

St. Peter Catholic Church

*Parish School of Religion*

PSR

Parent Handbook

2023-2024

## INTRODUCTION

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that *Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith* (§2223).

**Assisting and empowering parents in this primary role of transmitting the faith is the purpose and design of the Parish School of Religion.** In his recent encyclical, Pope Francis commented,

*"The main contribution to the pastoral care of families is offered by the parish, which is the family of families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony."*

(p. 153, *Amoris Laetitia*).

The following information will assist you in getting to know a little more about the Parish School of Religion. If you ever have ANY question or concern that is not addressed in this Parent Handbook, please feel free to contact the Coordinator of Religious Education, Ellen Frederick, at 985-893-2446 or email ore@stpeterparish.com. Meetings are available by appointment. The Office of Religious Education is located in the Ministry Center, which is next to our Adoration Chapel.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Saint Peter Youth Faith Formation Program, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the direction of the Archdiocese of New Orleans Office of Religious Education, and our pastor, affirms, assists, and empowers parish families in their role as primary catechetical educators of their children's faith. Through prayer, frequent reception of the sacraments, and ongoing catechesis, we aspire to create opportunities for the family to deepen their knowledge of God, and encounter Him in a personal way.

## ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

ALL CHILDREN (Grades 1 – 10) are to be dropped-off/picked-up using their assigned carline route. **Staff is on duty to supervise children under the pavilion beginning at 5:40pm. and no earlier.** Children are not allowed to enter the buildings prior to 5:50pm. Students are held under the pavilion from 5:40-5:50pm, and are walked to their classroom from 5:50-6:00pm. **If you arrive later than 6:00 pm., you must walk your child to the building.**

Please become familiar with your carline route and the appropriate streets for approaching to secure a safe and orderly flow. **There will be no walkers or 10<sup>th</sup> grade drivers without prior approval.**

After dropping off your child it is preferred that you do not circle around and park in the pickup line. If you must do so, DO NOT park in the pickup line until 6:10pm. You will be blocking other parents trying to drop off, and will be asked to move.

## ATTENDANCE

PSR takes place each Wednesday from 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Please see the calendar for special holidays and parish closures.

Parents are expected to make a serious commitment to see that their children attend each scheduled session. If an unforeseen situation should cause a child to miss a session, the child may be asked to complete missed work and return it the following session.

If absences are persistent, parents will be contacted by the Office of Religious Education to discuss the underlying reasons.

Parents of **Sacramental Year children** (2<sup>nd</sup> grade) will be contacted and concerns will be discussed if the child misses **more than two consecutive sessions, or more than three total sessions.**

## BEHAVIOR

If a child becomes disruptive during a session, and then refuses to cooperate with the catechist's charitable advice to correct his/her behavior, he/she may be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the hour and will sit with a Hall Monitor until dismissal time. A note will be sent home or a call made informing the parents of the inappropriate behavior. The child will be expected to repair the wrong by returning to class with a written apology to the catechist signed by his/her parents and the child, when appropriate.

If a child is asked to leave a session more than twice during the year, that child will not be allowed to return to the program without a parental meeting with the Coordinator of Religious Education and, if necessary, the Pastor to pray and discern further action.

If a child needs the support of a parent in the room in order to display virtuous behavior, we may ask the parent to accompany their child to formation classes for a brief time. It is our experience that parents can help tremendously in the “adjustment period” with which some children seem to have some difficulty. **It is our goal to provide an environment where Catholic Virtues, good manners, and respect are displayed by all.**

## CARPOOL

Parents must notify the Office of any carpooling in advance. **We are not permitted to send your child home with another parent unless you have given us prior notice and permission to do so.** Parents are required to either send an email to ore@stpeterparish.com or send a note with your child to class, so that we are aware of the situation.

## COMMUNICATION

**Please frequently check your child's folder for any flyers, as well as your email for important updates and events.** We also encourage parents to download the **St. Peter Parish App**, in order to subscribe to and receive **push notifications from PSR.**

We always encourage communication with our families. **Please advise us of any family situations such as recent divorce, unemployment, custody, etc, that may affect your child.** Know that all information will be kept strictly confidential and that our ministry is always willing to reach out to assist in any way possible.

