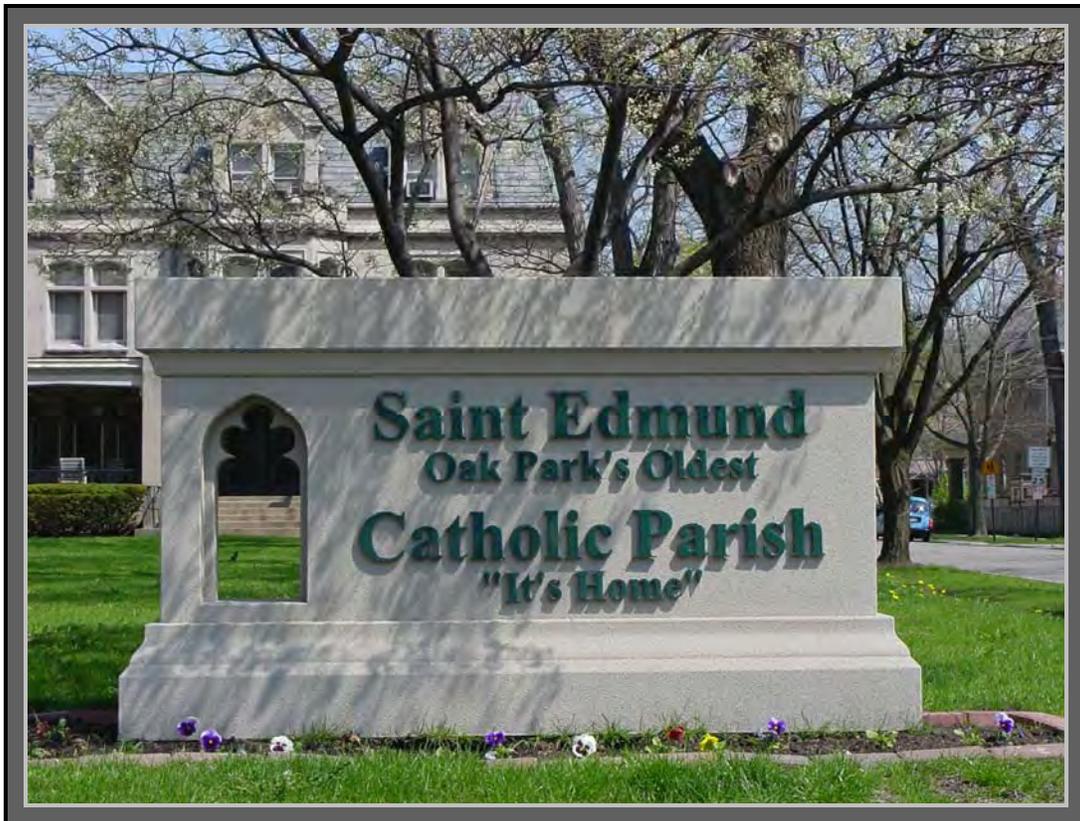


**Saint Edmund Parish
Office of Religious Education
200 S. Oak Park Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60302
708-848-7220**

Religious Education Program Handbook



WE BELIEVE

WE BELIEVE, that the purpose of our catechetical ministry is to proclaim authentically and fully the message of Jesus, to foster an understanding of and build community in all areas of life, and to encourage service to each other for the good of all.

WE BELIEVE, that you have entrusted your children to us to deepen the Faith you have given them as parents.

WE BELIEVE, that with your cooperation, such as, attending parent meetings, celebrating the Eucharist and the Sacraments together, and reinforcing Christian values in your homes, we can help *you*, help your child grow in their faith as they journey with you.

WE BELIEVE that the goal of religious education through formation is to make us aware of the action of God in our lives, both within us and outside of us. That religious formation is faith brought to understanding.

THEREFORE, we will work with you to awaken this awareness in your children and encourage them to gradually accept responsibility for their own Christian development, as they are able.

