

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH
Hallettsville, Texas

Religious Education Handbook



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OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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INTRODUCTION

Sacred Heart Parish's Religious Education Program is under the direction of the Diocese of Victoria and its Department of Education as well as the direction of the Pastor and Religious Education Board of Sacred Heart Catholic Church. The program uses the National Directives given in several pastoral documents, a few, for example include: *Sharing the Light of Faith: The National Catechetical Directory*, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *General Directory for Catechesis*, *To Teach As Jesus Did*, and *Catechesis Tradendae*.

All religious education programs must serve the mission of the Church. That mission is threefold, as expressed in *To Teach As Jesus Did*:

“The educational mission of the Church is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: the message revealed by God which the Church proclaims; fellowship in the life of the Holy Spirit; service to the Christian Community and the entire human community. While these three essential elements can be separated for the sake of analysis, they are joined in one educational ministry.” (#14)

OUR GOALS

1. To encourage basic religious attitudes of love of God and of one's neighbor.
2. To encourage a response of gratitude and love to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. To introduce the student to habits of prayer, worship, and liturgical celebrations.
4. To provide activities where the student can participate in service projects for the entire Christian community.
5. To encourage the student in moral formation.
6. To help the student become aware of personal responsibility in performing acts of good or evil.
7. To keep alive and nourish a Catholic Christian life.
8. To provide days of reflection and retreats for high school students and teachers.
9. To provide experiences which will enable the student to enjoy and appreciate his/her religious training now and in the years to come.
10. To support the catechists in the teacher training programs of the diocese.
11. To keep parents informed of their child (ren)'s progress.
12. To assist parents in the home religious education and sacramental preparation of their child (ren).
13. To obtain parental involvement for the mutual benefit of the child, parents, and the program.
14. To assist and cooperate with the other educational and ministry programs in the parish.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Classes are held most Wednesdays beginning the first Wednesday after public school begins and ending the beginning of May. For kindergarten through 11th grade, classes begin at 6:00 p.m. and end at 7:00PM. Please consult the yearly calendar published for any deviations in the appointed Wednesdays as well as additional dates, such as, sacramental preparation meetings, retreats, and celebrations of the sacraments.

Classes may be cancelled due to inclement weather. If the roads are covered with ice or snow, classes are automatically canceled. Cancellation will be announced on the radio as well as social media and teacher apps.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Admission to the Sacred Heart Religious Education Program will be considered for those children of the parish who are in Kindergarten through Grade 11, attend public school or are home-schooled **and** are registered members of Sacred Heart Parish. Admission to non-parishioners will be considered at an additional fee of \$20.00/student and if there is sufficient classroom space available.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Registration forms are mailed to all previously registered families. Families not previously registered may pick up registration forms from the Sacred Heart Rectory or call 798-3124. New families should bring a record of attendance in a program from their previous parish/town as well as Baptismal certificates.

FEES

Registration fees constitute the majority of monies available for the program's budget. These fees cover book expenses, copying and supplies, catechists' salaries, workshop expenses for additional religious training of catechists, and additional sacramental items needed.

A Family with one child: \$40.00

A Family with two children: \$50.00

A Family with three or more children: \$60.00

There is an additional \$5.00 fee required per student in a sacramental year.

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Attendance is recorded at the beginning of each class period, class activity, retreat, or field trip. Perfect Attendance is awarded at the closing Mass celebration in May for those students who are present at the beginning of class throughout the year. When a student has missed two consecutive classes they will be considered on notice, unless notification (via written note or phone call) by a parent is given to the teacher or coordinator. Because there are so few classes a school year, it is important that the students try to attend.

