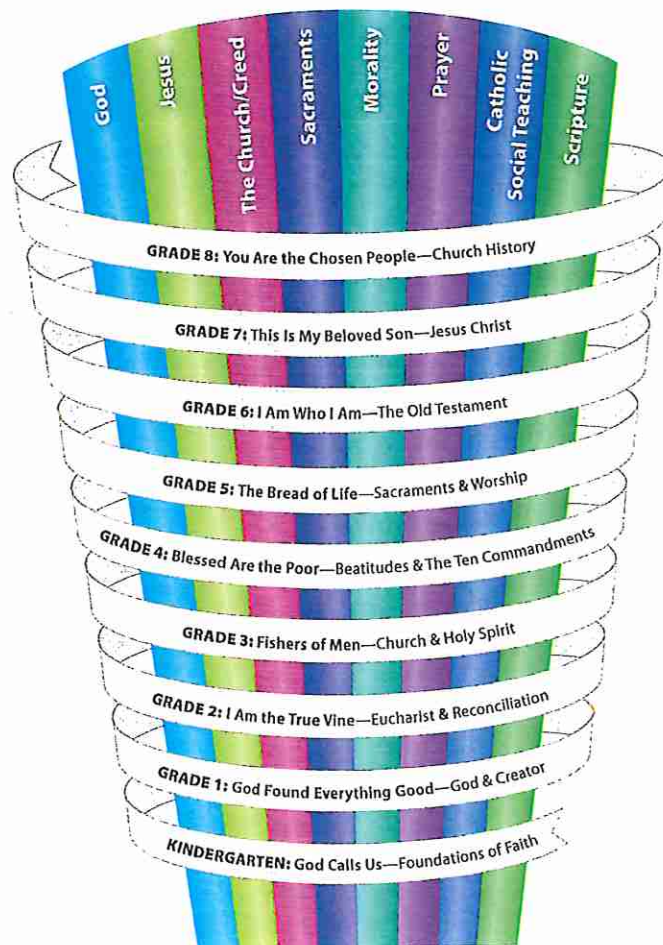
- To assist parents in their endeavors to educate their children in the Catholic Christian faith and traditions.
- To assist members of the faith community of Saint Michael the Archangel on their faith journey.
- To provide faith formation sessions for all age groups of our faith community.
- To provide opportunities of prayer experiences
- To help members realize their potentials as disciples of Jesus Christ.
- To promote an attitude of Christ like service to all in need

Finding God[®]

Our Response to God's Gifts

Spiral Curriculum

Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts is based on a spiral curriculum that integrates the fundamental themes of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as well as Scripture and Catholic social teachings. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen as they grow in faith as committed disciples of Jesus.



Finding God....Our Response to God's Gifts

Spiral Curriculum

Grade K-This program provides young children with beautiful images, thoughtful prayer, and engaging activities so they can easily learn, experience, and express their faith. This program uses instructional steps: Engage, Explore, Reflect and Respond.

Grades 1-6- This program reinforces the program's robust Catholic faith content through the use of dynamic multimedia content. Children engage with videos, audio and interactive experiences to respond to the ongoing invitation to enter into a deeper relationship with God and the Catholic Church.

Grade 1-God & Creation

Grade 2- Eucharist & Reconciliation

Grade 3- Church & Holy Spirit

Grade 4- Beatitudes & the Ten Commandments

Grade 5- Sacraments & Worship

Grade 6-The Old Testament

Grades 7-8 – Seventh and eighth graders face many important decisions about school, interactions with families and friends, interests they want to pursue, and faith. *Finding God* reaches young people where they are in this critical stage of their lives.

Grade 7- The life, death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Grade 8- The Church as the universal flock of Jesus.

Faith Formation for All God's Children- *Adaptive Finding God* is the foremost program of its kind, offering faith formation for children with disabilities that can be implemented in a variety of settings and situation.

Online Resources

- Catechist-

Resources are easily downloadable from the PL Digital Library

Assessment System allows catechist to gauge progress at every level

Articles and resources

Activity Finder

- Families

Go to ***FindingGod.com***

Finding God at Home Edition

Fishers of Faith Game- allows children to review unit terms and concepts in a fun and enriching way.

Interactive Session Reviews- provides ongoing reviews to help students retain knowledge.