OUR MISSION

Saint Edmund Religious Education Program seeks to reach children from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade by proclaiming Christ's message through instruction, prayer experiences, and the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation. We realize that our ministry is accomplished in *partnership* with the parents who are the primary catechists. Together we will proclaim Christ's message, help develop Christian community, lead the students in prayer and worship and motivate them to do Christian service.

OFFICE HOURS

Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday
Sundays (class dates only)
Other times by appointment

8a.m. – 3p.m.
9a.m.-12:30p.m.

For your convenience the office has a 24-hour answering machine. Please leave your phone number and the best time to reach you. We will make every effort to reach you in a timely manner. Communicating well is important to our ministry with you and your children.

OFFICE ENTRANCE

During Religious Education office hours, please use the Pleasant Street entrance to the school building. Ring the door bell marked ‘Religious Education and we will let you in.

On Sunday for sessions please use the Pleasant Street entrance to the school building only, we will be there to welcome you.

Please remember that class hours can be hectic. If you need to speak with the catechetical leader we ask that you please make an appointment at 708-848-7220. This will allow us to give you our full attention.

You can also find us on the Internet. Stay in touch with the Parish Family by visiting the Parish website weekly at <http://www.stedmund.org/>. We will be posting information regarding our Religious Education program on a regular basis. Simply select *Religious Education this Week* to find postings.

You may reach the Religious Education office by calling (708-848-7220) or by email at religioused@stedmund.org

PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

708-848-7220

Janet Bennick
Kaydee Sproat

Catechetical Leader
Secretary

PARISH STAFF

708-848-4417

Father John McGivern
Peggy Leddy
Kathleen Halfpenny
Donald Giannetti
Christine Rousakis
Alvara Vargas
Thomas Dwyer
Father John Lucas

Pastor
Pastoral Associate
Director of Music
Parish Assistant
Parish Administrative Assistant
Parish Maintenance
Deacon
Resident

PARISH SCHOOL

708-386-5131

Michael Sweeney

School Principal

CATECHETICAL STAFF

Catechists are women and men who are members of our parish family and have agreed to represent all of us in a specific area of ministry. In this ministry catechists work as assistants to the parents who are the primary catechist. Our role is to help, *not* to replace the vital role parents have as the primary catechists. It is our role to help the parent's journey with their children as they deepen their faith and love for our Lord.

We would like to thank all the young people and adults who are not mentioned here but volunteer their time in so many ways to help create a wonderful environment for learning, prayer and worship.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Any Child wishing to receive a sacrament must have a *full year* of religious education sessions *prior* to the Sacramental year itself. The preparation is the bringing together of elements that allow us to celebrate the sacraments in community. If you are interested in preparing your child to receive a sacrament you must be a member of Saint Edmund Parish and your child must be baptized and enrolled in either the Religious Education Program or the Parish school program.

You and your child will have the opportunity to participate in classroom work, small group work and family experiences. Each sacrament has requirements that are meant to enrich the family and child experience of receiving and celebrating that sacrament.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation/Eucharist is a two year process. The process begins with an Enrollment ceremony with the Children and Parents and the Reconciliation celebration takes place in the winter. The Reconciliation preparation is done in the faith sessions and by the family at home with material provided by the Religious Education office. We also encourage you to participate as a family in Reconciliation services held in the parish throughout the year.

First Eucharist

This program provides for the involvement of priest, parents, catechist, and children, faith sharing at home, and special Family Sacrament Experiences. The First Eucharist/Reconciliation family program is in addition to the regular classroom sessions. We expect you to attend weekly Mass with your child in preparation for their reception of First Eucharist.

Confirmation

The Confirmation process at Saint Edmund Parish is a three-year program involving sixth, seventh and eighth grades. Confirmation candidates, their families and sponsors study their faith by participating in both small and large group experiences. They participate in special Liturgies, Christian service/social justice opportunities, a review of basic information and prayers of the Catholic religion, an interview with a member of our pastoral staff as well as a Confirmation Retreat Day.