Attendance is extremely important during sacramental preparation years involving Grade 2 for 1st Penance and Holy Eucharist and Grades 9, 10, & 11 for Confirmation. Students in these grade levels will receive makeup lessons to be done at home. A sacramental preparation student with 5 or more absences will be asked to repeat the class. **Students in the 10th and 11th grades are no longer considered candidates for Confirmation with 5 or more absences per each school year.** The Confirmation student may repeat the class or attend RCIA classes the following year to prepare for his/her confirmation.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION/PROBATION

Probation is considered necessary when a particular student(s) is consistently disruptive in the classroom setting, disrespectful to a teacher, adult leader or volunteer, causes destruction of school or parish property, or is caught with illegal drugs/alcohol or cigarettes. First, the parent(s) will be notified. If this fails to remedy the situation on the first call or letter to the parent(s), the alternative will be probation. **A student on probation will not be readmitted to the program unless accompanied by a parent to the remaining classes of that school year.**

Our CCD Program

Sacred Heart Parish's Religious Education Program uses curriculum which has been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. All grade levels may use additional supplemental books, as well as videos, in an effort to instruct the students in the truths of the Catholic faith. The textbook series we are currently using in grades 1st – 8th is *Christ Our Life* from Loyola Press. Kindergarten uses a text from Loyola Press called *God Loves Us*. Both series have an internet-user web site that has games and activities for you to complete as a family. You can find them at ChristOurLife.org. The 9th grade will study Pope John Paul's teaching on Theology of the Body and Morality. 10th grade studies the Liturgy and uses a 5 week video/book series by Ascension Press called *Altaration*. 11th grade reviews the Bible, Creed and Church, through a video/book series entitled *Chosen* by Ascension Press.

Along with normal class work and sacramental celebrations, the Sacred Heart Religious Education Program also provides Mass celebrations, Penance services for 3rd-12th graders, participation in Benediction and Adoration, a May Crowning, Stations of the Cross, Net Retreat for HS, Service Projects including the St. Nicholas Ministry and the Rice Bowl, Church tours, vocation talks and a Baccalaureate Mass for HHS seniors who have been through the program.

Grades 2-11 participate in our monthly Wednesday Mass during the months of September through May.

DROP OFF AND DISMISSAL

A Parent or older sibling is required to drop off and pick up a child in grades kindergarten through second at the classroom door.

Class starts at 6:15PM for their safety no students should be dropped off before 6PM. No students may loiter outside of the building before class. There will be a tardy bell at 6:00PM and a dismissal bell at 7:00PM. When picking up, please wait patiently and quietly as it is difficult for each catechist to dismiss at exactly the same time.

☀ The senior class meets in the Youth House, unless there is a special service or Mass scheduled. For security reasons all outside doors are locked at 6:15PM. The gate between Elementary and Jr. High will be open during class time.

FACULTY AND STAFF

The program is under the direction of the pastor who utilizes the talents of his parishioners in facilitating, coordinating, and teaching in the program. The coordinators and catechists are given free tuition a small allowance for their contribution of time and talents. It takes many volunteers to have a successful program. Please consider giving of your time.

Formal training is not a requirement to teach, just a good working knowledge of the Catholic Faith and teachings. We do provide a variety of Catechetical classes to help further your spiritual growth, including the basic certification classes for all religion teachers. The Echoes program is taught as a home study. With Pastoral Institute classes offered on Tuesday evenings.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATIONS

FIRST PENANCE AND COMMUNION

These two sacraments are celebrated in the second grade. It is considered a two-year program and attendance and participation in the first grade is strongly encouraged. Older students from elementary grades can join in the celebration of these two sacraments if the parents agree to attend an additional preparation meeting/class where the older student's readiness will be assessed. The older student may be required to attend additional classes or enter into the RCIA for children process. (See the section on Prayers to be learned.)

No specific dress is required for these sacraments. For first communion, boys usually wear a light colored shirt, dark slacks and a tie. Some will wear suits, but this is not necessary. The girls will usually wear white or light colored dress. They may wear veils, but this is not required. The only concern that needs to be expressed is in the wearing of gloves. They may wear white gloves, but they will be asked to remove them when they receive First Holy Communion on the hand.