Family E-Newsletters



Grade 9

Teen Time-line Published by Ascension Press is a study of the Old Testament and God's relationship with His people. Students learn the journey to God is about joy, not happiness. Happiness is fleeting but joy- the joy of life in Christ both on earth and in heaven - is eternal.

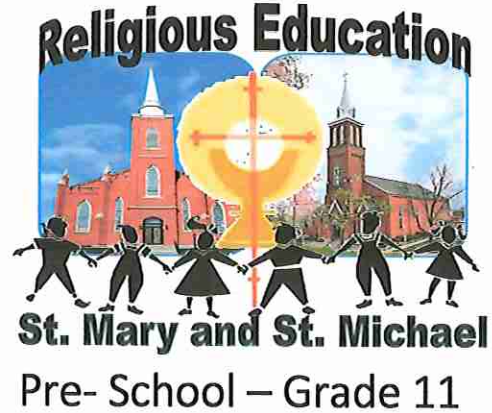


Grade 10 & 11

Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation Published by Ascension Press and written by Chris Stefanick & Ron Bolster contains 24 lessons which we split in half between second year and third year Confirmation Preparation Classes. The series contain excellent videos and lessons to assist Confirmation Candidates on their faith journey toward the sacrament of Confirmation.



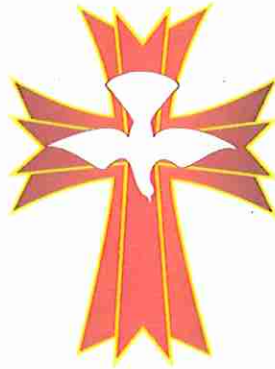
Saint Mary ~ Saint Michael the Archangel
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September	12	1 st Class
	19	Class
	26	Class
October	3	Class
	10	No Class- Columbus Day
	17	9F, Rec Meeting for Parents
	24	Class SHYCON (Grades 9-12)
	31	Class - 10F
November	7	Class - 11F <i>The Rite of Commitment 10 AM</i>
	14	Class
	20	11gr Retreat
	21	Class
	28	No Class- Thanksgiving
December	4	Gr 10 Retreat
	5	Class
	10	Reconciliation Retreat
	12	Class
	19	Class
	26	No Class- Christmas
January	2	No Class
	9	Class-
	15	9 th Gr Retreat

		<i>Rite of Blessing 4 & 5 PM</i>
	16	Class 10S- 11S
	23	Class
	30	Class- 9S
February	6	Class
	13	No Class- President's
	20	Class
	27	Class
March	6	Class
	13	Class
	20	Class and <i>Jr. High Youth Day (Grades 6-8)</i>
	27	Class
April	3	Class
	10	No Class Palm Sunday 2 nd Gr Retreat
	17	No Class Easter Sunday
	24	Class <i>Rite of Sending 10 & 11:30</i> <i>Confirmation Meeting</i>
	28	Confirmation
May	1	May Crowning
June	19 11:30	Corpus Christi Procession

Saint Mary ~ Saint Michael the Archangel
 Religious Education ~ Faith Formation
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Grade 9
Year of Invitation

Candidates are to attend weekly classes in addition to the following sessions.

Date	Time	Location	Theme
October 3, 2021	12:30 PM	St. Michael Activity Building	Information Meeting
October 24, 2021	11 AM-5PM	St. Francis	SHYCON
October 17, 2021	8:45 AM- 10:15 AM	St. Mary School 2 nd Floor	9F The Creed
January 15 th (Saturday)	12:30-6 PM 4 PM 5 PM	Activity Building St. Mary St. Michael	Baptism Retreat & Mass <i>Rite of Blessing</i> <i>Rite of Blessing</i>
January 30, 2022	8:45 AM- 10:15 AM	St. Mary School 2 nd Floor	9S Prayer
			Eucharistic Adoration
Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022			Service Hours Due 15 individual Service Hours 10 Community Service Hours
			Eucharistic Adoration

- Please note that it is the responsibility of your parish to prepare you for Confirmation; not your school.
- Please refer to weekly parish bulletin or parish website for updates and cancellations.
- If you cannot attend the dates for the required sessions and retreats, (Everything in bold print) you are responsible to find another location by going to the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website. Be sure to call ahead to secure a spot and also have the facilitator sign the necessary form to validate your attendance.
- In addition to the events listed above, ALL student who do not attend BGHS must attend weekly Religious Education~ Faith Formation Classes. (See separate schedule.)
- **WEEKLY attendance at Mass is a must.**

Saint Mary ~ Saint Michael the Archangel
 Religious Education ~ Faith Formation
 2021-2022



Grade 10
Year of Formation

All candidates are to attend weekly classes in addition to the following sessions.

