

# *Family Handbook*

2023-2024

St. Mary and Sons of Zebedee

Religious Education Program



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## **MISSION STATEMENT:**

The mission of St. Mary and Sons of Zebedee Religious Education Program is to aid parents in the Catholic faith formation of their children. At Baptism, parents promised to carry out the faith formation of their children and are considered their children's primary teachers. Our parish catechists assist parents and children by providing quality religious education in a safe and spiritual setting. The collaboration between parents, catechists and students is essential to the growth of the Catholic Faith. The partnership promotes children to grow in their love for God and their understanding of their Catholic faith. It also cultivates their God given gifts and talents and encourages them to follow in the path of Jesus. Furthermore, it encourages them to serve God and others compassionately and generously as Catholic Christians, which leads them to evolve into active members of their faith community.

## **GOALS:**

- To foster students' spiritual growth in their Catholic faith
- To provide students with an enduring understanding of the scriptures, creed, justice & morality, prayer and the history of our Catholic church.
- To offer youth the tools needed for integrating faith with everyday life throughout their journeys.

## **PARENTS/PARISH/MASS:**

**Parents are the primary educators in the faith of their children.** Modeling the faith to your children is an essential part of this role. Attending weekly Mass, following the precepts of the Church and celebrating the Sacraments are important things for your child to see you doing. Making Christian values in your home important will show them how to live as a Christian. Your participation in the Religious Education program (as a catechist, an aide in the classroom, a hall monitor or even a parent willing to discuss your child's faith) is vital to your children. As a parent you should be keeping up to date with what is happening within the Religious Education Program, within your Parish, in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and within the Catholic faith. As a responsible and responsive parent you should attend all required parent meetings and be sure your child attends all scheduled classes. Parents are welcome at any special program events during the year (talks, Masses, Prayer Services, Stations of the Cross, at class or any other special program events).

**As a parish, it is our responsibility to assist you in the formation of your children.** We are here to provide resources, prayer, and guidance through email, phone and letter. The Religious Education program is conducted to supplement the faith formation you are doing at home. We will provide a safe environment where love, care, respect and acceptance are held in the utmost importance.

***Mass and the Eucharist are two of the most important gifts you can give your children.*** The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that the "Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch." (CCC 1324) Mass and the Eucharist are the center of the Catholic faith. Regular Mass attendance and participation are an important part of the spiritual development of your child(ren) and are a way for parents to model being active in our church community. As such, it is expected that parents are taking their children to Mass and encouraging them to actively engage in Mass.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Classes for 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade meet on Monday nights from 6:00-7:15 pm. Classes for 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade meet on Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00 pm. Grade 11 meets from 6:30 - 8:30 pm. At St. Mary and Sons of Zebedee we are trying to provide the best religious education we can in the small amount of time we spend with your children. Because our time is limited, it is very important for your child to attend all classes. If your child/children will not be attending a class, please notify the DRE, Lesa Staehler at 920-979-4656. Expect that if the student is absent he/she may be given an assignment based on the content covered in class and may be expected to return it to the teacher the next class. (see Classwork/Homework for more information). Excused absences will be determined by the discretion of the Director of Religious Education.

If we do not receive a phone call, text or email from a parent, the absence will be assumed an unexcused absence by the Religious Education Office. Unexcused absences will require the parents to make arrangements with the Religious Education Office in order to complete any work that may be required in order to advance to the next grade level.

## **AT-HOME LESSONS, ASSESSMENTS AND CLASS ASSIGNMENTS**

Research has shown that parents are the most influential teachers of their children. Active engagement in their lessons will strengthen your child's willingness to continue practicing their faith post high school. At home instructional time has been incorporated into the schedule to help meet this need.

**Elementary At-Home Lessons** – Children will receive workbook lessons and parents will receive online access to help them carry out the lessons at home. Additionally, your child may bring home an assignment or project from a catechist. Because we don't meet weekly, we are unable to fit all the lessons in and some must be completed with parents. This is a great way for parents to engage and share in their child's faith formation.