Baptismal information is required to properly record your child(ren)'s reception of the sacrament. Therefore, please be prepared to provide that information on the forms supplied you and be prepared to provide a copy of the Baptismal Certificate if your son or daughter was not baptized at Sacred Heart or St. Mary's Parish. Our parish must notify the parish your child was baptized in as this is where their permanent records are kept. This "home" parish must also be notified of any future sacraments that are received.

CONFIRMATION

This sacrament, which completes the three sacraments of initiation, is celebrated in the eleventh grade. It is considered at least a two-year program and attendance and participation from the first grade upward is strongly encouraged. Students moving into the area should bring a record of attendance in a program from their previous parish/town to assist in the assessment of their readiness. New students can join in the celebration of this sacrament if the parents agree to attend an additional preparation meeting/class where the new student's readiness will be assessed. The older student may be required to attend additional classes or enter into the RCIA process. (See the section of specific Sacramental Requirements.)

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

The RCIA process is used to prepare converts and those interested in joining the Catholic Church. RCIA candidates are instructed and prepared to receive the three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and celebrate these rituals with the parish community.

Older children who have reached the age of reason (7 years old), who have or have not been baptized, but who have not been instructed in the faith, are to be considered for this process. Once they have "caught up" with the children their own age, they will be placed in the classroom setting with children their age who have been receiving instructions for years.

Any high school student who has never had any formal instructions should consider enrolling in the RCIA program of the parish. They will attend classes with other adults who are considering joining the Catholic Church. In this way their needs can be addressed more completely at this level.

Likewise, any adult who is considering the Catholic faith can call the rectory and register to attend RCIA classes. These classes begin in October and are completed at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night when they are formally brought into the Church.

PRAYERS

FAMILY PRAYER: “Family prayer has its own characteristic qualities. It is prayer offered in communion, husband and wife together, parents and children together. Communion in prayer is both a consequence of and a requirement for the communion bestowed by the sacraments of baptism and matrimony. Family prayer has for its very own object family life itself, which in all its varying circumstances is seen as a call from God and lived as a filial response to his call. Joys and sorrows, hopes and disappointments, births and birthday celebrations, wedding anniversaries of the parents, departures, separations and homecomings, important and far-reaching decisions, the death of those who are dear, etc. -- all of these mark God’s loving intervention in the family’s history. They should be seen as suitable moments for thanksgiving, for petition, for trusting abandonment of the family into the hands of their common Father in heaven. The dignity and responsibility of the Christian family as the domestic church can be achieved only with God’s unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned in prayer.” (*On the Family*, John Paul II, 1981)

It is not possible for a student to learn all their prayers in the one hour a week they are in religion studies if prayer is not part of the family life. They need to learn by example, seeing a mother and father on their knees in prayer is a powerful example. A good practice is to recite a different prayer with each evening’s meal. An example might be: On Monday say the Before Meal Prayer and the Our Father, Tuesday say the Before Meal Prayer and the Act of Contrition, completing a different prayer each evening. Pray in the car on the way to games if meals are taken in the car. It is your responsibility as parents to share your faith with your children in anyway you can fit it in. Be creative, but make it a priority.

EDUCATORS IN PRAYER: “By reason of their dignity and mission, Christian parents have the specific responsibility of educating their children in prayer, introducing them to gradual discovery of the mystery of God and to personal dialogue with him: ‘It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and the office of the sacrament of matrimony, that from the earliest years children should be taught, according to the faith received in baptism, to have a knowledge of God, to worship him and to love their neighbor.’”

“The concrete example and living witness of parents is fundamental and irreplaceable in educating their children to pray. Only by praying together with their children can a father and mother -- exercising their royal priesthood--penetrate the innermost depths of their children’s hearts and leave an impression that the future events in their lives will not be able to efface.” (*On the Family*, John Paul II, 1981)

LITURGY: Each year through the liturgy (especially the Mass), the Church makes present for us the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. It is in this way that we can encounter our Lord in His Mysteries, give glory to God, and obtain graces for ourselves and the world. Choose to attend a Sunday Mass as a family. The sense of celebration that you bring to the Mass is an equally powerful sign to your child. Your reverence, your signs of welcome, your affirming responses to the liturgy, the way you sing helps your child appreciate the importance of Mass.