Date	Time	Location	Theme
Sept. 19, 2021	12:30 PM	Activity Building St. Michael	Information Meeting
October 24, 2021	11 AM-5 PM	St. Francis	SHYCON
October 31, 2021	8:45-10:15 AM	Activity Building St. Michael	F-10 Scripture
November 7, 2021	12:30PM	Activity Building St. Michael	Candidate and Sponsor Meeting
Saturday, December 4, 2021	9:30 AM to 6 PM	Activity Building St. Michael	Holy Spirit Retreat Parable Retreat & Mass Rite of Commitment
January 16, 2022	8:45 AM- 10:15 AM	Activity Building St. Michael	10S Witness, Word, Worship, Community Service
Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022			Service Hours Due 10 Community Service Hours 15 individual Service Hours
			Eucharistic Adoration

- Please refer to weekly parish bulletin or parish website for updates and cancellations.
- **All events in bold must be attended in person by ALL Candidates.**
- If you cannot attend the dates in bold print, you are responsible to find another location by going to the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website. Be sure to call ahead to secure a spot and also have the facilitator sign the necessary form to validate your attendance. All other classes can be made-up on line. (See attached schedule)
- **WEEKLY attendance at Mass is a must.**

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Grade 11
Year of Reflection

All candidates must attend weekly classes in addition to the following sessions.

Date	Time	Location	Theme
September 12, 2021	12:30 PM	St. Michael Activity Building	Information Meeting
October 24, 2022	11 AM-5 PM	St. Francis	SHYCON
November 7, 2021	8:45 AM-10:15 AM	St. Michael Activity Building	11F Sacraments and the Paschal Mystery
November 20, 2021 (Saturday)	TBA	Saint Mary Altoona	Discipleship Retreat
January 16, 2022	8:45-10:15 AM	St. Michael Activity Building	11 S Morality
Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022			ALL PAPER WORK DUE (Check list is in your binder) Service Hours Due 10 Community Service Hours 15 individual Service Hours
Sunday, April 24, 2022	10 AM Mass 11:30 AM Mass	St. Mary St. Michael	Rite of Sending
	12:30-1:30 PM	St. Michael Activity Building	Sponsor/Candidate Meeting
TBA	6:30 PM	Cathedral	Confirmation Practice
Thurs. April 28, 2022		Cathedral	Celebration of Confirmation

- Please refer to weekly parish bulletin or parish website for updates and cancellations.
- If you cannot attend the dates highlighted in bold letters, you are responsible to find another location by going to the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown website. Be sure to call ahead to secure a spot and also have the facilitator sign the necessary form to validate your attendance.
- **All events in bold must be attended in person. All other classes can be made up on line.** (See attached schedule for other dates)
- **WEEKLY attendance at Mass is a must.**

Celebration of Confirmation Rites



9th Grade- Year of Invitation Rite of Blessing

Location	Date	Time
Saint Mary	January 15, 2022	4 p.m. Mass
Saint Michael	January 15, 2022	5 p.m. Mass

10th Grade- Year of Formation Rite of Commitment

Location	Date	Time
Saint Mary	November 7, 2021	10 a.m. Mass
Saint Michael	November 7, 2021	10 a.m. Mass

11th Grade- Year of Reflection Rite of Sending

Location	Date	Time
Saint Mary	April 24, 2022	10 a.m. Mass
Saint Michael	April 24, 2022	11:30 a.m. Mass

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Confirmation Session

	Date	Session	Facilitator
9 F	10/17/2021	Creed	Sue
10 F	10/31/2021	Scripture	Sue
11 F	11/7/2021	Sacraments and the Paschal Mystery	Marty & Rebecca
11 S	1/16/2022	Morality	Marty & Rebecca
10 S	1/16/2022	Witness, Word, Worship, Community Service	Sue
9 S	1/30/2022	Communion with God: Prayer	Sue

Retreats

Grade	Date	Topic	Facilitator
11	11/20/2021	Discipleship	Students From St. Francis College, Check
10	12/4/2021	Holy Spirit/ Parables	Sue
9	1/15/2022	Baptism	Sue