## CURRICULUM

Throughout the year, children will benefit from spiritually enriching encounters such as the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Novenas and Devotions, The Sacrament of Reconciliation, Holy Mass, and Eucharistic Adoration.

Our students utilize the *Spirit of Truth* curriculum, published by Sophia Institute Press. Doctrine, Sacred Scripture, prayer, lives of the Saints, Catholic traditions, and the liturgical seasons are taught at each grade level. The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade children supplement their learning with intensive catechesis on the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist, parent and child workshops, and liturgical rites.

## DISABILITIES / LEARNING NEEDS

*"All persons with disabilities have the capacity to proclaim the Gospel and to be living witnesses to its truth within the community of faith and offer valuable gifts. Their involvement enriches every aspect of Church life. They are not just the recipients of catechesis—they are also its agents." (National Directory for Catechesis, 2005)*

If your child has a physical, learning or other disability or exceptionality, we ask that you would please contact our office so that we can meet with you to discern how we can best meet the needs of your child and affirm his/her God-given gifts and abilities.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Our ministry does assist families that are unable to pay the registration fee. Please contact our Office at 985-893-2446 or indicate your need for assistance on the Registration Form. **NO CHILD WILL EVER BE DENIED RELIGIOUS FORMATION DUE TO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES.**

## FIRE

We will use the same exit routes that have been designed by St. Peter School in the case of a fire. In this very unlikely incident, your child can be safely picked up inside St. Mary's Hall.

## GRADE PLACEMENTS

Children are placed in grade levels based on their religious formation the previous year.

Registered children who completed all course work and successfully met the attendance requirements for St. Peter Parish are promoted to the next year of formation.

Registered children who *failed* to complete the course work or failed to meet the attendance requirements must successfully complete an assessment for that formation year in order to proceed to the next. Returning children to PSR after a lapse of formal religious education are placed based on the outcome of their assessment.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

There are MANY ways to become involved! **Please contact our Office if you are interested in learning about ways to serve in our ministry.**

We maintain an "Open Door" policy. We encourage you to sit in on your child's class at any time. We do ask, however, that you notify the Office or your child's catechist prior to arriving. We strongly urge you to meet your child's catechist and feel free to contact them during the year.

\*Please Note: Any person over 18 years of age who has "ongoing" (more than once) contact with our students **MUST** complete the Safe Environment requirements for the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Additionally, there are many opportunities for our parents to be a special part of the PSR year. The dates for special activities are highlighted on our calendar.

## PRAYER

Truly the power of prayer is real and effective! We beg the prayers of our Youth Faith Formation family knowing that Our Lord hears and answers our every need. Each week parents can commit to lift us up in prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament. Know that we also remember your family in our prayers as well. Please consider visiting our Adoration Chapel.

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT

St. Peter joins the Archdiocese of New Orleans in taking very seriously the responsibility of protecting our children. Background checks are run on all Staff members and volunteers, who must also attend an Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training. **Child protection catechesis is taught annually. Parents may refuse the participation of their child in the safe environment lesson, but must complete documentation indicating their objection which will be submitted to the Archdiocese.** Parents are certainly welcome to observe the lesson (See Calendar for Dates).

## SAFETY

Children are expected to remain with their class at all times. **At no time may a child leave their class or try to depart by means other than their assigned carline. Please do not instruct your child(ren) to meet you anywhere other the designated dismissal areas.** Our goal is for our time to be peaceful and orderly, with the safety of the children as our highest priority.

Should we ever have to **evacuate a building(s) due to an emergency situation**, parents will be notified via St. Peter Parish App PSR Push Notification.

## TECHNOLOGY

For safety purposes, our catechists have their cell phones with them at all times to use in case of emergency. Your child should not need the use of their phone (or any other electronic device) during Youth Faith Formation. **If a child *does* come with a cell phone or other electronic device, he/she will be asked to place it out of sight for the duration of the session to avoid distractions.** If a child does not heed the catechist's request to place his/her device out of sight (silent, vibrate, etc.), parents will be contacted regarding the inappropriate use of technology.

## WEATHER

If we need to cancel PSR for the evening because of inclement weather, an email will be sent out as well as a St. Peter Parish App push notification by 2:00 p.m. of that day informing you of the closure.