**Middle & High School At-Home Lessons** – The salvation story is the theme of our 6/7 grade content. Lessons will be online and children will be able to engage with these at home as well as in the class. Some lessons will not fit into our time allotment: therefore, your child will be expected with your help to complete them at home. Additionally, your child may bring home a challenge or project to complete at home. We are called to listen to the Gospel and carry out God's word. Students in grades 7-8 will receive lessons in a form similar to a *Scholastic News*, but called **Gospel Weeklies**. Each child will receive a Gospel Weekly Response Form (GWRF) which must be handed in to receive credit for at-home instruction. Students may also receive challenges or projects from their catechists. **AWAKEN** is a new form of the Gospel Weeklies written for teens and young adults. Students in grades 9-10 will receive Awaken, a parent/teen discussion log sheet. Additionally, they may receive a lesson challenge or project from their catechist.

**Class Assessments** – The goal of religious education is to form your child in the Catholic faith. The use of assessments gives the child a goal for learning and passing on the faith. All grade levels will be assessed during classes during some lessons.

**Class Assignments** – The student is responsible for completing and turning in all work assigned by their teacher and all family reflection assignments. If your child misses a class, they are expected to complete any classroom assignments given by the teacher by the next scheduled class meeting. All assignments and family reflections must be completed and submitted before the start of the next registration year for a student to advance to the grade level. Middle and High school students may receive an alternative lesson on Formed.org.

## **CELL PHONE/ ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

**Grades 1-5** Cell phones and electronic devices are not permitted and will be confiscated.

**Grades 6-11** It is recommended that your child(ren)'s cell phone and/or electronic device be left at home or in their vehicle during classes in order to minimize distractions and aid the catechists with classroom management. Students who choose to bring their cell phones or electronic devices into the classroom will be expected to silence them or turn them off and place them upside down on the corner of the desk or a spot designated by catechists. Use of the cell phone/electronic device during class time (i.e. a break) is at the discretion of the catechist. Students may not use their cell phones for picture taking at any time. Misuse of the cell phone/electronic device will result in confiscation of the phone. The DRE will notify the parent it needs to be picked up. ***Students who choose to bring cell phones/electronic devices to class will need to sign an Acceptable Use policy contract.***

## **CONFESSION**

Students who have received the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation are expected to go to confession. Matthew Kelly, Catholic author and speaker, discusses why we need confession.

**“Confession brings peace and makes us whole. It gives us strength, grace, courage, and wisdom. We all have a need to confess our sins, not for God’s sake, but for our sake. Not to help him, but to help us. God has already placed his dream deep within us. All we have to do is draw it out. We need confession because we lose our sensitivity to sin. When we go to confession, we are given more grace to acknowledge temptations and avoid sin.”** (<http://rediscover.archspm.org/belonging/what-is-confession-and-why-do-i-need-it/>)

## **CURRICULUM**

Elementary Grades 1-5 will be using the 2022 Word of Life curriculum, which integrates “salvation history, Christian anthropology, heroic virtue and character formation and learning through discipleship.”

Grades 6 & 7 will be learning about salvation history through the Word of Life series. They may also participate in Encounter: the bible timeline series and various other resources. They will have a better understanding of the Old Testament and how it is fulfilled by the New Testament.

Grade 7 - 9 will be using the New Chosen Series, to review and deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. It has built in videos, questions, reflections, and assessments. This marks their beginning toward the Sacrament of Confirmation. This series is necessary to review and solidify the teachings of our faith.

HS Grade 10 will be learning about deeper prayer and deepening their faith as they continue on their journey to becoming apostles and receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. They will engage in small group discussion topics that include building a relationship with Jesus, the saints, confirmation sponsors, service and outreach, and much more to help them prepare. Additionally, they will engage in Lectio Divina prayer, Eucharistic adoration, and other experiences that can draw them closer to Jesus.

Grade 11 will be finishing up *Decision Point Curriculum* Topics include: *The Holy Spirit, The Eucharist, Confirmation, Made for Mission, and Holiness is Possible*. Confirmands will be completing the Archdiocese of Milwaukee requirements for Confirmation preparation. They are preparing to receive in fullness the Gifts of the Spirit, transition from disciples to apostles of Jesus, and carry out the mission of our Catholic faith, “to spread the Good News.”

## DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

Students in the Religious Education program are expected to be respectful to teachers, aides and other students. They are also to be cooperative with the facilitators of the program. This is required to have an effective learning environment for all students. If a teacher deems it necessary to remove a student from the classroom and sends him or her to the Religious Education Office, the student will be given a verbal warning. Based on the discretion of the Director of Religious Education, the student may be sent back to class or wait out the remaining class time in the office.

Contact to the parents will be made the second time a student is sent to the office or if the first offense is deemed serious enough to warrant it. On the third offense, or for extremely serious infractions, the parents will be required to attend classes with their child for the remainder of that semester, or until the Director of Religious Education deems it no longer necessary. If the parent chooses not to attend class with their child, they have the following options:

1. They can do home study with their child, for which they will be accountable to the Religious Education Office.
2. They can take their child out of the Religious Education Program. Please note: If this option is chosen, sacraments may be delayed until appropriate religious education has been completed.

Reasons for disciplinary action and possible dismissal are listed, but not limited to:

1. Flagrant/outrageous and persistent disruption of class
2. Violence
3. Possession or use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs
4. Continued disrespectful or abusive language or conduct
5. Consistent non-participating, disinterested behavior and attitude
6. Any other situation deemed inappropriate

An expelled student may be allowed re-entry into the program the following year by:

1. Meeting with the pastor, DRE and parents to determine the willingness of the student to cooperate with program standards.
2. By repeating the year in question.

## DRESS AND CONDUCT CODE

- No candy, gum, food or drink is allowed in the buildings unless provided at special functions or approved in advance by the Director of Religious Education and teacher.
- No hats or caps may be worn in the building.
- Students who drive are to turn down their radios on parish grounds.
- Headsets, boom boxes, pagers, laser lights, iPod, electronic equipment, roller blades or anything related that is brought onto the property by the students during program hours will be confiscated and turned in to the office for **parent pick-up**. Cell phones are not to be on during class. In the event that one is, it will be confiscated and turned into the office for **parent pick-up**.
- The police department will be notified when drugs, alcohol or tobacco products are present.
- When students have a leadership role in the Mass (i.e. ushering, lecturing, taking up the gifts, etc) they are to dress appropriately and arrive 15 minutes earlier. **Boys:** dress/casual pants (no jeans), shirts with a collar. **Girls:** dress pants (no jeans) or skirt/dress with appropriate length, blouses/tops of appropriate style (i.e. no bare midriff or spaghetti straps- stomachs and shoulders are to be covered).

- Bare midriffs, visible undergarments and clothing with un-Christian logos and themes are unacceptable attire for the Religious Education setting. Parents, please discuss this policy with your children before classes begin so that it does not become an issue.

## **ILLNESS**

If your child is ill, has a fever, or has not been fever free for 24 hours, please keep them home and notify the DRE prior to class via email, text or phone message. The DRE will leave assignments if need be in the pickup bin outside the school hall entrance.

## **PRAYERS**

As part of faith formation, children and youth are expected to be practicing their prayers at home. We will review them in class as well, but our classes don't meet often enough to instill learning and memorization of prayers. See Expected Prayers by grade level on page 12.

## **PRESCRIPTION & NONPRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

All prescription drugs are to be dispensed through and stored in the religious education office. A parent must fill out a permission form before prescription drugs/medication may be dispensed to their child.

## **REGISTRATION AND FEES:**

Students will be automatically enrolled for the following school year. Unless there are changes to your contact information, paperwork will not be required to register. Payment and consent forms to be mailed in by August 1<sup>st</sup>. The current tuition fees for 2022-23 are listed below. Each year the fees are examined and parents will be notified if changes occur. In adherence with our parish policies, partial or full payment must be made prior to or at the first class session. The balance is due by January 1<sup>st</sup>.

<u># of Children Enrolled</u>	<u>Parishioner Tuition</u>	<u>Non-Parishioner Tuition</u>
1 Child	\$65	\$130
2 Children	\$115	\$230
3 or More Children	\$155	\$310

Parents of new students should submit a copy of their child's baptismal certificate if their child was not baptized at St. Mary or Sons of Zebedee Parish.