Saint Mary ~ Saint Michael the Archangel
 Religious Education ~ Faith Formation
 2021-2022

Reconciliation- First Communion



Date	Topic	Location	Time
Sunday, October 17, 2021	Meeting on Reconciliation	St. Michael- Activity Building	8:45 AM
Sunday Nov. 21, 2021	Blessing for Children	St. Mary Saint Michael	10 AM
Friday December 10, 2021	Retreat for Reconciliation	Church Hall St. Michael	6 PM
Saturday, December 18 2022	<i>Celebration of First Reconciliation</i>	Saint Mary Church	10 AM
Sunday January 23, 2022	Parent Meeting for First Communion	Saint Michael Activity Building	8:45 AM
Sunday, April 10, 2021	First Communion Retreat	Saint Michael Church Hall	1 PM
Fri., April 29, 2022	First Communion Practice	Church Hall Saint Michael	5 PM
Sat., April 30, 2022	<i>Celebration of First Communion</i>	Saint Michael	10 AM
Sunday, May 1,	<i>Celebration of First Communion (?)</i>	Saint Mary	10 AM
Sunday, May 1, 2022	May Crowning	Saint Mary Church Saint Michael	10 AM
Sun. June 19, 2022	Feast of Corpus Christie	Saint Michael to Saint Mary	11:30 AM

- Please refer to weekly parish bulletin and parish web site for updates and cancellations. www.stmichael-hldg-pa.org/ondex.php?page=calendar.
- In addition to the events listed above, ALL students who do not attend a Catholic grade school must attend weekly Religious Education Classes.
- All children are expected to attend weekly Mass.

Attendance and Punctuality



Attendance at all classes are of vital importance since each class is built upon the foundation presented the class before. Students are asked to arrive on time for all scheduled classes. Parents should obtain missing classwork and complete it at home with their child.

Custody Considerations

We are aware that due to shared custody of children some students are not able to participate in weekly classes. We ask you to inform your child's Catechist of the situation so that they may provide you with the missed lesson plan for you to implement at home with your child.

We pray your child will attend Sunday Mass even though they are not with us for Religious Education Class on any given Sunday.

guidelines

Disciplinary Procedures Guidelines for Christian Behavior During Religious Education

The following guidelines apply to all students participating in any formation program offered by the Religious Education Ministry or by the Youth Ministry at Saint Michael the Archangel Community.

- It is expected that students be on time and prepared for learning activities when class begins. Preparation consists of the possession of assignments, writing implements and textbooks.
- All students are expected to attend every class and other grade level formation programs that are scheduled during the entire academic calendar. **This includes attendance at Sunday Mass.**
- In the event that a student is ill and cannot attend class, the lesson for the day is expected to be completed at home with the parent or guardian.
- All students are expected to be cooperative in class. Constant reminders to be quiet, to sit down, etc. should not be necessary. Any student who finds it difficult to be cooperative in class should meet with the DRE to discuss the matter further. Disruptive behavior in the classroom is not acceptable in the context of a Christian learning experience.
- Students are asked to use the restroom facilities before coming to class so that time is not taken from the one-hour class. Parents are asked to alert the Catechist if a student is not feeling up to par for medical reasons.

- Christian respect for the property of others is the norm. Students are asked not to touch personal property in desks or around the classroom as well as in the hall ways. Christian behavior also implies leaving the classroom in good condition: desk in neat order, no paper on the floor and no writing on the chalkboard.
- Each student is asked to contribute to the class by not only answering direct questions, but by offering opinions of his/her own.
- Disrespectful or rude language and/ or attitude has no place in religious classrooms. Students are asked to act as if they know why they are in class: to experience Christian community, to learn about the Catholic faith, and to prepare themselves to know, love and serve God in the life.
- When conduct problems arise, a written notification will be sent home. This should be discussed between the parent/ guardian and child, then returned by the student at the next class with both the child's and parent's signature on it. If the student fails to reflect the basic Christian values of respect and appropriate behavior in class, they will be asked to continue their instructions at home under the supervision of their parent/ guardian.

Recognizing we all make mistakes, it is hoped that initial failures are quickly addressed once they are presented to the student and their parents. If after three meetings with the DRE, the problem cannot be corrected, the student will not be invited back into the structured program for the remainder of the year. The parish will provide the parents with the necessary material for the parent to do the instruction at home.

