

***Sts. Peter and Paul
Holy Cross
Religious Education
Parent Handbook***

Non-discrimination Policy

The Parishes of Sts. Peter and Paul/Holy Cross Religious Education Program of the Diocese of Evansville admits students of any race, color, sex, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in the program. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, nationality, and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admission programs, or other parish-administered programs.

Admissions/Class assignment

Admission/assignment to classes is based on the students' age/class they attend in school. Students enrolled in the 3 year old preschool class must be 3 years old by August 1st or the date used for admission to school. Students are automatically promoted to the next grade at the end of each year. Any other wishes must be discussed with the Director of Religious Education.

Arrival and Departure of Students

All students will meet in church at 6:30 with their teachers. We will have a short prayer and blessing, and teachers will then take their children to their classrooms.

Students will be dropped off & picked up in front of the church with parents driving south on Vine street, so that the passenger doors are facing the church. This way, the children will not have to cross traffic. High school students will again park in the lot behind the school. Students must at all times use the crosswalk for crossing the street.

At time of dismissal, students may leave in the following ways:

- A: wait with their teacher until parent drives up via car line;
- B: wait with their teacher until parent walks up to teacher to get child;
- C: drive self home;
- D: ride home with older sibling who is also a religious education student;
- E: walk home.

A waiver/release form must be filled out if a student is using options C, D, and/or E. All walkers are to remain with their teacher until all cars are dismissed and gone.

Unfortunately it only takes one family not following these rules to cause a change in the policy. If necessary the car pick-up line will be discontinued and all parents will have to pick up their child/children from their teacher(s) in the classrooms.

Attendance

Regular attendance at class is essential to a student's success. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Attendance is recorded each time class meets. Attendance records are kept on file in the religious education office at the completion of the year. Prompt arrival at class is expected of all students. Parents can report absences to the Director of Religious Education. Irregular attendance will be brought to the attention of the Director of Religious Education by the Catechist and addressed with the parents. Attendance reports will be sent to parents.

Behavior & Discipline

We are about the task of religious education. This includes not only the passing on of our Catholic religion, but also, living as disciples. The behavior of students should reflect respect. The principles are: respect others and their belongings; respect all parish/school property; be prepared to learn by being prepared for class; share your faith; do your own work; show appropriate behavior in the classroom, hallway, Church - all parish places. Language and actions should also be respectful and courteous to all people - students, Catechists, visitors, parish staff.

Each student has a responsibility to his/her fellow students and to the Catechists and staff to create and maintain a Christian atmosphere. The following behaviors are not part of a Christian atmosphere: disrespect/inappropriate language; vandalism; cheating; excessive talking and noise in the classroom, hallway, or other areas; disruptive behavior in class or the building; fighting.

The Catechist will discuss behavior needs or inappropriate behavior with the Director of Religious Education. A Code of Conduct Form will be sent home with the child and signed by teacher and DRE. Three forms on file can lead to dismissal from the program.

If the catechist feels a student is not following these behaviors, he/she will issue a warning to the student, discussing if necessary how the student is being disruptive. If the student continues to be disruptive/disrespectful, the student will be sent home with a Code of Conduct Form signed by the teacher and the DRE, requesting a parent to join their child in class the next week. This is the only way the child can return to the classroom. Three forms on file can lead to dismissal from the program. This policy will be strictly enforced.

Parents are our resource for help with a behavioral need. The Catechist with the Director of Religious Education will seek the parents' suggestions as to the cause of inappropriate behavior. This collaboration will result in positive approaches to working with/ending the behavior.

Cancellation of Classes

The Director of Religious Education and/or Catechists will try to inform families of the cancellation of classes due to weather or any other emergency. Listen to WRAY 98.1 for school closings.

When Gibson County schools are NOT in session due to bad weather Religious Education Classes will be cancelled for that evening

Care for Facilities & Materials

We share our classrooms, library, gathering areas, and restrooms with all of the members of our parish. Students are expected to keep the classroom and spaces they use as clean as or cleaner than they found them. Students are not allowed to have or chew gum in any classroom. Students are expected to take good care of their textbooks and all other materials they use. They are not to be torn, tattered, or otherwise misused.