SCRIPTURE: “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit” (*Dei Verbum*, 9). Tradition transmits the Word of God entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Scripture and Tradition flow from the one source, a revealing God.

Among all the books of Scripture, the Gospels hold a special place because they tell us about Jesus and his message. “Pray” the Bible as a family by reading and sharing your favorite stories. Let your good feelings flow through your voice. In this way, you will be modeling prayer and spirituality to your children.

PRAYERS THAT ARE TAUGHT BY GRADE LEVEL

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Kindergarten | Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Glory Be to the Father |
| Grade 1 | Previous prayers and: Prayer Before and After Meal, Our Father |
| Grade 2 | Previous prayers and: Act of Contrition, Order of the Mass/Mass Responses, Rite of Penance |
| Grade 3 | Previous prayers and: Rosary, Hail, Holy Queen, Stations of the Cross, Apostle's Creed |
| Grade 4 | Previous prayers and: Act of Faith, Act of Hope, Act of Love, Ten Commandments, Beatitudes, Rite of Penance |
| Grade 5 | Previous prayers and: Nicene Creed, Gloria, Seven Sacraments, Morning and Evening Prayer |
| Grade 6 | Previous prayers and: Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Angelus |
| Grade 7 | Previous prayers and: Prayer for Vocation, Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, Gifts of the Holy Spirit |
| Grade 8 | Previous prayers and: The Memorare, Holy Days, Precepts of the Church |
| High School | Previous prayers and: Praying with Scripture, Psalms, and Emphasis on Spontaneous Prayer, Anima Christi |

PRAYERS AND CATHOLIC TEACHINGS

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ANGEL OF GOD

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love entrusts me here, ever this day be at my side, to watch and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

OUR FATHER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

MEAL BLESSING

Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive, from Your bounty, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER (DOXOLOGY)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER MEAL

We give thanks, God, for all your gifts, Almighty God, living and reigning now and forever. Amen. (Silver Burdett Ginn)

ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, and I detest all my sins because of your just punishment, but most of all because they offend You my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of Your grace, to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

Loving God, bless the work that we do. Watch over us and guide us in school and at home. Help us to realize that everything we do gives praise to you. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. (Silver Burdett Ginn)

EVENING PRAYER

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, Lord in your mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Silver Burdett Ginn)

HOW TO PRAY THE ROSARY

1. Hold the crucifix and make the Sign of the Cross with it.
2. Say the Apostles' Creed while holding the cross.
3. On the first bead, say the Our Father.
4. On each of the three beads, say a Hail Mary for more faith, hope, and love.
5. Say the Glory Be (Doxology) on the chain before the large bead.
6. Call to mind the first mystery and think about it. Say the Our Father on the large bead.
7. On each of the ten beads, say a Hail Mary. Keep the picture of the mystery in your mind.
8. After each ten Hail Marys, say the Glory Be.
9. Say each decade (group of ten beads) the same way, thinking about the mystery.

10. Say the Hail, Holy Queen.
11. After the last Glory Be you may bless yourself with the crucifix.

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES (Said on Mondays, Saturdays, Sundays of Advent and after Epiphany until Lent)

1. The Annunciation
2. The Visitation
3. The Birth of Jesus
4. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple
5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES (Thursdays of the year)

1. The Baptism of Jesus
2. The Wedding at Cana
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom
4. The Transfiguration of Jesus
5. The Institution of the Eucharist

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES (Said on Tuesday, Friday, Sundays in Lent)

1. The Agony in the Garden
2. The Scourging
3. The Crowning with Thorns
4. The Carrying of the Cross
5. The Crucifixion

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES (Said on Wednesdays, Sundays after Easter until Advent)