Children of non-parishioners may apply to attend our religious education program. In recognition of the financial commitment that St. Mary and Sons of Zebedee Parishes make to the program, non-parishioners will pay twice the amount of the regular tuition. All such requests must be approved by DRE and Pastor.

Families with outstanding balances from the previous year are reminded that these fees are due at the time of registration. Any family that is experiencing financial hardship will not be refused religious education; however, they must contact the DRE to make necessary arrangements.

## **SACRAMENTS**

Students must be enrolled each year in the continuous process of religious formation. This continuous formation should supplement family role modeling and faith formation in the home. In combination, these things are very important in developing your child's life as a Catholic. Our program is set up so that each year builds off the previous year. Each year students are asked to learn certain prayers in addition to the grade specific faith information.

**Students must attend religion classes for two years prior to the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Communion and three years prior to the Sacrament of Confirmation.** Failure to comply with this policy may result in the delay of the reception of a sacrament. Sacraments are normally received in the following grades:

First Reconciliation and First Communion- Second Grade

Confirmation- Eleventh Grade

Any special classes that are required may have an added expense. If your child was previously enrolled at another parish, please provide us with documentation.

## **SACRAMENT FEES**

First Reconciliation (2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade).....	\$15
First Eucharist (2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade).....	\$25
Confirmation (11 <sup>th</sup> Grade).....	\$75



- First Reconciliation fee covers expenses such as special books, certificate, prayer book, etc. A separate retreat fee may be collected at a later date.
- First Eucharist fee covers expenses such as special books, scapulars, candles, certificates, administrative expenses, etc. A separate retreat fee may be collected at a later date.
- Confirmation fee covers expenses such as the Retreat, special books, Bibles, certificates, stipend for bishop, administrative expenses.

## **SAFE ENVIRONMENT**

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is committed to maintaining safe environments for children to learn, pray, and grow. Every priest, deacon, parish or school staff member, teacher and lay minister that is employed by a parish or school and any volunteer working with minors in our archdiocese is required to meet three requirements:

- Attend a Safe Environment Education Session.
- Pass a Criminal Background Check.
- Sign the Code of Ethical Standards for Church Leaders [Link to Code of Ethical Standards](#).

In addition to our safe environment requirements for adults, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee requires all parish religious education programs and Catholic schools to provide instruction on personal safety and abuse prevention in age



appropriate lessons for all children in grades kindergarten through twelfth grade enrolled in their programs. Parishes and schools are required to annually report their compliance with this requirement.

## **SERVICE**

*To live as Christ lived is to live a life that responds to the needs of others--at home, in school, in the community, etc. While service is a component of confirmation preparation, it should be seen as more than a project or a number of hours that "count."*

(Archdiocese of Milwaukee) The purpose of requiring service hours is to encourage students to live the Christian Life. The service rendered is to be an expression of our life of faith in Christ done for the love of Him and others.

### **What are the requirements for service?**

1) 30 hours of documented *volunteer* service are required prior to Confirmation. Students in grades 9 and 10 are expected to be involved in serving others (community, parish, family) at least 10 hours each year. 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders may be provided opportunities as a class to participate in service hours; such as a retreat/service day or a summer mission trip. Students must have a service form signed by the supervising adult for each project. A service log will be given to students at the beginning of the religious education year and needs to be handed in by the last class.

2) 9<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> graders will participate in a small group discussion in the Spring. (If you are not in attendance, then you will be expected to make this up with the DRE). The following questions may be used to guide the discussion and are intended to help you prepare. What does service mean to you? What service did you participate in and what did you learn from it? How did the service aid you in imitating Christ? Why is living a life of service important for a Catholic Christian?

### **How do I find opportunities to volunteer?**

Flyers distributed during Religious Education and events advertised in the weekly church bulletin. The parish website [www.smsoz.org](http://www.smsoz.org) and our Facebook page will give you some options for community/parish service hours. Parents and students are responsible for finding and completing appropriate events for the credits.

