

Guidelines

St. Martha Combined Evening Religious Education Program 2011-2012 (7-20-2011)

Welcome to the combined Evening Religious Education Program for Ascension, St. Bartholomew and St. Martha.

St. Martha Parish provides a Religious Education Program for children in grades 1-8 who attend public school. The program is staffed by dedicated volunteers and administered by the Director of Religious Education of St. Martha.

St. Martha Parish Mission Statement

We, the community of St. Martha, aware of our call by the Holy Spirit, are striving to continue the ministry of Jesus Christ through prayer, teaching, service and fellowship in the Catholic tradition.

As stewards, we are called to live out our baptismal promise by placing God first in our lives, in worship, in proclaiming the Good News, in utilizing our talents and gifts, and in supporting each other in our Christian values.

Goals of Saint Martha Evening Religious Education

- We are in support of families who recognize the importance of a strong Catholic faith with emphasis on doctrine, the Eucharistic community, and service.
- We support parents in providing an atmosphere that instills respect for authority and development of accountability in young adults for the future.
- We will make known to the student the teachings of Jesus and the doctrine of the Church and provide a Christian atmosphere that challenges the student to live his/her faith.
- We want to help each student develop a positive self-concept as a child of God.
- We will give the children an understanding of life as a stewardship of the gifts God has given to them.

The purpose of the Religious Education Program is to assist the parents in the faith development of their children by providing formal instruction. Under the direction of legitimate church authority, the desire to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ, belongs to all members of the Church according to each one's role. (Canon 774, p1)

"Parents above others are obliged to form their children by word and example in faith and in the practice of Christian life; sponsors and those who take the place of parents are bound by an equal obligation." (Canon 774, p.2) Celebrate Sunday Mass and prayer in your family. Review the material presented in class and in your child's text.

The following guidelines contain basic information and expectations of the program. If you have any further questions, please contact the Religious Education Office at 491-5135.

Registration

This year, after August 1, registration information will be available at www.stmarthachurch.org. Registration information is mailed to current St. Martha students in grades 1-8 in August, who do not have email contact information. You may print the page and send it to St. Martha Parish office with your check made out to "St. Martha Religious Education". Bulletin notices will encourage new families to go to our web page or call the DRE of your home parish. Ascension, and St. Bartholomew hold their own registration evenings.

This year, St. Martha will have a registration time for those who would like to meet with us after the 11am Mass on August 7th in the Teacher's Lounge off the cafeteria.

The religious education registration fee is \$30.00 per child.

Each parish under contract, St. Martha, Church of the Ascension, and St. Bartholomew pays an additional fee of \$120.00 per student to fund the program.

- Parishioners registered and current in their stewardship commitment will have their parish fee paid for them by their parish.
- Non-registered or non stewardship families are to add on an additional \$120.00 fee per child. However, we strongly urge parents to register in a parish and be active in their stewardship commitment.
- In order to participate in a Sacrament of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation or Eucharist), a family must be registered in a parish and currently fulfilling their stewardship commitment.
- If fees cause a serious financial hardship, payment plans can be arranged. Call the DRE at St. Martha or in your home parish.

Curriculum

The curriculum text is RCL(Resources for Christian Living)/Benziger Faith and Word, Blest Are We for Grades 1-5.

2011-2012, we will prepare for First Reconciliation in 1st grade. It is a family program with a workshop to help parents understand how to do this. We use Pflaum's Together in Jesus, which is a home study.

6th graders are given a copy of The Catholic Youth edition of the New American Bible.

Grades 6, 7 & 8 have the Sadlier series, We Believe, as the text.

6th graders study the Bible; the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

7th graders study We Live Our Faith; As Followers of Jesus Christ.

8th grade curriculum prepares our students as candidates for Confirmation.

We use the Sadlier text, We Live Our Faith; As Members of The Church and Inspired by the Holy Spirit - Confirmation.

Our curriculum is based on the Sacramental and Religious Education Guidelines of the Archdiocese of Louisville.

All that we do on Tuesday is meant to bring young people and their families to a deeper faith and life in Jesus Christ and to the Sunday Mass celebration with the larger community.

ACRE Assessment

St. Martha ERE 5th and 8th graders participate in the ACRE assessment in January-February time frame.

This is not a graded test and no names are connected to scores. It is to help us make sure we are covering material in the curriculum of the Archdiocese.