1. The Resurrection
2. The Ascension
3. Descent of the Holy Spirit
4. The Assumption
5. The Crowning of the Blessed Virgin

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope! To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn, then most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy toward us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us O Holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth; I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, Our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

1. Jesus is condemned to die.
2. Jesus takes up His cross.
3. Jesus falls the first time.
4. Jesus meets His Mother.
5. Simon helps Jesus carry His cross.
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus.
7. Jesus falls the second time.
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem.
9. Jesus falls the third time.
10. Jesus is stripped of His garments.
11. Jesus is nailed to the cross.
12. Jesus dies on the cross.
13. Jesus is taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods besides me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

ACT OF FAITH

O my God, I firmly believe that You are one God in Three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I believe in Jesus Christ, Your Son, who became a Man and died for our sins, and who will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the holy Catholic Church teaches, because You who know all have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

ACT OF HOPE

O my God, trusting in Your goodness and promises, I hope to obtain pardon of my sins, the help of your grace, and life everlasting, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

ACT OF LOVE

O my God, I love You above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because You are all-good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for love of you. I forgive all who have injured me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have injured. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Your Spirit, and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.

THE MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother; to you do I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

ANGELUS

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. And she was conceived of the Holy Spirit. (Hail Mary, full of grace...)

Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word.

(Hail Mary, full of grace...)

And the Word was made flesh. And dwelt among us.

(Hail Mary, full of grace...)

Pray for us, holy Mother of God. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray: Pour forth, we beseech You, O Lord, Your grace into our hearts, that we to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Your Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His passion and cross be brought to the glory of His resurrection, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

ANIMA CHRISTI (a Traditional Prayer)

Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Blood of Christ, inebriate me. Water from the side of Christ, wash me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O good Jesus, hear me. Separated from You let me never be. From the malignant enemy, defend me. At the hour of death, call me. To come to You, bid me, That I may praise You in the company of Your Saints, for all eternity. Amen.

THE BEATITUDES (Gospel of Matthew: 5:3-12)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER FOR VOCATION

God, our creator, life is your gift to me. Through baptism You invite me to share the gift of my life in service to others. I ask Lord, who will be your priest, deacon, brother, sister, lay minister. Is it I? Give me the courage and generosity to respond to Your love, to Your call. Give those You have called to the married and the single state the graces their lives require. I pray especially for those who serve You as religious. Keep them close to You. This we pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SACRAMENTS

Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist

Sacraments of Healing: Penance, Anointing of the Sick

Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Matrimony, Holy Orders

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Visit those in prison.
5. Shelter the homeless.
6. Visit the sick.
7. Bury the dead.

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

1. Help sinners.
2. Teach the ignorant.
3. Give advice to the doubtful.
4. Comfort those who suffer.
5. Be patient with others.
6. Forgive injuries.
7. Pray for the living and the dead.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Right Judgment, Courage, Reverence, Wonder and Awe.

PRECEPTS (LAWS) OF THE CHURCH

1. Celebrate Christ's resurrection every Sunday (or Saturday evening) and on holy days of obligation by taking part in Mass and avoiding unnecessary work.
2. Lead a sacramental life; to receive Holy Communion frequently and the Sacrament of Penance regularly, minimally--to receive the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year (annual confession is obligatory only if serious sin is involved); minimally also, to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.
3. Study Catholic teaching throughout life, especially in preparation for the sacraments.
4. Observe the marriage laws of the Catholic Church; to give religious training, by example and word, to one's children; to use parish schools and catechetical programs.
5. To strengthen and support the Church: one's own parish community and parish priests, the worldwide Church and the Pope.
6. To do penance, including abstaining from meat and fasting from food on the appointed days.
7. Join in the missionary work of the Church.

