

# St. Giles Parish

## Partners in Handing on the Faith

### Religious Education & Formation Handbook 2019-2020



The work of handing on the faith to children helps the whole family in its evangelizing mission.

It naturally begins to  
**SPREAD**  
the faith to all around them,  
even outside the family  
circle.

-Pope Francis  
*Amoris Laetitia, 289*

---

#### OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Religious Education & Formation program at St. Giles Parish. This handbook has been developed to provide information regarding our program, procedures and requirements. **Please review the contents of this handbook with the students in your household who are enrolled in our programs, and where applicable, your childcare provider.**

Communication and collaboration is essential to the success of our program. If at any time you are in need of additional information on these or any other topic pertaining to your student(s), family, or the religious education programs offered please feel free to contact the parish Religious Education Office at 708-383-3430 x 101 or via email at [reled@stgilesparish.org](mailto:reled@stgilesparish.org)

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The Religious Education program will attempt to keep you informed of all changes as soon as practical, however, some changes might be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.

### ***OUR PARISH MISSION***

As the sacramental community of St. Giles, we are inspired by Jesus Christ to live His teachings as grateful disciples. We do this through worship, education, spiritual formation, and service.

### ***OUR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MISSION***

It is the goal of the St. Giles Parish Religious Education & Formation programs to support the efforts of parents in handing on the gift of our Catholic faith to their children. Our programs are designed to offer children and their parents opportunities to deepen not only their knowledge of our Catholic faith, but also to deepen their personal relationship with our God through prayer, communal worship, and service to others.

### ***OUR STAFF***

**Reverend Carl Morello-Pastor**

#### **Leadership Team**

**Marrey Picciotti**- Parish Life & Formation Director (DRE); Sacrament Director

**Rachel Faulman** – Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Asst. Coordinator

**Sara Yount**- Preschool Religious Education Program (PREP) Coordinator

**Therese Sabo**- SPRED Program Coordinator

**Zelda Rideaux**- Religious Education Administrative Assistant

### ***OUR OFFICE***

*St. Giles Parish: Religious Education & Formation Office*

*1025 N. Columbian Avenue Oak Park, IL 60302*

*Phone: 708.383.3430 x 101 /Email: [reled@stgilesparish.org](mailto:reled@stgilesparish.org)*

## ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

### ***ADMISSIONS, REGISTRATION, TUITION AND FEE***

ADMISSIONS  
REGISTRATION  
TUITION AND FEES

### ***ARRIVALS/DISMISSALS***

PROGRAM INFORMATION  
EARLY DISMISSAL, ARRIVALS, DEPARTURES

### ***ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE***

### ***CODE OF CONDUCT***

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT  
DISCIPLINE POLICY

### ***COMMUNICATIONS***

WEBSITE  
THE ARROW  
ELECTRONIC MAIL

### ***SACRAMENT PREPARATION FOR CHILDREN***

SACRAMENTS: FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION  
OFF TRACK  
SACRAMENTS: CONFIRMATION

### ***CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT***

### ***CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES***

### ***HEALTH AND SAFETY***

### ***STUDENT/FAMILY RECORDS***

### ***ADULT VOLUNTEERS***

## ***ADMISSIONS, REGISTRATION, TUITION AND FEES***

### **Admission**

The St. Giles Parish Religious Education & Formation programs do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, nationality or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies, supplementary programs or any other program-based functions.

### **Registration**

Each program year, parents wishing to enroll their child in one of the parish's religious education programs will be required to complete the registration process for the upcoming year. **This includes families currently enrolled in one of our programs.**

Registration for **returning families opens in the Spring** and remains open through **September 15th**. The Registration link for returning families will be sent via email to each individual family prior to the opening of registration.

Enrollment for **new families** to our parish programs will begin **in the Summer** and will remain open until **September 15th**. The Online Registration process for families new to our parish programs will be available on our parish website [www.stgilesparish.org](http://www.stgilesparish.org) until August 31st. Offline registration will continue until September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**All registrations received after September 1<sup>st</sup> will be subject to a waitlist.**

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition is charged on either a per student or per family basis depending upon the program. Tuition is set each program year to cover administration costs to operate each of the parish religious education programs. **At the time of registration, a minimum of 50% of the projected tuition is due. REGISTRATION FOR THE NEXT PROGRAM YEAR WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED IF THERE IS AN OUTSTANDING TUITION BALANCE.**

Families preparing for reception of a **Sacrament** are required to pay an additional fee, indicated on the registration form, which covers the expenses for those programs.