Class Time

Religious Education classes in the Sunday morning Pre-school/Pre-K program are held at 8:45 a.m. at Holy Cross and 10:30 a.m. at Sts. Peter and Paul for all. Wednesday evening at 6:30-7:45 is Religious Education for all students from K-12 at Sts. Peter and Paul Campus. Students are to be in the church at 6:30 pm. Please be in church promptly at 6:30 for Prayer, if not this delays class time for all teachers and students.

Code of Christian Conduct

The students' interest in receiving a quality, morally based religious education can only be served if students, parents, and religious education personnel work together. Normally, differences between these individuals can be resolved. In some rare instances, however, the religious education program may find it necessary, in its discretion, to require parents/guardians to withdraw their child.

It shall be an express condition of enrollment that the student behaves in a manner, both on and off campus that is consistent with the Christian principles of the religious education program as determined by the school in its discretion. These principles include, but are not limited to any policies, principles, or procedures set forth in any student/parent handbook.

It shall be an express condition of enrollment that the parents/guardians of a student shall also conform themselves to standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the religious education program, as determined by the religious education program in its discretion. These principles include, but are not limited to, any policies, principles, or procedures set forth in any student/parent handbook.

These Christian principles further include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Parents/guardians are expected to work courteously and cooperatively with the religious education program to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral, and behavioral expectations of the religious education program.
2. Students and parents/guardians may respectfully express their concerns about the religious education operation and its personnel. However, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.
3. These expectations for students and parents/guardians include, but are not limited to, all religious education sponsored programs and events.

The religious education program reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, which actions fall short of meeting the Christian principles of the religious education program. Failure to follow these principles will normally result in a verbal or written warning to the student and/or parent/guardian and normally will first result in disciplinary action short of a requirement to withdraw from the religious education program.

The religious education program reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, when conduct is of such a severe nature as to warrant immediate action without a warning and/or without an intermediate step short of withdrawal. SEE ATTACHED FORM

Communication

Communication among families, Catechists, the Coordinator of Religious Education for sacramental preparation, and the Director of Religious Education is encouraged. The religious education program is in place to support you, the parents, who are the primary educators of your children. Communication among everyone will help everyone meet the needs of the students.

Bulletin/Parish Newsletter

News items and information related to the religious education program will be published in the weekly parish bulletin at church and the quarterly parish newsletter that is sent to your homes. Please watch these publications for dates, information, and articles. An addition to the program this year is a periodic newsletter to help the flow of communication. We hope this helps inform the families of important upcoming dates, religious education policies, etc. This newsletter will be sent via e-mail to all families providing an address, and extras will be available in the vestibule of each church. Another form of communication we are encouraging the parents/students to use are the websites of our parishes. These are: Sts Peter and Paul - www.stspeterandpaul.net and Holy Cross - www.holycrossparish.info.

We also encourage communication through the use of the parish newsletter, The Message - diocesan paper, or perhaps local media. Please read, decide, and sign the Media Release section on the bottom of the Handbook Agreement signature sheet.

Emergency/Disaster Safety

Emergency drills will be conducted periodically. Detailed escape plans are posted near the door of each room. The religious education program has an emergency plan. Students are to follow instructions of their Catechist.

Emergency Information

Parents/guardians are required to complete an Emergency Information Form AND an Emergency Information and Medical Treatment Consent Form as part of the registration process. A copy of these forms is kept in the religious education office and in the classroom for Catechist information.

Illness or Injury or Accident

Accidents or injuries occurring to students while at religious education class will be reported to the Director of Religious Education and will be recorded. Duplicate copies of reports will be made so a copy can be kept at the parish and another given to the parents and another given to the diocesan insurance agent as necessary. Only emergency care can be given in the classroom/at the parish. No medication, including aspirin, may be given without written permission of parents/guardians. Reporting to parents/guardians will occur through the Director of Religious Education or Catechist.

Mission and Stewardship

The religious education program supports families and the parish in their education and practice of stewardship and missionary support. Sts. Peter and Paul/Holy Cross parishes are active in supporting people and agencies in need. This mission spirit will be continued in our religious education program. Volunteers for: Dinners, Auction, Children's tithing envelopes etc. Any official mission/stewardship program will be published in the parish bulletin or newsletter or information will be sent home with the students.

The religious education program supports and educates the students whenever possible in the understanding and practice of stewardship of time, talent, and treasure.