CATECHIST ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

The catechists in our program form a small Christian community within our parish by participating in *The Fostering Faith Program* from the Archdiocese of Chicago as a way of developing their understanding and knowledge of our faith. We gather monthly for faith sharing, spiritual enrichment, and session planning. Catechists are offered many opportunities throughout the area as well for continued spiritual growth and development.

We always welcome new catechists. If you are interested in becoming a catechist, catechist assistant or substitute catechist, please call the Office of Religious Education at 708-848-7220

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXPECTATIONS

- *Parents are expected to pray with their children, attend Mass every Sunday (preferably the 9:30am Mass), and receive the sacraments as a family.* Yours is the first model of parish family the children will learn.
- Students will read the materials before each session so they can share their views and feelings about their faith based on the readings.
- Students will bring completed homework (when assigned) to the next session and come prepared to participate in the sessions.
- Students in grades 3-8 are to bring their Study Bibles to every session. Bibles are presented in the early part of third grade to the children as well as to all new students entering the program. If your Bible is lost contact the office and arrange to pay for a replacement. (Replacement cost \$25.00)
- Parents are asked to review readings and homework with your child and use the *Faith in Action* and *Take Home Page*. As their *primary* catechist it is important to live, model and talk about your faith with your children. This will enrich them and you.
- Parents are asked to read all correspondence sent home, including *The St. Edmund RE Newsletter*. It is one of the primary ways for us to stay in touch.
- Parents are asked to keep the Family Calendar in the home for ready reference to session dates, special events, etc.
- Parents are encouraged to attend at least one session with their child sometime during the year as well as attending the ending prayer session in the Gym at 12:00. Special days are included in the schedule when *all* parents will be invited to join in session activities. Together we will accomplish great things and we want to be sure you are involved.



POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Non-Discrimination Policy

The St. Edmund Religious Education Program is operated under the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. We do not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, handicap, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its policies, supplementary programs or any other program-based function. As such all are admitted with equal rights and privileges accorded to students in this Religious Education Program.

Enrollment Policies

Enrollment in the Religious Education Program is open to any child whose family is registered in Saint Edmund Parish, in grades Pre K3-8th.

The grade level of a child entering the program is left to the discretion of the DRE/CRE in dialogue with the parents.

Parish Subsidy

The parish subsidizes the Religious Education Program from the generous offerings of the total Parish Community. For this subsidy, we are grateful to the Parish Community.

Registration Fees & Tuition

Tuition is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. The fees are kept as reasonable as possible. However, no child will be turned away from Religious Education due to lack of the ability to pay the fees. These fees are due at the time of registration or in full by “Book Day”. Special fees are assessed for Sacramental Preparation in grades 2 and 8. Special financial arrangements may be made if there is a need.

Class Size

The goal is to maintain class size between 10-12 students. You may wish to become a Catechist to help us maintain this goal; if so please call the Office at 708-848-7220.

Continuity

Faith, like Religious Education, is a life long process. Every child is expected to faithfully participate in each grade without skipping any grade. You know that all of life's success is built on the learning that preceded it. Similarly, our program is designed to build on and deepen the teachings of the previous grade. In the event of a missed or skipped grade we will work with you to help bring the child up to the proper grade level.

Absences

In the event that your child is going to be absent, *we ask that you call 708-848-7220 and leave the child's name, catechist name and reason for absence*; any child who is absent for a session must make arrangements to pick up the missed work and return it the next session.

Any child who is absent for more than two sessions without making up the missed work will be asked to come in with their parents and meet with the DRE/CRE to work out a solution.

Abused and Neglected Children

The Religious Education personnel are required to conform to the *Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (P.A. 81-1007)*.

Classroom Policies

Classes in the St. Edmund Religious Education Program will be taught in conformity to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and in accordance with the guidelines and policies for Religious Education Programs within the Archdiocese of Chicago.