**If at any time a financial hardship develops, please contact the Religious Education & Formation Office. Full or partial scholarships are available for qualifying families. All scholarship requests are kept strictly confidential.**

## ***ARRIVALS/DISMISSALS***

### **PREP Program**

Ages 3 to 6 / PreK to K: Gleeson Building, 1101 N. Columbian Ave

Our PREP program is housed on the first floor of the Gleeson Building. Students participating in this program should enter this building via the **south (main) entry doors**. Student aides will be available to assist the students and their parents in locating the proper classroom. **Classes begin promptly**. Parents are asked to sign in their child when they arrive and make contact with their child's catechist.

Parents/guardians of PREP students need to sign their child out of his/her classroom as well as make contact with their child's catechist prior to departing. Parents/guardians are asked to promptly pick up their child once classes end.

### **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) Program**

Ages 3 to 13 / PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: Gleeson Building, 1101 N. Columbian Ave.

The atria of our CGS program are located on the first floor of the Gleeson Building. Students participating in these programs should enter this building via the **north entry doors**. A volunteer parent will be available to assist the students in locating the correct atrium. Children will be dismissed from the same **north entry doors** at the end of each session. The catechists will release the children with visual confirmation of their rides.

### **Family Catechesis (FCAT)**

Grades 1-6: Church, then McDonough Hall in the Gleeson Building, 1101 N. Columbian Ave.

Families who enroll in Family Catechesis will attend 9:30am Mass once per month and then head to McDonough Hall for about an hour of reflection, discussion and activities - first as a family, then separately for parents, students in Grades 1 through 3, and students in Grades 4 through 6. Teams of catechists will work with each grouping for about 1/2 hour or so and then the groups will rejoin for wrap up and closing prayer. Families will then work on designated parts of the grade-level Loyola Press books with their students for the remainder of the month until the next monthly gathering, sending in online assessments for each student's session.

### **Grade Level RE: 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> (GRE)**

Grades 7-8: Parish Center, 1025 N. Columbian Ave.

The formation spaces for the Grade Level RE program are located in the Parish Center, 1025 N. Columbian Ave. All students participating in our Grade Level RE should enter via the front door of the Parish Center.

### **At-Home RE: (At Home)**

Grades 1-8: Done individually as a family at home to complete 20-22 sessions by August 15<sup>th</sup> with online assessments sent to the Religious Education & Formation office.

## **Early Dismissals (ALL PROGRAMS)**

**For safety reasons, no child will be excused from class without a written notification (email or text acceptable) from the student's parent/guardian.**

## **Traffic Policy: Arrivals & Departures**

Drivers should use the west side of Columbian Avenue in order to drop off students in front of the Gleeson building or the Parish Center. **Students should exit their vehicle on the curbside only.**

Drivers who use the east side of Columbian Avenue should escort their student(s) across the street and safely to the curb on the west side. **No child should cross Columbian Avenue without an adult.**

Once a student leaves the parish grounds, they are the responsibility of their parent/guardian.

At no time is a volunteer or parish staff person to give a student a ride home, unless stipulated by the student's parent/guardian in writing and in advance.

## ***ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE***

It is important that all children enrolled in any of the parish's religious education programs attend each of their sessions. Students are to arrive on time and remain for the entire length of their class.

The St. Giles Religious Education & Formation programs are required by the Archdiocese of Chicago to provide a minimum of 30 hours of faith formation per program year for the children enrolled in grades 1-8.

Families with a child who is absent from their program for more than 4 sessions due to illness/family issues will be contacted to insure the health and well-being of the child. Parents will be asked to assist their child to make-up the missed material at home or as arranged with the Director or Coordinator of the program. Families with children who were absent for more than 4 religious education sessions will have the option to a) enroll in the At Home program to allow their child to complete the faith formation materials they missed; or b) have their child repeat the grade level.

## ***CODE OF CONDUCT***

### **Student Code of Conduct**

The St. Giles Parish Religious Education & Formation programs strive to provide an environment that affords students the opportunity to explore, expand, and deepen their own spiritual growth as well as their knowledge of our Catholic faith. For this to occur, we have established the following student code of conduct:

Each student is expected to:

- display **good conduct** both in sessions and when arriving or departing from the program
- **be prepared** for their sessions by completing any assignments and bringing any items required by their catechist for that day's lesson
- **cooperate and participate** with their fellow students during activities and discussions
- be attentive by **actively listening** to their catechist and classmates
- show **courtesy and respect** to all
- treat their classroom and the materials in their classroom **with care and respect**

### **Discipline Policy**

Any student who does not adhere to the above student code of conduct will be subjected to the following discipline policy:

- 1<sup>st</sup> offense: catechist will INVITE THE STUDENT TO STEP OUT OF CLASS allowing the student an opportunity to regain control of their behavior. WHEN THE STUDENT IS READY they will be invited back into the group.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> offense: catechist repeats action for 1<sup>st</sup> offense and also contact student's parent and program coordinator regarding the student's inappropriate behavior. The DRE will hold a conference with student and student's parents regarding situation

Offensive behavior will be documented and retained in the student's file located in the parish Religious Education & Formation office for the remainder of that program year.