PRAYING WITH SCRIPTURE

Christians believe that the Bible is the living word of God. For this word to speak to us, though, we must read and reflect on it. We must hear what the Lord is saying to us through the particular Scripture reading. Meditation uses the mind and the heart to help us hear the word of the Lord. It engages the faculties of thinking and imagination (our minds), the love we have for God (our hearts), and also the resolution we make to live better Christian lives (our hands and feet). (Adapted from *The Ways of Prayer* by Michael Pennock. Ave Maria Press, 1987.)

1. Select a passage.
2. Settle down.
3. Pray to the Holy Spirit to help you pray and hear what the Lord is saying to you.
4. Read the scripture passage slowly and meditatively.
5. Observe by stepping into the story and become part of it.
6. Reflect on what the story means, what strikes you as the main point?
7. Listen to what God is saying to you in the reading.
8. Resolve to do something about the insights you have gained.
9. Thank the Lord for your time of prayer and the insights you have received.

HOW TO GO TO FIRST CONFESSION

Child: Kneel in front of the priest if there is a kneeler.

Sit in the chair opposite him if there is a chair.

Make the Sign of the Cross: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Child: Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. My sins are: _____ Listen for your penance.

Priest: Father will talk to the child: He will give him/her their penance (either in prayers to say or a good deed to do, or both).

Child: Recites his/her "Act of Contrition".

Priest: Father will give the child ABSOLUTION (absolving him/her of their sins) by saying: I absolve you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (while he makes the motions of the sign of the cross).

Child: The child will make the sign of the cross while the priest make his absolution. AMEN.

Priest: Go in Peace.

Child: Thank you, Father. Then returns to the pew, kneels and says his/her penance.

HOW TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (PENANCE)

1. The penitent should prepare to receive the sacrament with a careful examination of conscience, recalling the Commandments of God, the Precepts of the Church and the duties of the particular state in life. Silent reflection should be accompanied by prayer, especially to the Holy Spirit, and Scripture reading. One should recall and regret all of the sins committed since the last confession.
2. After the penitent has recalled all of the sins to be confessed and mentally expressed genuine sorrow for them, the confessional or other place set aside for the celebration of the sacrament is entered.
3. Priest: Gives a greeting or welcome.
4. Penitent: Makes the Sign of the Cross saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
5. The penitent says "Bless me Father for I have sinned", states the time since the last confession and confesses the sins recalled in the examination of conscience. (If this is the penitent's first confession, he/she simply states that "This is my first confession.")
6. After the sins are confessed, the priest counsels the penitent and imposes the penance to be performed for the satisfaction of the sins.
7. Before the absolution is given the penitent expresses sorrow for sin by saying an "Act of Contrition" or by using similar words, or a short psalm of sorrow.
8. The priest then gives absolution, ending with, Priest: "...I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
Penitent: "Amen". The penitent is then dismissed by the priest in the peace of Christ. Penance should be done as soon as possible.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

This sacrament is referred to frequently in the Acts of the Apostles. It is entitled the “calling down of the Holy Spirit” in several places, and is reminiscent of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. (See Chapter 2 of *Acts of the Apostles*.) Down through the ages it has been administered at various age levels. It must always follow after Baptism. In the early Church, it was frequently administered immediately after the sacrament of Baptism. This is still the practice in the Eastern Churches today. In the Western Churches (Roman Catholic Rite) it is moving more to reflect an acceptance of the faith by the young adult. Both time periods have their advantages.

The sacrament of Confirmation does just what its name implies: it confirms that which was begun in Baptism. The new life given in Baptism is strengthened, the Divine Gifts given in Baptism are enriched, and the rite of initiation is completed by full membership in the Church through Confirmation. It is the Holy Spirit acting in both who brings about these immense changes in the individual – birth to maturity in the life of the Spirit.