Homeschooling



Home based catechesis is understood as the work of Catholic parents/guardians who undertake the formal religious education of their own child(ren) for any length of time and in their it home.

Doctrinal Foundations

The Diocese of Altoona- Johnstown recognizes that the Church's teaching consistently affirms that parents are called to be the primary educators of their own children.

It is the right, therefore, to educate their children. The parish has the responsibility to support them, provide parents the necessary education to enable them to adequately form and teach the faith to their children, call them to accountability and ensure communal faith formation at the parish for the family.

Pastoral Application

Although home-based catechesis is a viable option, the words of Pope John Paul II must also be considered: "Catechesis can be given anywhere, but I wish to stress....that the parish community must continue to be the prime mover." (Catechesi Tradendale, no.67)

Parents who choose to provide the religious instruction of their own child(ren) in their own home must recognize that "Catechesis must be complete and authentic. The bishop of the diocese, the pastor of the parish, the parents, and the children all have God given responsibilities that must be respected in

considering home-based catechesis...Parents who choose...to be the primary catechist of their children must adhere to the guidelines for catechists as outlined by the diocesan bishop.” (National Directory for Catechesis. No. 61)

Home-based catechesis a cooperative and collaborative effort between the parents and the parish leadership. This relationship helps parents who choose home-based catechesis to be part of the total catechetical effort of the parish and “should not feel alone in this task.” (National Directory for Catechesis, no. 61)

Illness or Injury of Students



- If a student becomes ill or is injured during class time a parent will be notified via phone or text message by the DRE.
- If a child is injured in a classroom or anywhere on the campus of St. Michael the Archangel an Incident Report must be filled out and given to the DRE as soon as possible.
- DRE will then turn in a copy to the parish office so that the insurance company can be contacted.
- Parents should also receive a copy of the Incident Report

List other relevant parish activities and programs



- Saint Mary-Saint Michael the Archangel has an active **Youth Group** directed by Tim Baranik. Activities are fun and some are service oriented. For more information Tim can be reached at the following cell phone number: 207-7008
- **Eucharist Adoration** is held several times during the year. Please consult the parish bulletin for dates and times.
- **Stations of the Cross** are held on Friday evenings during Lent.
- Wednesday evening Mass is held at Saint Mary.
- The **rosary** is recited before all Masses during the month of May and October as well as after Mass during the course of the week.
- **Food drives** are conducted several times during the year.
- **Camel Tree** is held during Advent.
- **Pancake Breakfasts** are usually held once a month as a fund raiser for our twin parish in Jamaica.
- Clean up at **Green Lawn Cemetery** occurs in the spring and the fall seasons.
- **Youth Choir** for children in grades 2-8th
- **Adult Choir:** any student in grade 9th and up may join this group
- **Altar Servers:** any student from grade 4th and up
- **Lectionary readers:** any student from grade 2 and up
- **Eucharistic Ministers:** any confirmed student
- **Religious Education Teacher/ Aide:** any student from grade 12
- **Contemporary Music Group:** any interested student who plays a string instrument or who wants to sing contemporary music at Mass is invited to join.
- **Musical talent to share.** Play a music instrument with organist at Mass.
- **Audio Visual Assistance-** Audio and Video Technician. Must be in ninth grade or higher. Training will be provided.

Safety Policies and Procedures including Safe Environment Policies/ Lessons

Providing a safe environment for all parish programs is essential for the well being of all as well as providing an environment conducive to education and formation in faith. Within reasonable care safe environments can be provided for catechists, volunteers and children/youth.

- Any employee or volunteer participating in children/youth programming is to complete the requirements for diocesan training, clearances and documents for the Office of Children and Youth Protection before assuming any responsibilities.
- People not participating in a program or activity should not have access to children/youth.
- Children in PreK through second grade are not to be dismissed until a parent or older sibling picks them up at the classroom door.
- All programs and buildings are to be monitored.
- Catechist, volunteers and children/youth should be familiar with the location of exits and fire extinguishers.
- An annual fire drill.
- Each building used for programming should have at least two exits.
- Safe environment lessons will be given to all grades levels at least once a year and a report is to be sent to the Office of Youth Protection.

Service Component of the Program



- Service is a very essential part of our Catholic Christian tradition. All grade levels are expected to do at least one service project and reflection afterwards.
- Those in the Confirmation process are to complete 10 hours of group service hours and 15 individual service hours each of the three years of the process. A reflection is to accompany the service hours.