St. Martha Religious Education is dedicated to the following goals for youth as stated by the U. S. Catholic bishops: (Renewing the Vision)

- To know the message of Christ
- To live and experience the community of Christ
- To serve the needs of others and reach our own human potential.

Schedule for Tuesday Evening

- **When you bring your child to ERE, we will meet in Church this year.**
- Parents will be notified in advance of any change of location, but at this time we are planning to meet only at St. Martha Parish.
- Church will be open 15 minutes before classes begin. **Children should arrive within that 15-minute period of time.**
- Children will be dismissed from the classroom when a parent **or other assigned adult, with a signed permission slip, picks them up. No child will be allowed to leave the building without an adult. The building will be locked at 8:30pm. All children must be picked up prior to that time.** If you are unavoidably delayed, special arrangements with the Director must be made to pick up your child. Call 491-5135.
- Students arrive at 6:45pm - 6:55pm.
We begin at 7:00pm in Church.
Classes are dismissed at 8:15pm from the classroom.
Again, we do not release students to the parking lot.

Sacramental Programs

First Communion –

2nd Grade preparation for the reception of First Communion will be handled in our regular Tuesday evening Classes.

Parent meetings, First Communion Workshops and Sacramental Celebrations will be offered by your home parish. DRE's in your home parish will keep you informed and answer your questions.

Eucharist is a Sacrament of Initiation and will be celebrated in your home parish.

First Reconciliation –

St. Bartholomew Parish

2nd Grade Preparation

We are going to celebrate this sacrament at the 2nd Grade level. There will be a parent meeting on September 21 at 6:30pm, (No ERE) at Barth Hall at St. Bartholomew. The celebration of the sacrament is at St. Pius Church November 16 at 6:30pm.

St. Martha

2011-2012, we will prepare for First Reconciliation in 1st grade. It is a family program with a workshop to help parents understand how to do this. There is a workshop, and parent meeting in early February (tentatively). We will celebrate the sacrament on March 22nd (tentatively) at 7pm in church. More information later.

We prepare from First Grade to ask forgiveness for sin from God who always loves us. The understanding is enhanced through the eighth grade.

Church of the Ascension

2nd Grade preparation and reception, in the fall semester, is offered to students of Ascension at the parish.

We prepare all students from First Grade to ask forgiveness for sin from God who always loves us. The understanding is enhanced through the eighth grade year.

Confirmation – 8th grade

For **St. Martha and Church of the Ascension**, preparation will be on Tuesday evening at St. Martha. Each parish will contact its members about schedules.

St. Pius and St. Bartholomew will prepare in a six week, Sunday Morning process in each parish. These Students will attend our ERE classes on Tuesday evening in addition.

These are very involved processes and each parish will provide its own schedule. Parent meetings will be held in your home parishes.

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation and will be celebrated in your home parish. Exceptions to this can be requested and permission must be obtained from the pastor of your home parish.

Sacramental Special Needs

Children, older than 7, who have not been baptized or who have received little or no religious education and desire to receive the Sacraments are asked to contact the Director of Religious Education or RCIA Director at their home parish.

Preparation for Baptism is done in the Rite of Christian Initiation; Children's Catechumenate.

Arrangements for instruction will be made based on the needs of the child in any case.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in the Evening Religious Education Program is always needed. Please consider assisting us by becoming a Catechist, Assistant Catechist, joining our Parent Support Group, helping with hospitality and special projects. We will assist you in matching your talents with our needs. This experience will enrich your own faith and the children will greatly benefit from your presence. **Anyone working with children in the Archdiocese is required to take Honor Thy Children, the safe environment training course of the Archdiocese of Louisville and have a background check done.** When you volunteer, information will be given to you for the background check and you can go to www.archlou.org to learn when the next and most convenient Honor Thy Children class will be held. It will be listed under Safe Environment Training.

Concerns

Any parental concerns relating to the Religious Education Program should be brought to the attention of your child's Catechist. Please inform you child's Catechist of any significant changes in his/her life such as a death in the family, change in family life, or special needs which may develop.

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected for all students. A calendar is published at the beginning of the year, and parents are asked to honor this calendar when planning vacation, sports, appointments, after school activities or evening commitments. All coaches in CSAA play, should understand the importance of religious education and will not interfere with the child's attendance.