The ritual dramatizes all of these elements:

1. The candidates are presented to the Bishop by the Pastor. He states that they have been baptized, have prepared, and are ready.
2. There are readings from sacred scripture followed by a homily to the whole assembly so that all might arrive at a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation.
3. The candidates are asked to stand and renew the promises made in their names at Baptism. The candidates answer “I do” to the five questions and then “Amen” to the final profession of faith.
4. The Bishop says: “This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus, Our Lord.”
5. The Bishop then extends his hands over all of those who are to be confirmed and says a prayer.
6. Each candidate will then take turns coming forward, with their sponsor standing behind them. The sponsor lines up behind the candidate and places his/her right hand on the right shoulder of the candidate at the time the Bishop is anointing the candidate. The Bishop anoints the candidate by placing his right hand on the candidate’s forehead and making the sign of the cross with his thumb (which has been dipped in Holy Chrism oil). During this ritual, the Bishop says “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit”. The candidate answers “Amen”.
7. The Bishop will then shake the newly confirmand’s hand or place his hand on the newly confirmand’s shoulder and say “peace be with you”. The newly confirmed responds “and also with you”, and then can return to his/her seat.

How Parents can help with Confirmation Preparation

- Pray for the confirmand privately and collectively as a family.
- Read through and understand the requirements of the Confirmation Redbook with your son or daughter.
- Help your son/daughter write a letter to Bishop Brandon Cahill requesting reception of the sacrament of Confirmation. This letter is to be brought to the teacher 6 weeks before Confirmation. Below are suggestions of what might be in the letter – in the candidates own words:
 - Why he/she wishes to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.
 - What he/she has been doing to prepare for the reception of this sacrament (attend classes, perform service, model the Catholic faith in his/her daily life)
 - What it meant to have a sponsor
 - Why they chose their saint name
 - What he/she intends to do in the future as a result of receiving this sacrament.

- Help your son/daughter choose a sponsor. Individual sponsors are the usual practice. Baptismal godparents are the most appropriate sponsors as they will signify the continuity between the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation). The sponsor may be either gender. If it is impossible to have one of the godparents, another exemplary adult who is 18 years of age or older, confirmed, and is a practicing Catholic may be chosen. See the Redbook for further details.
- Help your son/daughter choose a Confirmation name. In order to emphasize the close connection between Baptism and Confirmation, it is appropriate to use the name given in Baptism. If the student admires a particular saint and sees that saint as a role model, then he/she may choose that saint's name rather than the name given at Baptism.

DRESSING FOR CONFIRMATION

Boys are asked to wear dress slacks or khakis, shirt tucked into pants and a tie. A jacket or suit is optional. Jeans and baggy pants are not permitted.

Girls are asked to wear a dress, skirt or pantsuit. All dresses and skirts must be within two inches from the floor when kneeling or longer. Sleeveless dresses are permitted as long as the armhole is unrevealing and the end of the armhole comes to the shoulder. No straps or spaghetti strings will be permitted. No low cut or clingy dresses or blouses should be worn.

See Redbook for requirements.

Traffic and School Entry Procedure

Please follow these guidelines to ensure the safety of our students:

All doors & gates, except the door between Jr. High & Elementary will be locked until 5:45PM. **Please do not drop children off before then. Class does not start until 6:00.**

At 6:20PM all doors will be locked for the rest of the evening. This allows students to get out of the building for emergencies while keeping unwanted intruders out. All late arriving students and parents wanting to come in to pick up students must come through the gate leading to the Religious Ed. Office that is between the Jr. High & elementary building and knock on the door.

TRAFFIC FLOW: Please keep traffic flowing from West to East on the driveway that goes between the church and the school. If we all drive in the same direction traffic flows nicer and it is easier to see those students that are running to the parking lot. If you are not coming in the building to meet your student then plan a designated area for them to meet you each week. Please park your car while waiting, do not line up on the drive way- it will cause congestion and back up onto Texana.

PLAN TO PARK EITHER IN DESIGNATED PARKING SPACES, along the DRIVEWAY OFF 1ST ST. or on TEXANA ST. Remember Grades K-2 have to be picked up at the class room. Students in Grades K-4th will be dismissed from the classrooms on Mass days.

Thank you for helping us have a safe school year.