

St. Nicholas Church  
Religious Education  
Parent Handbook  
2020-2021

*CCC 2223 – Parents have the first responsibility for the  
education of their children.*

## General Information

Textbooks – Textbooks this year for grades 1-8 are “Christ Our Life” Religion Series, 2009 edition. Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, approved by the USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) and highly recommended by the Sioux Falls Catholic diocese, these texts ensure that the Christian message is presented in its entirety and richness.

The ninth grade class uses the textbook Chosen by Ascension Press as their Confirmation prep course work.

Fr. Fitzpatrick teaches the 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who will be confirmed.

Please consult the CALENDAR for the days that classes will be held.

Discipline - Students are expected to observe the rules of conduct that enhance the Religious Education learning experience. Parents/Guardians will be contacted in the event a teacher or staff member deems it necessary. Every attempt will be made to settle any difficulty in a Christian manner.

Liturgical Life – It is assumed that children and their families attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Parents are encouraged to join the children at the special Masses held on Wednesdays during the Religious Ed year (students sit with their families at the Masses). It is in this way that the children learn to participate in the liturgy as well as have the experience of the larger parish community.

Catechists – all of our Catechists are volunteers. Without their many hours of love and devotion, this program could not exist. Many of our catechists have students in the program. We are also indebted to those who teach who do not have children in the program, who generously give of their time and talent.

Registration – is required each year for Religious Education. *Families must be registered in the parish* to sign up for Religious Education. (Contact the parish office if you need to register in the parish.) Forms are available for families in August. Fees, which cover the cost of student texts, are due at the time of registration. Student books will be issued when payment is received. By paying the fee, families are participating in the stewardship of the parish and ensuring that we have a strong program of passing on the faith to our children. Other arrangements for payment of fees (including sharing of time and/or talent instead of payment for those families who are unable to pay) can be made by contacting the director of Religious Education, or the pastor.

Attendance – regular attendance at religion classes on all grade levels is *essential* to the continuity and reinforcement of the Religious Education experience. This implies arriving on time, being attentive during class time, participating and cooperating with teachers.

If a student cannot be present for a session, a parent or guardian must notify the parish office by 5 p.m. by telephone or email prior to, or on the day of the scheduled class. If a student is absent from class and no notification was given, we will call the student’s home.

## Policy for Parental Involvement

The parish Religious Education programs we offer are meant to support the parents in their responsibility as the first educators of the Faith. Family involvement in and commitment to the life of the parish is critically important for those who participate in parish religious education.

Parents will assist in the faith growth and development of their children by encouraging *regular* class attendance, weekly Sunday Mass attendance and family prayer. Participation in Christian service activities as a family also reinforces the principles of the Stewardship way of life.

Parents are encouraged to:

\*Participate as a volunteer teacher, classroom aide, substitute or small projects helper.

\*Meet your child's teacher.

\*Help your child with assigned homework and classroom projects.

\*Attend the Religious Education Masses held on Wednesdays (students sit with their families at the Masses) and other gatherings or special events connected with the program.

\*Contact the parish office by phone or email prior to or on the day of the scheduled class if your child will be absent.

\*Come and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with your child's class as indicated on the calendar.

## Student Expectations

Students are expected to show respect for the grounds, buildings, classrooms, teachers and other students.

\*Fighting, pushing or intimidating behavior will not be allowed.

\*Bullying of any kind is not allowed.

\*Language that is disrespectful will not be tolerated.

\*Walking inside the buildings will be expected as will the use of moderate voices in hallways and classrooms.

\*Classroom rules established by individual teachers are to be followed.

\*Respect for the property of others with whom we share classrooms is of the utmost importance. Vandalism of property will not be tolerated. Students will be expected to help keep the facilities clean and not deliberately make any kind of mess.

\*Respectful behavior is expected at all gatherings in the Church. This respect includes appropriate participation and no disruptive or distracting behavior or attire.

\*Students are expected to come to class prepared with the books required and assignments that are due.

\*Please - **no gum or food** is allowed during Religious Education classes in any part of the facility. It is difficult to clean gum and food off of various surfaces.

### Discipline Procedures

If a student does not follow expectations;

1. Teacher talks to the student privately about misbehavior.
2. If the problem is not corrected the teacher will make the RE director aware of the situation. The director will contact the parents after speaking with the student and the pastor.
3. If it is necessary to contact the parents a second time, parents will be asked to consult with the DRE and pastor regarding a course of action to pursue, not excluding home schooling/individual instruction.

\*Parents can obtain permission from the DRE to have the student return to class.

### Sacramental Preparation

Sacraments are times of joy and celebration for the entire faith community. They are graced moments in which the parish family participates and remembers its own Christian journey.

Children are prepared to receive First Reconciliation and First Communion in the second grade. Confirmation preparation takes place in ninth and tenth grade.

Baptismal certificates are required for sacramental verification. Attendance at special meetings and retreats is expected of parents and students.

If a child enters our program who has not received sacraments at the grade levels stated above, please notify the pastor or DRE and we will arrange for preparation and reception of these sacraments.

### Inclement Weather

A decision to cancel Religious Education classes will be made by 4:00pm and parents will be notified via email.

If a late storm develops, check with the parish office before 5 p.m. If the weather in your area is threatening, use your good judgment, keeping safety in mind, in deciding about coming to religious education classes that evening. We will try to leave a message on the church answering machine and on the website regarding the cancellation of classes for those evenings that a storm may develop late.

### Safe Environment Training

The Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls is committed to providing healthy and holy environments for the children of our diocese to grow in their faith. As a part of this commitment, the diocese has created educational programs and policies for the employees and volunteers who work in parishes. All teachers volunteering in the Religious Education program at St. Nicholas complete the Safe Environment training required by the Diocese of Sioux Falls each year. The Diocese also requires age appropriate Safe Environment training for each student every year. This Safe Environment training for students consists of grade appropriate lessons in each class. The curriculum is called "Made In His Image". Parent information about the Safe Environment class material is available from the DRE any time during the year.

*CCC 2225 – Through the grace of the Sacrament of Marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children.*