## **SNOW DAYS:**

Religious Education classes will be canceled due to inclement weather if the Lomira Schools are closed for the day or dismissed early because of the conditions. A text message will be sent out to parents if classes are canceled. Also, a message will be posted under announcements on the Religious Education Website: [www.smsoz.org](http://www.smsoz.org) and on the Facebook page.

## **STUDENT PICK UP/DROP OFF INFORMATION:**

If you are having your child/children picked up by someone other than a parent (neighbor, grandparent, etc) you **must** send a written note and that person must **pick up the child from the classroom or they must be listed on your signed permission form**. When you drop off/pick up your child please use the entrance between the school and the church and exit by the school doors or on the south side of the church. This will help prevent an unnecessary accident. Children are not allowed to cross the street without an adult. Children in grades 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> **must be picked up at their classroom by a parent**. All students will enter through the school hall doors to check in and then proceed to class. The doors in the front of the school will be locked at all times.

## **TARDINESS**

It is important that all students be punctual and seated in class on time. If a student is tardy (defined as fifteen minutes or less late), he/she will be given one reminder that it is important to attend all classes on time. We are asking parents to reinforce the importance of this valuable life skill. Punctuality demonstrates respect for the volunteers who are giving of their time and talent to teach. Students who are repeatedly tardy will be expected to stay with the DRE after class and make up the time they missed. The DRE will notify the parent(s) if their child is tardy.

## **TEXTBOOKS:**

In some of our classrooms, students will be given a textbook and/or bible for them to use. These materials can be kept in class. If a child chooses to take them home, then they are responsible for returning with it. If it is lost, the cost of the new book will be the responsibility of the parent. If a child damages a classroom book that is not his/hers, the parent is responsible for the cost of replacing the book.

## **VANDALISM:**

All students must respect the Church's property. Anyone responsible for stealing or vandalizing property is responsible for all costs involved in repair and/or replacement. When appropriate, the matter will be referred to the police. In the event the student responsible cannot be determined or does not accept responsibility, the entire class in which the loss happened will be held accountable. Dismissal from the program will be considered.

# Expected Prayers

Taken from Archdiocese of Milwaukee Standards

## Grade 1

Memorizes and prays the  
Sign of the Cross, Our  
Father and Glory Be to the  
Father  
Act of genuflecting

## Grade 2

Memorizes the Hail Mary  
and Act of Contrition  
Prays the Nicene Creed  
and Apostles Creed as a  
group

## Grade 3

Memorizes the Hail Holy Queen  
Prays the Apostles Creed as a group  
Introduced to Stations of the Cross  
and the Rosary

## Grade 4

Memorizes The Apostles Creed  
Prays the Rosary as a group  
introduced to The Nicene Creed

## Grade 5

Creates and participates in a prayer  
service involving Scriptures and  
prayers; e.g., the Our Father, Hail  
Mary, Apostles Creed, Act of  
Contrition, Glory Be, Rosary,  
Stations of the Cross  
Prays the Nicene Creed as a group  
Introduced to spontaneous prayer

## Grade 6

Reviews and practices all prayers  
previously learned/memorized  
various forms and environments as  
a key dimension of prayer; e.g.,  
retreat, adoration, meditation  
• Experiences meditation as prayer

## Grade 7

Reviews and practices all prayers  
previously learned/memorized  
Constructs prayers of petition  
Practices spontaneous prayer

## Grade 8

Reviews and practices all prayers  
previously learned/memorized  
Prays the Nicene Creed with  
understanding  
Prays Scriptures of the day  
Practices Marian devotions and  
other devotions

# St. Mary & Sons of Zebedee Religious Education Office Contact Information

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## Religious Education Office Facebook Profile & Website

The Religious Education Office has a Facebook profile. The purpose of this profile is to increase communication between the Religious Education office, parents, and students. To find the profile: log into your Facebook account and enter **St. Mary and Sons of Zebedee Religious Ed** into the search box for Facebook. All parents are encouraged to click on LIKE this page so you can follow it.

St. Mary's and Sons of Zebedee parishes website includes resources for Religious Education under the Faith Formation tab. This will give you access to needed forms, calendars, and resources for growing your Catholic Faith. Please bookmark this site for easy access: [www.smsoz.org](http://www.smsoz.org)

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