## ***COMMUNICATIONS***

**Website: [www.stgilesparish.org](http://www.stgilesparish.org)**

As part of our parish wide goal, the Religious Education & Formation Office is striving to be more environmentally sound by posting **all program information** on our parish website located at: [www.stgilesparish.org](http://www.stgilesparish.org)

In addition to descriptions of each of our parish's religious education programs, information regarding class calendars, upcoming events, and parent information pages are also posted and updated each month. Parents will also find helpful links with information on Catholic parenting and faith formation opportunities for adults and children alike.

## **The Arrow**

Each week our parish publishes a bulletin, which is distributed at each of our weekend Masses with information on parish programs, events, and celebrations. The Arrow is also posted on the parish website each week.

## **Electronic Mail & Text**

The Religious Education Office send a vast majority of our communications via electronic mail and text systems. **Please be sure to adjust your SPAM to accept messages from our office to be received into your account.** Please notify the office with the email address you check most often and notify us of any changes to your email address during the year.

## ***SACRAMENT PREPARATION FOR CHILDREN***

### **Sacraments: First Reconciliation and First Communion**

All of us come to the Eucharist through our Baptism. It is through this initiation rite that we are connected to the community of faith. This rite also lays the foundation for our participation in the weekly celebration of Eucharist. The ritual of Baptism contains three essential components of what it means to be a member of this community of faith: discipleship to Jesus, membership in the community, and service to others. These three themes are also essential to our understanding of and participation in the celebration of the Eucharist.

We are honored to journey with you as you begin to formally prepare your child to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist for the first time. This is a special time... a holy time for you, your child, and our parish. This special time offers all of us - adult and children - many opportunities to deepen our faith and to grow in our understanding and appreciation of both the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

As we begin this journey together, it is important to think about the role parents play in "*handing on the faith*" to their children. Know that our parish will help support you in many ways. It is vital for you to understand that while your child maybe enrolled in either the parish school or parish religious education program, it is you, their parents who have the greatest impact on your child's faith and faith development. How you live your faith at home is crucial to the faith formation of your child.

Sacrament preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist here at St. Giles Parish each begin with a gathering for parents only to engage in meaningful conversation about issues of faith. At this point the parents are supported in their work of preparation by the RE staff and Sacrament teams. At the close of this home preparation period there is one retreat for parents and children to experience together.

A calendar listing the specific dates of events/meetings in preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist are posted on the Sacrament pages of our parish website: [www.stgilesparish.org/sacraments](http://www.stgilesparish.org/sacraments)

## **Off -Track: Sacraments**

St. Giles follows the requirements of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Catechism of the Catholic church that **requires two years of FORMAL religious education and formation prior to reception of the Sacraments of First Reconciliation & Eucharist and Confirmation.**

If a student has not completed a full year of formal formation prior to the typical year of preparation for one of these sacraments, they will be considered Off-Track. They will be able to enroll and engage in formation with their similarly aged peers, and will engage in preparation for the sacrament during the following year, along with formal formation. Parents wishing to have their children to participate in the reception of the Sacraments should contact the parish Religious Education office at 708-383-4185 to discuss your family's specific needs.

## **Sacraments: Confirmation**

One of the most rewarding parts of the eighth grade confirmation experience is the opportunity to live the Confirmation preparation process and then stand before our community, our bishop and the Lord to declare their eagerness to join the community of believers as full, adult participants. Just as your child grows physically, intellectually, and emotionally, he or she grows spiritually as well. As a parent responsible for the development of your child, you try to meet all of his or her changing needs. You foster and direct spiritual growth by the atmosphere in your home, the example of your life, and the celebration of the sacraments. You have seen that your child has been initiated into the faith through Baptism, and the Eucharist. Now your young teenager is at the stage of strengthening his or her commitment to the faith through the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The goal of our Confirmation program here at St. Giles is to assist our young people to be receptive and responsive to the graces and challenges of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Through studying together, they learn that Confirmation is one of the Sacraments of Initiation that deepens their relationship with God and the Church. Through praying together, they become more aware of the presence and action of the Spirit and his gifts within them, which empower them to live as Jesus did. Through service to others, they discover ways to fulfill the specific responsibilities that are theirs as Catholic Christians.