Off Limit Areas

The parish property/school is maintained and operated for the benefit of our students. However, common sense and safety considerations dictate the designation of a few off limit areas where students are not allowed. These areas include ALL Parish offices, the boiler room, storage areas, teacher's work rooms, kitchen and maintenance area and closets, and the septic system area outside. Students are expected to cooperate and refrain from being in these areas. Catechists will supervise students as they use or access rooms and spaces in the parish.

Registration and Fees

Registration of students for the Sunday morning and Wednesday evening religious education program is required. The dates for registration will be published in the parish bulletin and newsletter. Registration fees are charged for all students to help cover the cost of textbooks and materials. Additional fees may be charged for students in sacramental preparation programs to help defray the costs of supplementary materials and retreats.

Search Policy

The Director of Religious Education and Catechists may search students and their personal belongings if they have a reasonable suspicion, based upon the totality of the circumstances, for suspecting the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or religious education program safety rules.

Telephone

The telephone is a business phone and will be used by students only at the discretion and supervision of the Catechist and/or Director of Religious Education. The phone may only be used in case of emergency. Most student situations can result in the call being made for them. The only phone that is made available is in the religious education office.

NO cell phones permitted in the classroom. If they ring during class time they will be held by the DRE/CRE till class is over!

Textbooks

Students in grades Kindergarten through 8 have textbooks they will be using throughout the year. They will not be able to complete all pages or activities in these books. Textbooks will be sent home with the students at the end of the year. Families are encouraged to use the textbooks for continued discussion and learning.

Journals or writing activities that are done in the classroom may be read by the Catechist. Confidentiality does not extend to students' writing. Any information in a journal or writing that may indicate harm to self or others will be reported to the Director of Religious Education, parish staff, parents, and the appropriate authorities.

Vandalism

Willfully damaging or destroying parish property is cause for immediate suspension and possible expulsion. Damage caused by vandalism by a student is to be paid for by the student. If a student accidentally causes damage, he/she should report the damage to his/her teacher immediately so that it is not misconstrued as vandalism.

Visitors

Anyone who comes to visit during religious education class time should report to the front desk upon entering the building. That person can contact the Director or Coordinator of Religious Education and they can care for your needs. This does not include the dropping off or picking up of students.

Withdrawals

If a student will be withdrawing from religious education classes during the year, parents should notify the Director of Religious Education as soon as possible.

Zero Tolerance

Possession of and/or bringing onto parish grounds any form of drugs, alcohol, guns/weapons, or any substance that could pose a danger to oneself or to another person is grounds for automatic suspension and/or expulsion from the religious education program.

Any form of bullying will not be accepted.

Bullying Statement: Bullying is an intentional act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to another person. It is a consistent pattern of disrespect of one or more students by another. It is an abuse of power which can take many forms: physical (hitting, kicking shoving spitting); verbal (taunting, teasing, degrading social or sexual comments, rumor spreading); non-verbal (threatening gestures, exclusion, Internet, text messaging via cell phones, Instant message). Bullying may constitute grounds for detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Our School embraces the following as school rules against bullying:

- We will not bully others.
- We will help students who are bullied.
- We will include students who are easily left out.
- When we know somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and at home.

Please contact Fr. Tony, Fr. Gary, Mary Ann Zenthoefer, or one of the teachers, or any adult involved here if you feel threatened.

**Sts. Peter and Paul
Holy Cross
Handbook Agreement**

Parent(s)/Guardian:

A supportive relationship between families and those who minister in religious education is essential in the success of a religious education program. At Sts. Peter and Paul/Holy Cross, we will work together as a Christian community. To help understand what is expected, please read and share with your child (ren) this Religious Education Program Handbook for 2008-2009. Please sign and return this form to your child's teacher by September 10, 2008.

I/We have read the Religious Education Program Handbook for 2008-2009 and agree to abide by the policies, rules, and expectations stated within. Our signatures show our support and cooperation.

Date _____ Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Student's Signature _____

Sts Peter and Paul/Holy Cross Parishes Religious Education Program may share the activities of our students with the media. Please check your preference below, and identify children by name if your permission is not the same for all children enrolled in the religious education program.

_____ I give my permission for my child's photo, name, voice, and/or class projects to be released to the media.

_____ I **do not** give my permission for my child's photo, name, voice, and/or class projects to be released to the media.