



St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church
40000 North U.S. Highway 45
Old Mill Creek, IL 60046



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK

2023-2024

LETTER TO THE PARENTS

Dear Friends,

I welcome you to a new year of Religious Education at St. Raphael. I pledge to do my best to be a good shepherd to the people of St. Raphael. I always enjoy getting to know the people who make our parish their spiritual home! I look forward to getting to know you and your families in the coming year.

We need shepherds in the “big” Church: bishops, priests, deacons, and religious. We also need shepherds in the domestic Church, in the homes where families share their faith in Jesus Christ. Parents, grandparents, godparents, aunts, and uncles, are all shepherds who can guide, instruct, and help children grow in our Catholic faith.

I am grateful to Annette Wynn, our Coordinator of Religious Education and all our catechists who very generously give their time and share their faith with the young people of the parish. Please join me in working with them to provide the children with the best possible experience of growing close to Jesus Christ and his Body the Church this year. How can you help your child’s teachers?

Let me suggest three ways:

First, we acknowledge the importance of God by the way we live our lives. God has given us many gifts: life, faith, family and so much more. We offer God our thanks by living in a manner that reflects our gratitude for all the gifts He has given us. Being a prayerful, kind, merciful, generous, forgiving, and loving Christian expresses your gratitude to God. As adults, we are called to be good role models of Christian living for the children; if we live our faith well, that will teach as much as any classroom can.

Second, children have many questions about life; it is important for us to help them discover that Christ is the answer to our most profound questions. The answers to our questions will come when we grow closer to him through weekly participation at Mass, a regular habit of prayer, the reading of Sacred Scripture, and works of charity. The example of parents in practicing our faith is crucial for the spark to catch in the hearts and souls of the young people. Please join us each week for Mass on Saturday evening or Sunday morning; this is the most important way of planting a seed in your child’s heart so that he or she continues living as a Catholic as a teenager and adult.

Third, we can encourage the children in their study of our Catholic faith by demonstrating that we as adults also keep learning about our Faith. This year there will be a few opportunities for adult faith formation: guest speakers, new media, study groups and a book club. I encourage you to join us in whatever way you can so that you are strengthened as a Catholic and discover something new about the faith.

I am available to help support the families and the catechists in the year ahead. I look forward to seeing you and hearing how your faith in Jesus Christ is important to you and your family.

Father Matthew Kowalski

Pastor

GENERAL INFORMATION AT A GLANCE

Father Matthew Kowalski, Pastor

Annette Wynn, Coordinator of Religious Education

PARISH & RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICES:

St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church
40000 North U. S. Highway 45
Old Mill Creek, Illinois 60046

Phone: 847.395.3474

Office Hours: Monday -Tuesday -Thursday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Email: religiouseducation@straphaelcatholic.org

Website: www.straphaelcatholic.org

SCHOOL LOCATION:

Millburn Middle School
640 Freedom Way
Lindenhurst, IL 60046

ABSENCES

Call to leave message 847.395.3474 Monday – Friday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

After office hours, email religious education coordinator or the catechist.

CLASS TIMES

Wednesdays, September through May, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Thanksgiving Break	No class the Wednesday before Thanksgiving
Christmas Break	No class the Wednesday before Christmas or before January 1
Spring Break	TBD



**WE WILL FOSTER THE TOTAL PERSONAL
& SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF YOUR
CHILDREN & ENCOURAGE THEIR
RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN THE
LIFE, MISSION, & WORK OF THE
CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY**

STATEMENT OF CATECHETICAL PURPOSE

The aim of catechesis is to “lead believers to a deeper knowledge and love of Christ and the Church and a firm commitment to follow him” (National Directory for Catechesis).

The goals of the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel parish are to:

- ☐ Develop an understanding of who Jesus Christ is and a response to him in our Catholic faith.
- ☐ Lay the foundation of faith based on the teachings, tradition, and precepts of the Roman Catholic Church.
- ☐ Teach formal prayers and assist children in the growth of their personal prayer life.
- ☐ Prepare students for the reception of the Sacraments.
- ☐ Encourage meaningful participation in liturgical worship and the sacramental life of the Church.
- ☐ Foster personal, moral, and spiritual growth.
- ☐ Develop Catholic values for implementation in everyday life.
- ☐ Draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PERSONNEL

Pastor: Father Matthew Kowalski

Religious Education Coordinator: Annette Wynn

The Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church depends upon the commitment and dedication of our catechists, aides, substitutes, teachers, and other helpers. These individuals generously volunteer their time and talent to help your children know and deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith. Please encourage your children to be courteous and show their respect. We ask that you give them your support and from time to time remember to tell them thank you for performing this most important ministry.

