

*St. Patrick Catholic Church*  
*Religious Education*  
*Handbook*



Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new school year. I want to start by thanking all who have volunteered their time as Catechists, Aides and RE Office Supervisors. Our program would suffer without the dedication of such generous people.

In all times Christians are called to know, love and serve God. It is our duty as Christians to support one another on our journey to eternal peace in God's heavenly kingdom. This begins with the responsibility of parents to make their home a domestic church for their children to come to know and grow in God's love by the good example set by their families. Then it is the responsibility of the Church to assist parents in their duties of faith formation. In Religious Education, we can give to your child only a portion of their faith - what they come to practice and believe will come mostly from what they are taught in the home. Let us work together to build a strong faith and courageous moral character in all of our children.

These present times are difficult, there is much evil in the world and even Pope Benedict XVI pointed to the "division in the Church" as he called us to unity just before his resignation. This unity must be rooted in the ancient teachings of Holy Mother Church, which Christ (Who is God) founded. Modern notions must not have any influence on our beliefs if we are to remain in the fold with Christ as our Good Shepherd.

Our new school year is beginning, and I hope it bears much fruit for your entire family. If there are any questions, concerns, or special circumstances that may effect your child's development of faith, please contact me. I look forward to working with you in this most important duty as Catholic Christians.

Very Truly,  
Kalah Williams  
Director of Religious Education

# St. Patrick Catholic Church

## Mission Statement

With Christ as our model, the mission of St. Patrick Catholic Church is to worship our Lord as one body united in Christ, to minister through word and sacrament, to serve our brothers and sisters in time of need, to educate and form our youth as future Church and community leaders, to reestablish a Catholic elementary school, and to expand evangelization and adult education. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we seek to strengthen St Patrick Catholic Church as faithful stewards through our giving of time, talent, and treasure.

## Religious Education

### Mission Statement

The Religious Education Program at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Rochelle strives to bring the truths of the Catholic Faith to the children and their families who are enrolled in our program. We welcome all children of registered families into this program regardless of economic or intellectual challenges. Our program is based on love and obedience to Christ and His Church.

# Parish Offices

## St. Patrick Catholic Church

236 Kelley Drive

Rochelle, Illinois 61068

815-562-2370

815-562-5250 fax

[www.stpatricksrochelle.com](http://www.stpatricksrochelle.com)

stpats7@gmail.com

Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 9am - 6pm

Friday 9am - Noon

Saturday 10am - Noon

## Religious Education Office

Catholic Education and

Community Center

903 Caron Road

Rochelle, Illinois 61068

815-561-0079

[kalahmwilliams@gmail.com](mailto:kalahmwilliams@gmail.com)

562-7962 Kalah Williams at home

## Religious Education Class Times and Location

All RE Classes are held in the Catholic Education Center

Tuesday 5:30 -7:00pm (English)

Wednesday 5:30 - 7:00pm (English & Spanish)

Every-other Sunday 8:30-10:15am (English)

Pre-K - 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Pre-K - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

6<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

# Sacraments

## **Infant Baptism**

“Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.” CCC 1250

To prepare for infant baptism or to arrange a date for your infant to be baptized please call the Parish Office. You may contact the Parish Office for any child up to the age of Kindergarten for the Sacrament of Baptism.

## **Older Child Baptism**

If you have a child between Kindergarten and grade 12 who has not been baptized please contact the Director of Religious Education (DRE). The DRE will meet with the child and discuss the meaning of Baptism and provide a brief instruction on the Creed. After these meeting(s) the parents may contact the Parish Office to set a date for Baptism.

## **First Penance**

“Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as ‘the second plank (of salvation) after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.’” CCC1446

In 1<sup>st</sup> grade those children who have an adequate grasp of sin and reconciliation are invited to receive the sacrament of First Penance, at the end of the school year. We are hopeful that families will celebrate this sacrament frequently in preparation for proper and pious reception of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord. It is required that before receiving First Holy Communion each child must be baptized and celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation (also known as Confession or Penance).

### **First Eucharist**

“The Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’” CCC 1324 “...In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole of Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.*’” CCC 1374

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade those children who have an appropriate understanding of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist are invited to celebrate this Most Holy Sacrament. First Holy Communion Day is for the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Class only.

### **Confirmation**

“By this anointing the confirmand receives the ‘mark’, the *seal* of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object.” CCC 1295

All students who have participated in formal religious education classes and desire the seal of the Holy Spirit to be imprinted upon their souls are invited to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. This sacrament is not a “graduation” from Religious Education, rather it is an acceptance of the Catholic faith and a willingness to promote, defend, and live out that faith given to the person at their Baptism. All young people in grades 9 through 12 must attend Confirmation classes or contact the DRE if there are any impediments to attending classes.

