



Our Lady at St. Germaine Parish
Religious Education and Formation Program
2019 Parent Handbook

Mission Statement

The Our Lady at St. Germaine Religious Education Program is designed to foster the faith life of each child. As partners with parents/guardians we are dedicated to provide an education that is consistent with the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. We believe that it is our mission to offer opportunities for each child to enter a personal relationship with God through the experience and knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to become formed disciples.

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Pastor

Rev. George Velloorattil

Associate Pastor

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About The Religious Education Program

Our Lady at St. Germaine Religious Education and Formation Program is a comprehensive ongoing Catholic formation program to assist parents in developing the faith life of their children. We offer a multi-component approach which includes community building within the process as well as experiencing gospel values through service and worship. Through the use of study, prayer, and rituals, students are offered a curriculum that encourages them to live as faithful and active disciples of Jesus Christ. As primary educators of your children, parent involvement is a necessity for the success of our Religious Education and Formation Program.

We anticipate that parents will take an active part in the Religious Education and Formation Program by:

- **Regularly attending weekend liturgy with the family**
- **Attending each Religious Education and Formation Program session for parents; typically the first class of the month.**
- **Participating in at least two Family Service Projects throughout the year**
- **Attending at least two Extra-Ordinary Worship Events throughout the year**
- **Assist your child in learning and praying together**
- **Encourage your child to come to class on time, prepared, and ready to learn.**
- **Taking an active role in parish ministry and activities**

Program Textbooks

Pre-K and Kindergarten

Children have a folder that includes handouts from Our Sunday Visitor titled Allelu, as well as some age appropriate material that the catechists and DRE have chosen. For most lessons they will be given a handout from the packet that they will work on together and some that they will bring home for parents to continue to work with the children. During class time they will learn some basic concepts about building relationships, how to build a relationship with Jesus Christ, and ways to begin to live as young disciples. They will also sing and play some appropriate age level games and activities. This year at each session a child will be given a take home Jesus character so your child can actively pray with Jesus, talk to Jesus, and then return the Jesus character to tell the class about the experience.

Special Needs Classes

We have two very competent catechists who love to work with children who need particular accommodations to help them grow in their faith. This classroom includes all age groups as well as some very special young aides who are willing to work with the children. We have some adaptive resources for Our Lady at St Germaine Religious Education and Formation Program

the children to use in preparing for the sacraments, and sharing their faith. This year we are using an adaptive program from Loyola Press.

Grades 1-6

Our program includes the student textbook from Our Sunday Visitor, Alive In Christ. This company's curriculum as well as some additional guidelines from the Archdiocese integrates the fundamental themes of the Catechism of the Catholic Church with Scripture and Catholic Social Teachings. We have also included various parts of the Mass that are important for each child to know. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen. This program provides lessons in the faith and delivers those lessons through experiential activities that encourage lifelong practice. This textbook series also comes with online support for parents by providing comprehensive resources for students, and families that include online lessons, additional activities, seasonal resources, customizable chapter and unit assessments, and online training. Visit the website at aliveinchrist.osv.com

Grade 2

Our 2nd grade students will use 4 different resources. They will be given a textbook from Our Sunday Visitor for 2nd Grade. They will also have a classroom textbook that will prepare them to receive their First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. In addition they will be given handouts that will also prepare them for each of the sacraments. These texts cover the material that they will need when studying how to grow in a loving relationship with God, their family, and in the world through the experience of reconciliation and love. As they prepare for First Communion they will once again use the same publisher's texts helping them to discover the love of Jesus through the Eucharist and their study of particular parts of the mass.

First Year Confirmation Formation (previously known as 7th Grade)

The focus for 1st Year Confirmation students is for our students to learn more details about the life of Jesus and to understand their role in becoming a disciple of Christ. This will be of great value for them to experience the life of Christ as they prepare for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The textbooks they will use this year are from Our Sunday Visitor. We provide the students with handouts from the parish highlighting particular aspects of their faith journey. In the 1st Year Confirmation Formation the students will also study the lives of the saints so they can make an informed decision on choosing their Confirmation name and practicing some of the ways that particular saint lives as a disciple of Christ. Students will have 5 Formation Days where they will come together with the St Germaine School students to listen to talks and stories, share their faith, and have discussions on prayer and preparation for the sacrament. 1st Year Confirmation Students will be attending Holy Fire which is an Archdiocesan sponsored event to be held at the UIC Pavilion on October 18th during the day.

Second Year Confirmation Formation (previously known as 8th Grade)

Students who have attended First Year Confirmation Formation the previous year or students who have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation will be members of this class. The textbook they use is Our Sunday Visitor. The emphasis of this textbook is on the work of the Holy Spirit and how to integrate the gifts of the Spirit into their lives. 2nd Year Confirmation Formation students will also be attending 6 formation days with the St Germaine School students. These sessions will work to better prepare them for the reception of the sacrament as well as planning a group service project, planning the liturgy for Confirmation day, and to discover ways to incorporate various experiences of prayer into their lives. Our Confirmation is scheduled for February 23rd. We will also have a retreat day which has not yet been scheduled.