SERVICE

The life and ministry of Jesus are the source of Christian service and the example that we must follow. His love and compassion become our pattern for love and compassion. It is in following the example of Jesus that we are drawn into service.

Service is an essential part of living out our baptismal call as a Catholic Christian. Christian service properly understood is the automatic response to the dictates of the Gospel when it is properly proclaimed and explained. To help students experience what it means to live the faith, service and reflection upon the service is required for all students in Catechetical Formation.

Parents provide the first model of service for their children. The way in which they care for their children and others and participate in the parish and community teach their children by example basic Gospel values. Parents are encouraged at all levels to participate in the service required of their child.

The parish, under the guidance of the clergy, will call children and youth to an active participation in its life and ministry. Service that flows from parish sacramental life and the Gospel mandate is appropriate for and expected from all of its members. Children and youth have a vitality and newness of vision that is vital to a vibrant faith-filled community and must be encouraged.

The catechist will broaden the vision of service provided by the parents and parish. Concerns related to issues of peace and justice are integrated throughout the curriculum. Teaching these issues often leads to action. The catechist is expected to be a catalyst for age appropriate activities.

Service must be affirming and worthwhile to the person performing it if discipleship is to be understood. Children and youth are encouraged to go beyond their normal boundaries and be given a vision of self and communal service that stretches them to this discipleship. We need to encourage children and youth to develop and share their gifts and talents to participate in the mission of the church.

Encourage students to perform acts of service in the home, parish, community and to have a global awareness. Service needs to be both a normal part of daily life as well as performed through organized programs. Individual service will provide students the opportunity to work as a part of their daily life in a particular area of interest. Group service will help students work together with others toward a common goal of the parish or community in an organized program.

Allowing older grades to come up with group service projects for the parish or community on their own (with a catechists help) can sometimes make them feel more invested in the project than just telling them when to show up and where.

Reflection is an important component for any service if it is to help students grow into mature Christians. This may be accomplished in a group setting or in the case of older students, by journal writing. Whatever the method chosen, the student needs: to state their experiences, reflect on the impact of the service to their faith formation and name important events that happened during the service.

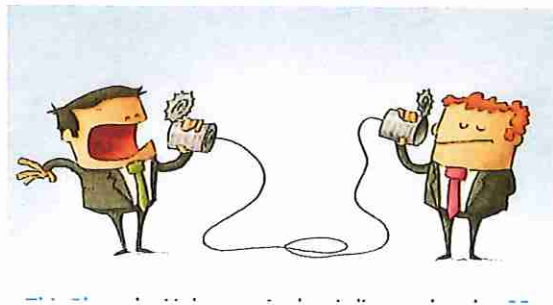
Policy for Cancellations due to Weather or other Emergencies



Cancellations will be posted on

- Flock Note
- Both Parish's Facebook Page

Procedure for communication with parents/guardians



Flock Note will be used to send reminders of up coming events, schedule changes, and cancellations.

Student will not directly receive any form of written communication from an adult catechist, youth minister or staff member unless we have the parent's permission and the correspondence is also sent to the parent.

Respect for Persons & Property



Christian respect for the property of others is the norm. Students are asked not to touch personal property in desks or around the classrooms as well as in the hallways. It also implies leaving the classroom in good condition: desk in neat order, no paper on the floor and no writing on the chalk board or smart board.

No form of Bulling is allowed at any time.

Disrespect or rude language and or attitude has no place in Religious Education classrooms. Students are asked to act as if they know why they are in class: to learn about the Catholic Faith and to prepare themselves to know, love and serve God in their life.

Registration and Program Fees

Registration takes place on line before the first of August. We encourage families to register at this time to give us ample time to prepare class for the first class. **ALL** students who are preparing for a sacrament are to register. The fee is \$25 per student in all programs except Pre-K; they are free.

Sacramental Preparation Guidelines



According to Diocesan Directives, sacramental preparation for Baptism, First Eucharist, Confirmation and Reconciliation is to be family oriented and parish based (Directive #4). Whatever the parish requires for sacramental preparation for the sacraments is expected of those who are home-schooled.

ALL students who attend Catholic Schools are to attend parish base preparation classes as required by the diocese. It is your parish that is responsible to assist you in preparing for sacraments not your school.