

# **S.S. Peter & Paul Church**

Religious Education  
Handbook  
2010-2011

# PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## S.S. Peter & Paul Church

We the Board of Education of S.S. Peter and Paul Church, believe that Christian formation is a life-long process. We believe that parents have the primary responsibility for nurturing the faith life of their children. The parish community shares that responsibility by proclaiming in word and in deed the gospel message of Jesus Christ; by providing formal instruction in Catholic doctrine and practice; by liturgical, sacramental, and prayer experiences for youth; by encouraging youth to participate in parish worship, community building and service activities; and by fostering in all parish members a growing relationship with and commitment to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

**Attendance** - Regular attendance at Religious Education classes is very important for the continual spiritual growth of the child. Please have children arrive 5 minutes before class begins so that class can begin and end on time; arriving late is disruptive to the rest of the students.

- Students need to attend 70% of classes to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. This 70% also applies to the school year preceding the sacrament.

**Behavior** - Students are expected to:

- Respect themselves, others (including fellow students, catechists, aides, DRE's and priests) and property.
- Demonstrate a good attitude toward religious education class and church activities.
- Participate in class discussions and activities.
- Participate in service learning projects.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

Ideally in a Christian educational program, discipline would not even be a topic of conversation. Realistically, we are dealing with young people who sometimes need help setting priorities. We recognize that learning cannot take place unless the environment is one with order and purpose, where every

person and all property are respected. Furthermore, religious education classes are short in length. In order for catechists to have enough time to teach the necessary concepts, they are not expected to spend a lot of time on discipline.

### **The Discipline Policy:**

1. Minor discipline problems are handled directly by the catechist in the classroom.
2. The first time a major problem occurs, the student is dismissed from class and reports to the Director of Religious Education's (DRE's) office. The DRE meets with the student to discuss the problem and possible solutions. The student remains in the office for the remainder of that class. The DRE also visits with the catechist after class that night. Parents will be contacted to be made aware of the disciplinary action.
3. If the student is asked to leave class a second time, he or she again reports to the DRE's office. The DRE again visits with the student and talks to the catechist. Parents are contacted, and the student will not be allowed to attend class again until a conference has been held with the parent, student, DRE and catechist. At this conference, options on disciplinary actions in the future will be presented and agreed upon by all present.

For any concerns regarding the learning environment, parish facilities, or any other factors regarding the well-being of the child, parents are encouraged to communicate these concerns to the DRE.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS**

Parents are their children's primary teachers. Children learn first and foremost from their parents. Therefore, it is important that the parents, parish, and catechists work together to teach and model the Catholic faith to children. **Parents are called to:**

### *Faith Formation at Home:*

- Acknowledge that they are the primary influence on their children.
- Share faith and values with their children and openly discuss these and other religious beliefs.
- Encourage their children to respect life and property, pray, praise, and worship together and individually.
- Attend Mass as a family on Saturdays/Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Explain to their children liturgical events, the Mass and basic Catholic traditions and customs, such as Holy Days, the Rosary, and Mary.

- Teach their children Catholic prayers and pray together as a family. *A child's daily lived experience of prayer as a family is an invaluable part of their faith formation. Appropriate opportunities include at meals, before bed, and spontaneously, in praise and thanksgiving.*

*Support Parish Religious Education Classes:*

- Bring their child(ren) to class on time.
- Take time to meet each child's catechist. Maintain open and ongoing communication with them.
- Become aware of what each child is learning each week.
- Be supportive of the religious education catechists/aides and program.
- Check with your child weekly for notes from the catechists or Religious Education Office.
- Contact your child's catechist when your child will be absent from class.
- Contact the DRE if you have any questions or concerns.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATECHISTS/ASSISTANTS**

Catechists for religious education not only bring themselves to the classroom, but they also volunteer their time, talents, enthusiasm and faith with the children of S.S. Peter and Paul. As catechists, they are called to:

- Be witnesses of the Catholic faith and model Catholic-Christian attitudes and traditions by attending Mass and celebrating the sacraments on a regular basis.
- Share the lives and love of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the saints with each other and the students.
- Be aware of developmental processes and individual differences of the students.
- Teach the message of God in interesting and understandable ways.
- Encourage children to respect life and property, pray, praise, and worship together and individually.
- Plan the lessons and activities beforehand and arrive 15 minutes before class time.
- Pray for and with their class, providing students with a variety of prayer forms and reviewing the common prayers of our Church.
- Maintain open and ongoing communications with parents.
- Provide service learning projects to class.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARISH**

- Call forth catechists and aides from the parish community and provide for their training.
- Provide facilities and materials for effective catechesis.
- Provide opportunities for catechists/aides to grow in their faith.
- Be familiar with diocesan policies in order to develop parish policies in conjunction with diocesan norms.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DRE**

- Organize and implement programs to meet the religious education needs of the total parish:
  - Develop educational and sacramental programs for children and adults.
  - Prepare schedules.
  - Coordinate youth activities and events.
- Be aware of educational resources and current catechetical methodology.
- Observe and evaluate catechists/aides on a regular basis.
- Work with the parish Board of Education.
- Evaluate programs and prepare an annual report for the Board of Education.
- Maintain communication with and support of parents.