If your child has a behavioral disorder which requires medication and that medication has not been taken appropriately for attendance at ERE in the evening, that child has an excused absence for the first two occurrences. If you have questions, please call the Director at 491-5135.

When your child is absent

Please notify St. Martha Religious Education Office (491-5135) on the day of your child's absence and the reason for the absence. We send a list of absentees to your home parish weekly. Team Play for sports requires baptism and attendance at religious education classes.

Responsibility for School Property

The family of a child who willfully or carelessly destroys, or damages any book, furniture, equipment, buildings or personal property will be obligated to pay the full amount of repairs or replacement.

Responsibility for Student Textbook

Some of our Catechists ask the children to take their textbook home so that the family may review the lesson at home. If the book is lost, parents are asked to pay \$18.00 for the replacement of the book.

Discipline

In order to create and preserve an orderly atmosphere for learning, discipline is necessary. The goal of Christian discipline is self-discipline. As Christian people, we have an obligation to respect the rights, the property, and point of view of others. Any behavior that would break the rule of common sense and safety is not acceptable.

In order to establish an appropriate atmosphere, we expect that students:

- be present and on time for class
- have books and other necessary supplies
- give attention to the Catechist or classroom discussion
- use courteous, respectful, and appropriate language and behavior towards all.
- Respect others property.
- Cell phones that are used or displayed will be taken by the catechist until class is over.

Parents are asked to review these guidelines with their children so that everyone will understand what is expected.

Procedures recommended for correcting unacceptable behavior should follow this sequence as a rule:

1. Catechist conference with student.
2. Director conference with student. Parent will be notified.
3. Director's conference with parent/student/Catechist.
4. Parent's presence required in classroom with student.
5. Removal of child from program due to inability to achieve acceptable behavior.

The Director is the final resource in all-disciplinary matters and may waive any or all rules for just cause. In cases where parents consider any disciplinary action unjustified, they may

1. Ask the Director to reconsider the decision.
2. Appeal to the Pastor.

Weather Related Cancellations

When weather conditions become hazardous, our Religious Education program will follow Jefferson County Public School Schedules.

- If Jefferson County cancels school or dismisses early on a Tuesday due to inclement weather conditions, Religious Education classes will also be canceled.
- If we anticipate that road conditions will be hazardous, either before or after our sessions, Religious Education classes will be canceled. Parents will be notified by telephone or email.

Release of students

In case of family difficulties (law suit, divorce, etc.) parents should inform the DRE in writing regarding guardianship of the student. A copy of any custodial court order should be sent to us to keep on file. If a parent is not allowed to pick up their child from ERE, it is recommended that the custodial parent not only file the papers with us but have a conference with the student's catechist.

The ERE abides by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment. Thus, non-custodial parents will be given access to information regarding the progress of their children, unless there is a court order specifically stating that the non-custodial parent is denied access to such information.

Exception: A student may be released to a person with lawful authority to take custody of the student, e.g. a police officer with a warrant. In such case, the student's parent shall be notified at the earliest opportunity.

Sports

Participation in the Catholic School Sports Program is governed by the CSAA rules and the rules of your local parish as approved by the Pastor. Full, active attendance at Catholic education classes affects eligibility. Please check your parish's Athletic Handbook.

St. Martha Boosters asks all ERE families planning to play sports at St. Martha to register at St. Martha School Registration, August 10.

The Reverend Mark M. Hamilton, STD
Pastor, St. Martha Church

Pamela M. Berry
Director of Religious Education

Please copy and send this sheet in with your registration and check made out to St. Martha Religious Education.

2011-2012 Family Guidelines

I have read and accept the Guidelines for the Combined Evening Religious Education Program at St. Martha Church. I have reviewed the discipline section with my child/children.

Name_____Date_____

2011-2012 Student Pictures

This year, we would like to take the children's pictures. We have always thought it was important to know our students and learn their names. These are being taken as group pictures.

Yes, I want my child/ren's picture taken.

Yes, you may use my child's picture in a Photo Book of the ERE for the office, only.

If you do not want your child/ren's picture taken, please check here to indicate that to us.

No, I do not want my child(ren)'s picture made.

Child/ren's names & grades_____

Name printed_____

Signature_____date_____

Return this sheet with your registration form as soon as possible. Thanks!