



St. Giles Parish
Partners in Handing on the Faith

Religious Education Handbook
2016-2017

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Religious Education 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

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 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)

Michelle Dal Pino- Traditional Religious Education Program Coordinator

Sara Yount- Preschool Religious Education Program Coordinator

Therese Sabo- SPRED Program Coordinator

Zelda Rideaux- Religious Education Administrative Assistant

OUR OFFICE

St. Giles Parish: Religious Education Office

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Phone: 708.383.3430 x 101 /Fax: 708.383.8669 /Email: reled@stgilesparish.org

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ADMISSIONS, REGISTRATION, TUITION AND FEES

Admission

The St. Giles Parish Religious Education 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. The admission of students to St. Giles Religious Education programs follows the order of priority set forth by the Archdiocese of Chicago:

1. Children of parishioners:

Children from families with children already enrolled in a St. Giles Religious Education Program

- ❖ Children now reaching school age
- ❖ Children transferring from the parish school
- ❖ Children from families newly moved into the parish

2. Children of non-parishioners:

- ❖ Children from families with children already enrolled in a St. Giles Religious Education Program
- ❖ Children now reaching school age
- ❖ Other children seeking to enroll

Registration

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

Registration for **returning families opens on May 1st** and remains open through **September 15th**. The Registration link for returning families will be sent via email to each individual family on May 1st.

Enrollment for **new families** to our parish programs will begin **July 31st** 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 until September 10th.

All registrations received after September 1st will be subject to a waitlist.

PLEASE NOTE: In an attempt to provide a quality experience for our children each of our religious education programs classes are designed to accommodate no more than 10 students for a single catechist; and no more than 15 students for a team of two catechists. Registering on time helps to ensure an accurate number of catechists are recruited and trained.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is charged on a per family basis, except for the PREP and CGS Level I programs which charge a per student fee. 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 1/3 of the projected tuition is due.** Any remaining balance will be collected in September and October of that program year. **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 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

Sunday (9:30 – 10:30 am)

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 at 9:30 am.** 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. **Classes dismiss at 10:30 am,** and parents/guardian are asked to promptly pick up their child once classes end.

Once the parent signs out their child, the child is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. At no time is a volunteer or staff person to give a student a ride home, unless stipulated by the student's parent in writing and in advance.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd ("CGS") Program

Ages 3 to 12

Monday (Level 1): 3:30-4:30pm

Tuesday (Levels II & III): 4:30 – 5:45 pm, 6:00 – 7:15 pm

Wednesday (Levels II & III): 4:30 – 5:45 pm & (Level IV): 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Thursday (Level II & III): 4:30 – 5:45 pm

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.

Traditional Religious Education (Classroom Environment)

Grades 1-5: Sunday (9:15 – 10:45 am)

Grades 5-8: Wednesday (7:00 – 8:30 pm)

Frawley Building, 1101 N. Columbian Ave.

All students participating in our Traditional Religious Education (classroom environment) should enter via the east or Columbian Avenue main doors. Students be checked in as they arrive before heading to their classroom.

Students in grades 1 & 2 will be escorted by their catechist for dismissal from the main Columbian Ave. doors. Parents need to make direct contact with the catechist before a child will be released.

Students in grades 3-5 will be dismissed from the courtyard door (north side of Frawley building on the Columbian Ave side).

Students in grades 5-8 will be dismissed from the main Columbian Ave doors.

Any student remaining 10 minutes after dismissal will be escorted to the Parish Ministry Center located at 1025 N Columbian Ave. by the program coordinator, for their parent to pick them up.

Parents are asked to notify the religious education office in writing if their child has permission to walk home after class. 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.

Early Dismissals (ALL PROGRAMS)

If your child must leave class before the scheduled end time, please send a written note of explanation to be given to the catechist. **For safety reasons, no child will be excused from class without a written notification from the student's parent/guardian. Parent of children seeking early dismissal from class will need to come into the building to sign out their child with the facility parent.**

Traffic Policy: Arrivals

Drivers should use the west side of Columbian Avenue in order to drop off students in front of the Frawley building. **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**

Traffic Policy: Departures

Drivers should utilize the parking lot on the east side of Columbian Avenue and walk across the street to pick up their student. All students should either be escorted by an adult across Columbian Avenue to the parking lot or should be picked up at the curb on the west side of the street. **No child should cross Columbian Avenue without an adult.**

Double parking is not permitted at any time nor should anyone pick up a student from the middle of the street.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE

It is important that all children enrolled in any of the parish's religious education programs attend each of their Religious Education sessions. Students are to arrive on time and remain for the entire length of their class. **If your child will not be present due to illness, or due to an emergency it is vital that you notify the parish Religious Education office by phone at 708-383-4185 prior to your child's class' starting time.**

To ensure the safety and well-being of our students, the facility parent on duty will contact all parents of children who are scheduled to participate in one of our parish religious education programs but are not present and have not been called in as absent.

CLARIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE/ABSENCE POLICY

The St.Giles Religious Education 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 order to meet this requirement, Religious Education programs meet at least three times per month (September / October-April) providing twenty-four sessions, each being 75 minutes in length.

Families with a child who is absent from their Religious Education 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 make-up the missed material at home. Families with children who were absent for more than 4 religious education sessions will have the option to a) enroll in the FRE Summer 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 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 class and when arriving or departing from the program
- **be prepared** for their class by completing any assignments and bringing any items required by their catechist for that day's lesson
- **cooperate and participate** with their fellow classmates 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**

PLEASE NOTE: Students enrolled in the St Giles Parish Religious Education programs share parish space with children enrolled in St Giles Parish School; therefore, all students are expected to respect all parish space and the materials within that parish space.

Discipline Policy

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

- 1st 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.
- 2nd offense: catechist repeat action for 1st offense and also contact student's parent and program coordinator regarding the student's inappropriate behavior
- 3rd offense: catechist will send student to program coordinator with note regarding student's inappropriate behavior. Program coordinator with the parish CRE will hold a conference with student and student's parents regarding situation

On the occasion that a catechist finds it necessary to ask a student to leave their classroom, the student will be sent to the facilities desk at the entrance of the building. Parents will be contacted to pick up their student. The program coordinator and parish CRE will conduct a conference with the student and the student's parents to determine if an alternate formation plan is required for the student.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Website: www.stgilesparish.org

As part of our parish wide goal, the Religious Education Office is striving to be more environmentally sound by posting **all program information** on our parish website located at: 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 published 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 here at St. Giles Parish consists of two gatherings that are for parents only to engage in meaningful conversation about issues of faith and one retreat for parents and children to experience together. **These parent gatherings begin at the end of your child's first grade year and will continue into the beginning of their second grade year. There is also a retreat for parents and their child to prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament. Two opportunities to celebrate First Reconciliation are offered prior to your child's Christmas break.**

Sacrament preparation for First Eucharist follows a similar format with one parent gathering and one retreat for children and parents to experience together. In conjunction with these three gatherings, St. Giles Parish also utilizes a preparation book for First Eucharist, which is distributed to the children at the First Eucharist Enrollment Mass celebrated in January. Parents and their child use this preparation text at home. Parents receive weekly information packets that are designed to deepen their own understanding of the Sacrament of Eucharist as well as enabling parents to guide their child into gaining greater understanding and meaning of the Eucharist in their daily lives.

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

Reservation forms for events may also be found on the Sacrament pages.

Off the Sacrament Track Program

This program is designed for children who have a need to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church through reception of the Sacrament of Baptism, Eucharist, and/or Confirmation at a different time from their peers or in an alternate setting. This program supplements and is supported by our parish religious education programs and/or our parish school.

This program, like our Sacrament Preparation Program, **requires two years of FORMAL religious education and 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 7th grade and continues through 8th grade.**

Information for confirmation candidates, sponsors and parents can be found on our parish website at: 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 class 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 should complete and sign the health and learning needs information section of the registration form. While this information is confidential, it is shared with the adults who have volunteered as catechist and facility's parents in order to assist in your child's formation experience.

Except in extraordinary circumstances that have been approved by the Coordinator of Religious Education, no adult volunteer or staff person will maintain, supervise the neither taking of nor 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 RE desk.

STUDENT/FAMILY RECORDS

The Religious Education & Youth Ministry 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 and Youth Ministry Office at 708-383-4185.

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.

There is a vast array of opportunities especially for parents to be involved in one of our Religious Education Programs. Each family is asked to volunteer in at least one of the areas of need for

the program their child/children are registered in. The Online RE Volunteer Form lists the areas of need that exist and will give a description of the tasks associated. One of the greatest needs of the Religious Education Program at present is volunteers for our Parent Coordinating Board. The mission on the PCB is to organize, energize, and activate our parent volunteers in order to enrich our children's experiences within the Religious Education Programs. Your consideration of this vital volunteer opportunity will be greatly appreciated.

PLEASE NOTE: All adults who volunteer in an capacity that involves direct interaction with the children enrolled in our parish religious education programs, or any parish ministry that serves children, are expected to complete:

- an online background check with the Archdiocese of Chicago,
- uphold the Archdiocesan Code of Conduct for Adult Volunteers,
- agree to the Department of Children and Family Services to conduct regular updates on your background checks status,
- completed an one-time Mandated Reporter training,
- and attend a Virtus training workshop in addition to maintaining Virtus compliance throughout the year by responding to the monthly updates.

All adult volunteers working with children have a confidential file kept in the Religious Education and Youth Ministry Office.

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