NO CELL PHONES, IPODS, OR OTHER SUCH DEVICES ARE ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOM SESSIONS;IF FOUND-PARENTS WILL NEED TO PICK UP THESE ITEMS FROM THE CATECHIST AFTER THE SESSION.

Dress Code

NO hats of any style are allowed to be worn inside the building. Hats are to be removed when in the building.

We encourage the children to wear comfortable clothes. Please remember that this is a religious learning environment when you select clothing for your children.

Discipline

There is a close connection between discipline and personal growth. We expect the best from your children and encourage them to act in that spirit in this and every environment they find themselves in. In the event of a problem, you will be contacted.

Since good behavior, cooperation, attention, and courtesy are expected from every child, the

- 1st offense will have the catechist speak privately with the student
- 2nd offense the catechist will inform the DRE/CRE and we will contact the parent.
- 3rd offense the DRE/CRE, catechist, parents and child will have a conference about the situation.

In the *rare event* that a child is removed from a classroom, the student will be escorted to the office and the parents will be called to pick up the student. If together we cannot come to a point where the student will improve their behavior, the DRE/CRE has the right to help the parents arrange for Religious Education outside of a classroom.

Arrival Time

We ask that you arrive no more than *15 minutes* ahead of your session time-- *an adult should accompany the child into the building.* Please enter through the Pleasant street doors and proceed to the Gym for prayer. Parents are highly encouraged to join us for group prayer, after which the catechist will escort the children to the faith room. Sessions begin at 10:50am. *Late arrivals must come in with a parent and pick up a pass supplied by the attendance clerk at the door.* Any child who is tardy three or more times will be asked to come in with their parents and meet with the DRE/CRE to work out a solution.

Closing Time

Sessions end at 12:15 P.M. on Sunday. In the event of an early dismissal you will be notified. Please pick up your children promptly so we can safely close each session on time.

Dismissal

The children in *all* grades will be dismissed from the Pleasant Street doors. Please come into the building and wait in the corridor to pick up your child. Children will be brought to the door from their room by the catechist. An adult must accompany every child as they leave the building. This policy is for safety reasons.

If your child is to walk home, please send a note with that information to the RE office and it will be kept on file for the year.

Excused Dismissal

If a child must leave early, we need a signed note from a parent in order to release the student. Please give the note to the attendance clerk at the door and the information will be relayed to the catechist. The catechist will not dismiss a child from their class unless they have the OK of the DRE/CRE. This is for your child's safety as well as part of our responsibility toward your child.

Keeping in Touch

Please look for information sent home for your use in the folder provided for this purpose. *You will be kept informed about up-coming events in the parish, religious opportunities and parent meetings through the newsletter.* Please take the time to read this important source of information regarding the Religious Education Program. You will also find suggestions for at home experiences you may wish to try as a family.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Divorce/Separation – Buckley Amendment

We abide by the provisions of the Buckley amendment, therefore divorced or separated parents must file a court certified copy of the custody section of the divorce decree. We will abide by the provisions of this Amendment with respect to the rights of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, we will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the records and to other related information regarding the child. It is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Office of Religious Education with an official copy of the court order and to update said copy if necessary.

Change of Information

Please notify our office of any changes in address, phone numbers, emails, or medical situations.

Lost and Found

If your child loses an item, please contact our office at 708-848-7220. We will do our best to assist you.

Fire and Tornado Safety

Instructions for fire and tornado safety are posted in each classroom. There will be at least one drill per year with the catechists and the students.

Emergency Closing Information

Emergency closing information can be obtained by turning to one of these sources:

Local TV Channels or local AM or FM radio stations or on line at **www.emergencyclosingcenter.com**

When there is a cancellation, the Office of Religious Education will contact the catechists who will in turn contact you, if there is time to do so.

Together

***As Parents, Catechists, Parish Community
And Global Community***

***We will bring all of Our Children
To the Lord, Our God!***