The Confirmation program is meant to give guidance to all those involved in the formation of the candidates and in the celebration of the sacrament so that Confirmation becomes a meaningful faith experience for the candidates, the family, and the parish community. At the same time, this program aims to equip the candidates with the knowledge and attitudes necessary for the lifelong process of conversion to Christ. **Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is also a two-year process, which begins during 7<sup>th</sup> grade and continues through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.**

Information for confirmation candidates, sponsors and parents can be found on our parish website at: [www.stgilesparish.org/sacraments](http://www.stgilesparish.org/sacraments) with specific information and instructions to assist in the preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This page also contains a calendar of meetings, events, and assignments required as preparation for reception of this Sacrament.

In order to keep each child's formation progressing, all material missed due to student absence from a session will need to be covered at home.

## ***CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT***

The Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act requires the St Giles Parish Religious Education staff to report any suspected cases of abuse or neglect to children enrolled in one of our parish programs. As required by the Archdiocese of Chicago, all parish staff, religious education staff, and adult volunteers who work with children must undergo a criminal background check and must also be Virtus compliant.

Virtus is a program designed to educate adults on identifying predatory behaviors in an effort to protect all of God's children.

Each program year, families new to one of the parish Religious Education programs receive an information packet on Keeping Your Child Safe. This packet is part of the LURES program offered by the parish through the Archdiocese of Chicago. As most of our RE students no longer take part in a similar education program through their school setting, our parish provides parents with this resource to use at home and also offers a workshop for parents to learn more about protecting their children. Any parent who wishes to attend the January LURES program should contact the Religious Education and Youth Ministry Office at 708-383-4185 to reserve a space.

## ***CHILD CUSTODY ISSUES***

If parents of students in any of St Giles Parish Religious Education programs are divorced or separated, the Religious Education office presumes that both parents have legal access to their child unless one parent provides evidence that he or she has sole custody. If parents cannot agree on custody issues and it interferes with the child's involvement in one of the parish programs, the child may be asked to leave the program.

## ***HEALTH AND SAFETY***

In order to provide a safe and healthy environment for all our students and volunteers **it is essential for the Religious Education & Youth Ministry Office to be notified of specific allergies, medical needs and learning challenges that your child may have.**

Parents/guardians will complete the health and learning needs information sections during the registration process. While this information is confidential, it may be shared with the adults who have volunteered as catechist and facility parents, only as needed, in order to assist in your child's formation experience.

**Except in extraordinary circumstances that have been approved by the Director of Religious Education, no adult volunteer or staff person will maintain, supervise the taking of, or the administration of, any medications to students in our programs.**

In the event of sudden illness or accidental injury, every attempt will be made to contact the parent of the student(s) involved. If the parents cannot be reached, the student's emergency medical release form containing the parent's instructions will be used. If emergency treatment is required, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital by ambulance and the Religious Education staff will notify the child's doctor. An adult will accompany your child until the parent(s) can take over.

Students are prohibited from wearing athletic spikes, heellies, or roller blades in any of the parish buildings. All sports equipment brought to the Religious Education class must be left with the facility parent at the TRE desk or at the CGS check-in area.

### ***STUDENT/FAMILY RECORDS***

The Religious Education Office maintains a student file for every child enrolled in one of our parish religious education programs. All files are confidential. Parents may view their student/family file at any time by contacting the Religious Education Office at 708-383-3430 x 101.

### ***ADULT VOLUNTEERS***

It is a tremendous honor to be invited to be part of your family's faith journey, an honor that also carries a great responsibility for demonstrating how to live this Catholic faith to the children of our parish. As our Parish Religious Education Programs steadily grow, meeting many of the program's basic needs is becoming more and more challenging. All of our Religious Education Programs/Events are staffed by adults in our parish who volunteer their time and talents for the benefit of our parish children's faith development. By volunteering your time and talents in one of our Religious Education Programs you will be demonstrating to our children how important their faith development is to all the adults of our parish. Your volunteering in one of these programs will not only be an example to our children of how to put your faith into action, but you will also be strengthening the religious education community by building relationships with other adults within the program and the parish.

***St. Giles Parish: Religious Education & Formation Office  
1025 N. Columbian Avenue  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
Phone: 708.383.3430 x 101  
Email: [reled@stgilesparish.org](mailto:reled@stgilesparish.org)***