## **Sacraments for Older Kids**

Any child in grades 3 through 12 who has not received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, or Eucharist must contact the DRE to register for the class to prepare for the needed sacraments. There are two class options, fall or spring semester. It is required that those children wishing to enroll in SOK must first be enrolled in Religious Education Classes and they must attend the SOK Class in its entirety. Upon completion of the SOK Class those children will be able to celebrate the sacraments on the date set by the Parish.

## **RCIA**

Any adult who has not been baptized or celebrated the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, or Confirmation may contact the Parish Office to register for RCIA. Any adult who is interested in conversion to the Catholic Church may also register for RCIA at the Parish Office.

## Tuition

Consistent with the Parish Mission Statement's emphasis on youth, we strive to give children in our program the best religious formation possible. We make many excellent resources available both to our Catechists and to our children and their families.

Furthermore, it is with great joy that with the 2014/2015 school year, Religious Education is free to all children.

The Religious Education Program is meant to be supported by the Parish at large. Therefore it is the obligation of EVERY Parish family to support this program which prepares the children of this community to be fine examples of Catholic virtues and morality.

Each family within the Parish has been asked to sell or purchase just \$50 in raffle tickets before September 17. There will be (3) three raffle drawings of \$500 each on the morning of October 1, 2014.

The raffle idea is meant to be fun and to attract people to participate.

## Registration Requirements

- ❖ The family must be registered parish members. For your convenience, this can be done at the time of enrollment.
- ❖ The family must attend weekly Mass. The weekend options are Saturday 5:00pm, Sunday 7:30, 9:00 (English) and 10:30am (Spanish)
- ❖ All certificates of Sacraments are needed at the time of enrollment.
- ❖ Completed registration forms must be turned into the Religious Education Office for children to be added to class lists.
- ❖ Registration runs from March 1 through September 17.

## Curriculum

Each child in our Religious Education Program will be provided with curriculum material. Students will be asked to keep this material in the classroom. If material is lost by a student, they will be responsible for its replacement. This material will remain in the classroom at the end of the school year (to keep tuition costs low). Books will be sent home only if purchased.

Pre-School & Kindergarten use OSV I Am Special

Grades 1-8 use Ignatius Press Faith and Life

High School use MTF Didache

A Catechism and prayers to learn will be provided to families the first night of RE. Please use this material at home as a family. The success of your child's formation demands more than 90 minutes each week.

## Christian Chastity and Safe Environment

This program has been established for use in the Rockford Diocese and is required to be taught yearly to all students in grades 1-8. All parishes and schools are to provide formation for children in the areas of safety and the integrity of their persons. Information will be sent home and the opportunity to opt-out will be available. This program will be taught October 28, 29 and November 2, 2014.



# Volunteer Opportunities

## Catechist

Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing, and committed to sharing the truths of the Catholic Faith with the children of this community. Catechists prepare their own lessons, ideally manage no more than twelve students, and participate in the Catechist Certification Program.

## Catechist's Aide

Must be a practicing Catholic in good standing, and committed to sharing the truths of the Catholic Faith with the children of this community. Assists the Catechist in teaching the lesson, and sharing The Faith. May be responsible for teaching a class session in the event the Catechist is absent. Strongly encouraged to participate in the Catechist Certification Program.

## Office Supervisor

Assists the DRE during selected class sessions in preparing classrooms, collecting attendance sheets, calling parents of absent students and dismissing students at the end of class. Added projects may be included such as mailings.

## Library Aide

Returns materials to their designated place in the Parish library. Creates reference cards for new material and learns the material well enough to be able to assist parishioners in finding or selecting desired materials. All new items must be approved by the DRE before creating a reference card and placing on the shelf.

# Volunteer Training and Support

The Religious Education Program strives to give excellent religious formation to the children in our care. Ensuring that your child hears and experiences Catholic doctrine, values, and expressions of prayer requires us to provide Catechists, Aides, and other volunteers with opportunities to further develop their own knowledge of the Faith. We offer at least one In-Service session during the school year. In-Service falls on regular class nights when classes have been canceled to allow the Catechists, Aides, and other volunteers time to grow in a particular area of spirituality or to share their teaching skills with one another.

Our goal at the beginning of each year is not to find enough “babysitters” for classrooms but to select individuals who have a desire to share the authentic Catholic Faith with children. Some volunteers have more knowledge than others; the important thing we look for is an excitement and willingness to bring the true teachings of Christ to others.

The DRE works very closely with those Catechists who need a little extra assistance so that they will one day be Master Catechists. We are pleased to have a very low turnover rate of Catechists each year, and we attribute that to the investment we put into our volunteers. If you are interested in being a part of this ministry please contact the DRE to discuss options that suit your gifts.