Please know that we take your children's safety very seriously and for that reason we strictly enforce the Archdiocese of Chicago's directives on the protection of children and youth. All catechists and substitutes in the Religious Education program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church undergo criminal background checks, annually submit the department of Children & Family Services Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System Form (CANTS), complete certification in VIRTUS/Protecting God's Children Programs, take mandated reporter training, and sign a code of conduct.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

We members of the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church agree with and adhere to the non-discrimination policy instituted by the Archdiocese of Chicago. We admit students of any gender, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this program. We do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies.

ADMISSION

Admission to the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church is currently open to children (preschool, age four, through Grade 8) of active parishioners. Active parishioners are parents registered in the parish, who routinely contribute to it. High school students who present to the program requesting to be prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation will be enrolled for two years in the 7th and 8th grade curriculum. Since the sacramental life of the parent has a major impact on the child's sacramental life, we require that parents attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and attend one Religious Education meeting in the Fall.

TUITION

Tuition for the religious education course is \$200 per family. We expect all tuition and registration fees to be paid in full at time of enrollment, unless alternate payment arrangements have been made. If you are experiencing extreme financial hardship and are unable to pay this tuition, please contact Fr. Kowalski at 847.395.3474.

Tuition for classes in the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church is nominal. Father Kowalski strongly believes that every Catholic child should be educated in the Catholic faith. He regards the religious education of the children as a part of the parish and parental faith obligation. There are however, economic realities that we all must face. There are many costs involved with operating a religious education program and the registration fees and tuition barely, cover expenses.

Similarly, there are no sacramental fees at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church. Father Kowalski considers the administering of the Sacraments the responsibility of the clergy, supported by the whole parish as part of the body of Christ's Church.

As you freely contribute to the parish, we ask you to think carefully about what our Lord taught us about our responsibility to apply God's resources in ways that affect other's lives. We urge you to look into your heart and soul when you put your envelope in the church collection.

REGISTRATION

If you would like to enroll your children in the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church, registration begins March 1. Late registration fees go into effect July 1. Only the children's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may register a child for the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church.

We encourage you to register as early as possible to ensure a place for your children and to help us determine the appropriate number of resources and materials we will need to procure.

Parents who wish to enroll their children in the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church that have become parishioners after the registration deadline are asked to contact the Pastor at 847.395.3474.

FEES

There is a nonrefundable registration fee, per enrolled child, due at the time of registration. This fee also includes the rental of textbooks and non-returnable workbooks and supplies.

Registration before July 1 \$50 per child

LATE REGISTRATION

Registration completed after June 30 \$75 per child

# of Children	Tuition	Registration Fee	Total Due	Total Due after July 1
1	\$200	\$50	\$250	\$275
2	\$200	\$100	\$300	\$350
3	\$200	\$150	\$350	\$425
4	\$200	\$200	\$400	\$500
5	\$200	\$250	\$450	\$575

CLASS TIMES

Religious Education classes are held once a week from September to May.

Day: Wednesday

Time: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Place: Millburn Middle School
640 Freedom Way
Lindenhurst, IL 60046

Thanksgiving Break: No class the Wednesday before Thanksgiving

Christmas Break: No class the Wednesday before Christmas or
the Wednesday before January 1.

Easter Break: TBD

All children Pre-School to Grade 8 must be signed out at the end of class by a parent or legal guardian or parent designate who is on file in the Religious Education Office. The Religious Education calendar is posted on the parish website.

ATTENDANCE

Since classes are held only once a week, we ask that you make a concerted effort to ensure your child's routine attendance and punctuality. If your children are frequently absent it will become extremely difficult for them to progress in the knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith.

ABSENCE

If unforeseen events or scheduling conflicts occur, we ask that you contact the Religious Education Office as soon as possible. Please leave your children's names, grades, and catechist's names and arrange to pick up assignments from the missed class.

