

St. Lawrence Catholic Parish

Children's Religious Education Handbook Kindergarten - 5th Grade



ST. LAWRENCE CATHOLIC PARISH
— FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA —

Pastor: Rev. Steve Williams

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PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

► Kindergarten through Grade 5 ◀

Class Time & Location: Classes meet on **Sundays** from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. in the Family Life Center upstairs classrooms.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the catechetical program of St. Lawrence Parish is to help all participants and their families develop a deeper knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. We seek to carry out this mission through catechesis, sacramental preparation, liturgy, and service.

OBJECTIVES OF OUR PROGRAM*

- To present a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, that integrates knowledge of the faith while living the faith
- To center on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- To involve all members of the parish community, particularly the parents
- To focus on the symbols, rituals, and prayers of the Church

*from the *National Directory for Catechesis, 2005*

Students of any sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin are admitted to St. Lawrence's catechetical program. Where possible, our program strives to make accommodations for children with disabilities.

CATECHISTS

Catechists are volunteers who have recognized a special call to help spread the Word of God by sharing it with His children. As required by the Archdiocese of Mobile, all catechists are trained and certified as part of the Child and Adolescent Protection Program.

ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians are the first and foremost educators of their children. Children, without conscience effort, model their parents – their speech patterns, attitudes, carriage and mannerisms. Parental attitudes and commitments to faith and morals have a significant impact on a child's own moral and faith development. In addition to providing parish or Catholic School education in the faith, we encourage parents to support their children's spiritual and moral development through Christian conduct, prayer and Sunday worship.

PARISH CATECHETICAL POLICIES

•**Attendance Policy:** Students and parents should make every effort to attend the catechetical sessions and/or parent meetings offered at St. Lawrence. Parents are expected to bring their children to class ON TIME, and to pick them up promptly. **Students who miss an excessive number of classes per year may not advance to the next grade level of catechesis.** If a student must miss a class, parents are asked to contact their child's catechist to obtain any missed assignments or information. Students and parents with specific family dilemmas preventing them from attending weekly catechetical classes will be handled on a case by case basis.

•**Arrival and Dismissal:** Students must arrive to class ON TIME and must be picked up promptly at the designated dismissal time.

•**Communication:** Since a student's catechist has the most direct contact with him/her, parents should discuss any classroom problems with their child's catechist first. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, parents should speak with the director. If still unresolved, the problem may be brought to the pastor.

•**Fire Safety and Disaster Preparation:** Procedures for fire and disaster evacuation are posted in each classroom. Each catechist will instruct his/her students on their respective classroom's evacuation procedures.

•**Health Concerns:** Health information is collected on the catechetical registration form. Catechists and other personnel are not allowed to dispense or administer medication to students. If your child is on medications (for ADD or other such medications), please follow the doctor's orders in administering any medication.

•**Sickness:** Please use the same criteria you use for secular school to evaluate whether your child is too sick to attend religion class. If your child becomes sick during class, the parent or guardian will be contacted.

•Student Behavior and Expectations:

- 1) Students will be expected to show respect to their teachers and classmates. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. At the first disruption, the child will be referred to the posted classroom rules. After the second incident, the child will be sent to talk with the director. If inappropriate behavior continues, the parent or guardian will be contacted.
- 2) All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. Students are also expected to complete assignments and participate in group projects.
- 3) Students are expected to regularly attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days and to celebrate sacraments in *this* parish. Parents and guardians are also encouraged to do so.

•Cell Phones: Students are to refrain from using cell phones during class time. Catechists reserve the right to confiscate any cell phones that are seen being used in any way until the class has ended.

•General Expectations: It is expected that each family become actively involved in the parish and in the parish catechetical program so that by their participation they model a living, conscious and active Christian faith and reinforce the values and attitudes for living that faith. The family and their children are expected to embrace and live these values and attitudes.

•In registering their children for St. Lawrence’s catechetical program, parents and guardians agree to have read the rules and policies presented in this handbook & consent to be governed by them.

CHILD & ADOLESCENT PROTECTION POLICY

According to the Mobile Archdiocese Child & Adolescent Protection Policy, all adult volunteers having “substantial contact” with children are required to attend training in the recognition and prevention of all forms of abuse against children, and students must receive annual grade-level child protection instruction. Further information is available from the Archdiocesan Office of Child Protection at 251-434-1559, or by email at childprotection@mobarch.org.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION GUIDELINES

•General Sacramental Requirements:

1) Parents must submit a copy of their child’s official certificate of Baptism from the parish where the sacrament was received.

2) The student must attend all sacramental preparation classes unless they are formally excused.

•We reserve the right to delay the reception of any sacrament if it is determined that a child is not adequately prepared or otherwise ready to receive.

•First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion: Children in 2nd grade who have completed one full year of previous catechetical instruction are eligible to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation & Eucharist.

•Older Students: Students who are older than the second grade but are not yet adults will receive separate sacramental preparation during the year in addition to attending their regular grade level classes.

Note to Parents and Guardians

As your child/children’s primary catechist and spiritual role model, your active involvement in their religious education is most important. The goal of our program is to team together with parents and guardians in order to provide quality education in the faith, appropriate preparation for the sacraments, and dedicated spiritual formation that encourages loving service to others.

In this effort, we ask that you:

- 1) Make attendance a priority.
- 2) Ensure that children arrive **ON TIME** for class.
- 3) Attend Mass with your children on Sundays and Holy Days.
- 4) Practice and encourage formal, informal and spontaneous prayer with your children.
- 5) **VOLUNTEER!** Your help is always needed!
- 6) Pray that the Holy Spirit will continually bless us all with the gifts of patience, fortitude, wisdom and love.

SPECIAL CATECHETICAL PROGRAMS

•Children’s Liturgy of the Word: Open to children aged 5 years-old through grade 4. This ministry celebrates the Word of God during the Sunday 8:30 and 11a.m. Masses.

•Vacation Bible School: This week long summer program is held annually for children in preschool through grade 6. Youth in grades 7-12 participate by serving as teen guides and catechetical aides.