# Expectations of Catechists

1. Must be attending Sunday Mass regularly!
2. Provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that children will be able to grow in their faith.
3. Prepare for class in advance.
4. Teach designated curriculum, only.
5. Seek approval from DRE before making any changes to class format.
6. Attend orientations and In-Service sessions for continued personal development.
7. Must complete required legal forms and class sessions (Protecting God's Children).

## Catechist Certification

It is important that our Catechists and Aides continue their faith journey as they assist our children in their journeys of faith. All Catechists and Aides will be asked to work toward their certification.

There are two choices given to reach this goal:

- ❖ Attend the required number of individual classes held in various locations within the Rockford Diocese.
- ❖ Complete an online certification program established by the Rockford Diocese.

Each Catechist and Aide is given a New American Bible and a Catechism of the Catholic Church to be used in class as a reference aid as well as in their own personal development of faith.

# Educational Options

**Children with Disabilities** will be placed in regular classes, unless other accommodations are needed. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Homeschool** families who choose to educate their children for Catholic Religious Education in their residence will be provided with the Rockford Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines. Parents can use their own resources to cover the necessary material or they may purchase the material through the St. Patrick, Rochelle, Religious Education Office. Prior to celebrating the Sacraments, children will be given a proficiency exam to establish whether the child has the expected understanding of their faith and the Sacraments to be celebrated. Sacraments will not be denied but they will be postponed until the child has demonstrated 90% or higher on the provided exam as well as the serious requirement that each child must be attending Sunday Mass.

The cost for homeschool will depend upon what materials the family is in need of. We do our very best to find materials at the lowest cost.

The money each family donates covers those materials and resources used at the Education Center. Any additional resources purchased for home use is not covered in this \$50 expectation.

# Attendance

Children are to regularly attend their Religious Education Classes. It is not permissible for a child to “float” between two nights of classes. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and all parents of unexcused children will be called to confirm their whereabouts. If your child will not be in attendance, please call the Religious Education Office in advance, leaving a message with the DRE if you reach voicemail.

If your child was absent from school during the day due to illness, DO NOT send them to Religious Education Classes that evening. If your child has a fever, complains of body aches or does not seem to feel well, DO NOT send them to Religious Education Classes.

If your child is registered for classes and has not attended class by the fourth week you will receive a letter confirming your wish to have your child enrolled. If your child has not attended class and you have not responded to the letter by the sixth week your child will be removed from the class list and you will need to contact the DRE if you wish to begin sending them to class.

# Dress Code

Children should be dressed properly and modestly.

- ❖ Clothing must be free from anything which advertises drugs, alcohol, sex, violence or gangs.
- ❖ Clothing may not contain vulgar or offensive writing, pictures, racial slurs or suggestive pictures.
- ❖ Shoes must be worn at all times. No shoes with wheels.
- ❖ No wearing of hats for gentlemen.
- ❖ No wearing of pajamas or bare mid-drift shirts or blouses.
- ❖ Pants must be worn at the waist and no underwear showing.

# Discipline

It is our desire that the children in our program experience the presence of God during their religious formation. We expect all children to behave with respect toward their classmates and teachers. We do not tolerate disrespectful behavior, damage to the Catholic Education Center or the belongings of others. The parent/guardian of a child who chooses not to act appropriately will be called by the DRE or the Pastor, and they may be asked to attend classes with their child until the behavior is corrected. We encourage all parents/guardians to speak with their children about the proper way to act. The following rules are posted in each classroom of the Catholic Education Center and are expected to be followed.

*Be considerate of others*

*Use self-control*

*Take prayer time seriously*

*Respect our teachers and each other*

*Participate in class*

*Be courteous in speech and action*

# Child Abuse

Child abuse is of serious concern. Consistent with Diocesan policy and local legal codes, the parish catechetical staff has a moral and legal duty to comply with the law to ensure the welfare of a child. Any staff member or volunteer who suspects a child to be a victim of child abuse will notify the DRE who will then notify the Pastor. The professional staff will then relieve the catechist of any further investigative responsibility and initiate follow through.

All staff members and volunteers are required by law to sign an acknowledgment that they have read and understood the ethical and personal conduct policies of the Rockford Diocese. Furthermore, all staff members and volunteers who are in regular and sustained contact with children and youth must attend an awareness training session mandated by the Bishop entitled, Protecting God's Children.

# Health Concerns and Medication

All health concerns must be brought to the attention of the DRE during registration.

A confidential appointment with the DRE should be made to discuss special medical needs.

If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition after registration, please inform the DRE as soon as possible.