High School 1st and 2nd Year Confirmation Formation

These students will meet on the same Sunday schedule as the Religious Education and Formation Community. They will be part of a two year process preparing them uniquely with the focus on the needs and learning style of high school students. The texts will be the same and they are to attend Formation Days appropriate to their first or second year of formation.

Sacraments

Baptism

Baptism is the first Sacrament of Initiation. All students must be baptized in the Catholic Church in order to receive the following sacraments. If for some reason your child was not baptized yet, please bring that to our attention. If your child was baptized in another Christian religion we recognize that as a valid baptism, however the child, along with the family will participate in a ceremony called Profession of Faith. If the child was baptized in a non-Christian ceremony i.e. Wayside Chapel, Congregational... or other non-denominational church, we will baptize the child in the Catholic tradition.

***Prior to the reception of the other sacraments we require that we have on record a copy of the child's baptismal certificate.**

First Reconciliation

Traditionally children receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in 2nd grade. The understanding for this sacrament is essential in learning to reconcile with others in their families and in our world and most importantly with God. The students are expected to know the Act of Contrition prior to January. First Reconciliation is scheduled for January 25th at 12:30. More detailed information will follow.

First Communion

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The Sacrament of Eucharist is one of the Sacraments of Initiation. As a result the requirements are that each student attend at least 2 years of preparation prior to the reception of the sacrament, know the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary, and that they attend formation days as a family. The sacrament of Holy Communion is traditionally received in 2nd grade. Parents and children are expected to attend the First Communion Retreat which is scheduled for April 4th at 9:30 am. At least one parent is expected to attend. Once the child has received the sacrament the expectation is that he/she will participate in weekend mass to continue to receive the sacrament with the family.

Confirmation

Confirmation is one of the Sacraments of Initiation. At least one parent must attend the scheduled parent meetings. Confirmation is traditionally received after the second year of formation. Confirmation candidates must be enrolled in the Religious Education program or St. Germaine School for at least 2 years prior to the reception of the sacrament. Students are required to know the Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Creed, and the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Outside of the classroom students will complete at least 5 service Opportunities, two with the family. Students are also expected to attend all formation days, which are written on the schedule, and are part of the preparation. They are also expected to attend the entire year of Religious Education classes. Classes do not end once the Sacrament of Confirmation is received. We spend the remainder of the year learning how we serve continue to serve as disciples of God. We are working on developing an overnight service project scheduled for after Confirmation.

Sacramental Preparation Process

Children in grades 3-8 who have not been baptized, or have been baptized and not received First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be prepared for the Sacrament in our Sacramental Preparation Process, which will be in addition to the regular Religious Education Classes. The days and time will be determined. If for some reason you or your child feels that he or she is not prepared for the reception of any of the sacraments please be open to having a conversation regarding the particular sacrament.

Class Attendance

It is important that you make attendance a priority for your children. If for some reason you are unable to attend one of our RE&F sessions please let us know ahead of time. You can email the director or coordinator if you know ahead of time to give your child more time to complete assignments and bring to the next session.

Protecting God's Children

Each grade level catechist is compliant with the Archdiocese of Chicago *Virtus*: Protecting God's Children policies. At Our Lady at St Germaine Religious Education and Formation Program we will present a sexual abuse prevention program, the Touching Safety program, to our students in October 2019. The creators of the Protecting God's Children™ program developed the Touching Safety program. This program is

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provided to us by the Archdiocese of Chicago and is a part of our ongoing effort to help create and maintain a safe environment for children and to protect all children from sexual abuse.

We encourage you to read the “overview” and “lesson plan” provided on our website so you’ll be aware of the nature of the Touching Safety program. If you have questions about the program or the lesson, please contact us. If you determine that you DO NOT want your child to participate, please complete the “opt-out” form at the bottom of this page, and return it to Jeanne Lassandrello no later Sept 2019.

Building Safety

Each session will begin in Goedert Hall at 9:45 am. Families will come together downstairs, catechists will meet your child there and bring them up to the classroom. As well catechists will bring them downstairs at the close of the session. While the children are in class the doors to the school will remain locked. If for some reason you need to have your child leave early there will be someone in the office to assist you, even though you will already be in the building.

If your child will be arriving late he/she must enter through the Kolin Main door so we can check them in. You can then meet with the other parents in Goedert Hall if we have a parent session that day. If for any reason you and your child(ren) cannot attend one of the sessions please call ahead of the class time that you will be missing and we should have the material for you to work on at home. If the morning of class you find that you cannot attend please call the school office as we can get the material to you in a timely manner. Much of our resources will be online for your convenience.

Discipline

Each student is responsible for his or her behavior. Misbehavior cannot and will not be tolerated. Students are to be courteous at all times. They are to respect the desks and belongings of the day students and all classroom materials. Vandalism would be sufficient reason for dismissal from the program and restitution for damages due to vandalism is the responsibility of the child’s parent/guardian. Any type of weapon found on or displayed by a student will be reason for immediate dismissal from the program. No skateboards or toys will be allowed in the classroom. The use of cell phones or texting or iPods is prohibited during classroom time and will be taken away. The parent will be asked to pick-up the item from the office. If at the catechist’s discretion the student’s behavior disrupts the lesson, the student will be sent to the office to complete the lesson on his/her own. If the behavior should continue, parents will be notified to discuss a follow-up plan.