## **CONTACTS**

Please feel free to address your concerns and/or questions to any of these parish members:

### **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**2008-2009**

**Chris Crutchfield** 733-2347  
[crutches@mchsi.com](mailto:crutches@mchsi.com)

**Cal Halstead** 388-4407  
[chalstead@feedenergy.com](mailto:chalstead@feedenergy.com)

**Kristin Taylor** 733-4844

### **DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**Tony Gustafson** 388-4042  
[tjgustaf@globalccs.net](mailto:tjgustaf@globalccs.net)

**Erin Wilgenbusch** 733-5250  
[erinandmike@iowatelecom.net](mailto:erinandmike@iowatelecom.net)

kristinambertaylor@gmail.com

**Eileen Wuebker** 733-9420  
[Wuebker98@iowatelecom.net](mailto:Wuebker98@iowatelecom.net)

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR**

**Rev. Jack McClure** 292-3810  
[jackcpps@yahoo.com](mailto:jackcpps@yahoo.com) cell 515-450-5598

**IF CHILD(REN) WILL BE ABSENT:**

Parents are asked to notify catechists of their child(ren) that they will not be attending class.

NOTE: To insure the safety of all children, attendance is taken in the first 10 minutes of class time. For children who are not in attendance and notification from parents has not been received, a phone call will be made to the parents.

**IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER, such that class is cancelled:**

A phone tree will be activated as follows - DRE's and / or DRE assistant will contact catechists, who in turn will contact families of their respective classrooms. In the event that school(s) are canceled for that day, or activities for that evening, it is likely to follow that classes will also be canceled.

**WEEKLY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS SCHEDULE**

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>CLASS TIME</b>
Kindergarten (5 as of Sept. 15) thru 9 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday 6:45-8:00

Refer to the 2009-2010 S.S. Peter & Paul Religious Education (RE) Calendar for dates when classes **WILL NOT** be held.

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Confirmation (gr. 10) at St. Thomas Aquinas	Wednesday 7:15-8:30 pm
Parent Meeting	Wed., <b>Sep. 29<sup>th</sup></b> 7:15-8:30
Rite of Welcoming	Sat., <b>Oct. 23</b> 4:45 Mass STA
Candidate/Sponsor Day of Reflection	Sat., <b>Jan. 29<sup>th</sup></b> , 1:00-5:45 Mass STA
Confirmation Retreat at 4-H Camp	Sat.-Sun, <b>Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup></b>
Confirmation Rehearsal	Wed., <b>April 27<sup>th</sup></b> , 7:15-8:30 pm

**Confirmation** (at St. Cecilia)

Sun., May 1st , 2:30 pm

Refer to the 2010-2011 St. Thomas Aquinas Peter & Paul Religious Education (RE) Calendar for dates when classes WILL NOT be held.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION CLASSES**

	<u><b>SCHEDULED CELEBRATION</b></u>
FIRST RECONCILIATION (gr. 3)	Dec. 15, 2010
CONFIRMATION (gr. 10)	May 1st, 2011 at 2:30 pm (at STA)
FIRST EUCHARIST (gr. 3)	May 1st, 2011 at 8:30 am

## **FEE SCHEDULE**

For parishioners:

Fee is \$15 for one child, \$30 for two, and \$40 for three or more.

For non-parishioners:

Fee is \$50 for one child, \$80 for two, and \$100 for three or more.

For families of catechists and assistants, the fee is waived.

Please contact Fr. Dennis Miller or DRE for information on fee arrangements.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

### **First Reconciliation**

Instruction for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is not grade specific, but is offered in our program in the first half of third grade. Both parents(s) and child should attend discernment session in order for the parents(s) to make an informed decision concerning their child's readiness to receive the Sacrament.

As required by Archdiocesan policies, children will be offered the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation before their reception of First Eucharist. Should the child, with the guidance of his or her parent(s), decide not to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at that time, he or she will not be deprived of the right to receive First Eucharist.

### **First Eucharist**

First Communion preparation is offered in the second half of third grade. Parent(s) should work with their child to best prepare for the reception of the Sacrament. Celebration of First Communion usually occurs at a regularly scheduled parish Mass in the Spring.

At S.S. Peter and Paul, children usually receive First Communion in third grade. However, this depends on the child's readiness, which must include a sufficient familiarity with the nature of the Eucharist to participate actively and with awareness.

### **Confirmation**

At St. Thomas Aquinas, instruction for the Sacrament of Confirmation is offered to high school youth in tenth grade. The Confirmation preparation process consists of participation in weekly classes, completing service projects, attending a retreat, and celebrating Rites at weekend Masses. Celebration of Confirmation usually occurs at a special afternoon Mass in the Spring.

## **HELP FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

The Archdiocese of Dubuque has established a program of pastoral assistance to people who believe they or those in their care have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other Church personnel. This assistance will include help in informing civil and Church authorities. Victim Assistance Coordinators are trained to facilitate access to appropriate professional mental health services, social services agencies, support groups and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. Any individual desiring help from this program is invited to call toll free **800-803-6758** or **866-319-4636** to report an allegation or receive assistance. This program is part of the new "Policy for the Protection of Minors."

All those (18 years or older) working with children on a weekly basis, as part of the S.S. Peter Religious Education program, have fulfilled the requirements of the "Policy for the Protection of Minors" by attending a VIRTUS training session, undergoing a background check, and by reading the sexual misconduct/abuse policies of the Archdiocese.