It is the usual policy that we do not administer any medication to students. Arrangements can be made if there is a need to make policy exception. If there is an exception to be made the following policy must be taken:

Parent/guardians shall provide the DRE with a written request authorizing the administration of the prescribed medication. The parent/guardian may also be required to sign a release as to claims against the school and/or its personnel arising from administration of that medication.

Medication shall be brought to the school in a container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. The name of the student and the names of the physician and pharmacy and pharmacy phone number shall be indicated on the container.

The school shall provide a locked space for safe storage of the medication.

The DRE shall be responsible for a written record of all drug administration.

# Field Trips

The Religious Education Program occasionally includes field trips. A written consent of parents must be obtained for every child/youth participating in a trip. Permission slips will be sent home when a trip is planned.

If a private vehicle must be used, a signed Volunteer Driver Information Sheet must be submitted to the DRE for each vehicle used. All drivers must be at least 21 years of age with a current driver's license and proof of insurance.

If a class is planned for attendance in the Church, parents must drop off and pick up their child at the Church. If a child is dropped off at the Catholic Education Center by mistake, they will remain in Catholic Education Center with supervision. No child will be taken from the premises where their parents have left them and expect them to remain. A parent may speak only to the DRE to give authorization for another parent to drive their child to the Church.

No Catechist, Aide, or other Parish volunteer or employee may drive a student to the Church unless the child was originally in the care of that person. Because of the traffic on Caron Road, there will be no walking to the Church from the Catholic Education Center except during special camps.

Exceptions are allowed for emergency evacuations such as a fire in the Catholic Education Center.



## Communication

Occasionally a letter may be sent home if there are any changes in the programming of your child's classes or for details of upcoming events or issues at hand.

You may also receive a telephone call from the DRE, Office Supervisors or your child's Catechist. Please understand that these volunteers are entrusted with your contact information. If you wish to have your information kept confidential, please contact the DRE.

St. Patrick Catholic Church subscribes to "flocknote" which is a database where your cell phone number and email address are accessed only by Parish staff members. You will not be overwhelmed with unwanted messages. The sort of messages sent pertain to events going on in the Parish. You can withdraw your information or change it at any time.

To sign up, please give submit your name, cell phone number (1 per household) and email address to Kalah Williams.

## Emergency Class Cancellation

Whenever school is called off due to extreme weather, Religious Education will also be canceled for that day. If weather is doubtful, please listen to WRHL (1060 AM or 102.3 FM). If hazardous weather develops during the day, the Religious Education Office will notify the area schools by 3:00 PM of class cancellation. If possible you will receive a telephone/text message and email preferably from flocknote to save time!

## Fire and Evacuation Procedure

- ❖ Each classroom has a notice of where to proceed in case of a fire. Students are to remain with their Catechists.
- ❖ No one shall re-enter the Education Center in the event of an actual fire.
- ❖ The evacuation procedure begins with the children being lead by an adult out the nearest exit. Another adult will check the classroom to confirm all children are out. At this time the lights will be turned off and the door closed.
- ❖ The DRE and Office Supervisors will double check the building before exiting.
- ❖ All people must evacuate the building quickly and silently.
- ❖ During a fire drill, the DRE will notify the Catechists when the building is free to re-enter.
- ❖ In the event of an actual fire all classes will be calmly lead to the church and contact will be made to families.

## Tornado

- ❖ In the event of a tornado, the DRE and Office Supervisors will alert each classroom, directing them to the appropriate area of the Education Center (girl's bathroom and the north hallway).
- ❖ Everyone will sit on the floor with their hands folded over their heads. Remaining here until the DRE notifies them the emergency has passed.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Children should not arrive more than fifteen minutes before classes begin. Volunteers will be monitoring students in the St. Joan of Arc Room (on the south side of the building) at this time, but not sooner.

When dropping off your child, please pull under the car port and for safety reasons, only let children exit your car when you are in front of the building door.

When picking up your child, pull through the car port as before. The children will be waiting inside and will be sent out only when your car has pulled to the front of the line. If you are sending another adult to pick up your child, please inform us of this change. If you do not inform us of this change, for their safety, we will not allow your child to leave with this other driver. We will then call you to confirm a change. Please understand how inconvenient this can become and could have easily been avoided with an advance note or telephone call. Thank you.

If you wish to come in to pick up your child, please park your car in a designated parking space (not under the car port) and come into the building to retrieve your child. No child will be sent across traffic or into the parking lot without appropriate supervision.

Early dismissals are discouraged, but we are aware of the occasional necessity for them. If your child must leave early, please send a written note or call the Religious Education Office, and you must then come into the building to get your child.

The door to the Catholic Education Center will be locked at all times and you must ring the door bell to be let into the building.

Please be aware that these policies are in place for the safety of all children and volunteers.