In the case of an unexpected illness, please call the Religious Education Office as soon as possible. After hours, please email or call your child's catechist. It is our policy to place a call to the parents/legal guardians of any child of whose absence we have not been informed. The Religious Education office may be contacted at (847)395-3474 or at religiouseducation@straphaelcatholic.org

If your children are absent from five or more classes in one year they will be required to complete additional assignments and might have to repeat the year if it is a Sacramental year.

TARDINESS

When your children are tardy to class, it is an interruption that distracts both the catechist and the students. In the case of an unexpected delay of 5 minutes or more, remember to take your children to the front desk in the main lobby, sign them in, and escort them to class.

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS

- ☐ Students should arrive no later than 6:25 pm and remain with the parent/guardian until they are escorted to class.
- ☐ Students may not enter their classrooms unless a catechist is present.
- ☐ The school door will be secured five minutes after the beginning of class and remain secured until 5 minutes prior to dismissal.
- ☐ All Students Preschool to Grade 8, must be escorted to the classroom, picked up by a parent /guardian or parent designee, who is on file in the Religious Education Office. Drop off is not permitted.
- ☐ At no time are the students allowed to go out into the parking lot unless accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- ☐ Please do not park in the driveway of the school. Parking is only allowed in designated parking spaces in the lot.

EARLY PICKUP OF STUDENTS

If you need to pick up your children early, you will need to sign them out at the front desk. You will then be given an early dismissal slip that you will need to present to the catechist at the time of early pick- up. Please remember that your children will only be released to a parent/ legal guardian or parent designate who is on file in the Religious Education Office.



**IF WE STAND TOGETHER & GIVE WITNESS
TO OUR LOVE FOR THE LORD & THE
CATHOLIC CHURCH, OUR CHILDREN WILL
FOLLOW.**

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

We ask that you impress on your children the importance of treating everyone with courtesy, respect, and kindness. Please explain to your children that rude and hurtful conduct toward others degrades their character and reputation and is in opposition to the Christian values of Our Catholic faith. We also suggest that you remind them that we are visitors in Millburn Middle School and we must be careful not to cause any damage.

As we all know children are not perfect and will, from time to time, act in an immature and inappropriate manner. However, repeated disrespectful or inappropriate behavior is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action and in extreme cases, expulsions from the Religious Education Program.

DISRESPECTFUL/INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR INCLUDES, BUT IT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

- ☐ Lying
- ☐ Talking back to the catechist or other school personnel
- ☐ Raising one's voice in anger
- ☐ Using vulgar or obscene language or gestures
- ☐ Name calling, racial or ethnic slurs,
- ☐ Disrupting the classroom
- ☐ Using cell phones (I PODS, etc.) during class time
- ☐ Leaving the classroom without permission
- ☐ Littering the school building or grounds

DISCIPLINARY ACTION FOR DISRESPECTFUL & INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR INCLUDES, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO:

- ☐ 1st Instance: Verbal warning by catechist
- ☐ 2nd Instance: Coordinator or Religious education is notified and speaks with the student
- ☐ 3rd Instance: Parent is notified
- ☐ 4th Instance: Student is withdrawn from class

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Serious behavioral infractions which will not be tolerated and may result in the immediate removal of the student from the classroom and expulsion from the Religious Education Program, without refund of any tuition or fees, include, but are not limited to:

- ☐ Cheating
- ☐ Leaving the school without permission
- ☐ Bullying, intimidating or harassing another person*
- ☐ Verbal, written or gestured threats
- ☐ Fighting
- ☐ Assault
- ☐ Possession, use, sale, and/or distribution of any dangerous or unlawful objects** (e.g., tobacco, alcohol, drugs, etc.)
- ☐ Theft***
- ☐ Vandalism or deliberate damage to personal or school property

*Harassment of any kind should be reported immediately to any or all the following the Catechist, Coordinator of Religious Education, or the Pastor (847.395.3474).

**Please note that when there is suspicion of a violation of this policy the Religious Education Office at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic church maintains the right to search.

- ☐ All desks and other parish supplied enclosures
- ☐ Any and all personal property

All contraband will be seized and the appropriate authorities will be contacted.

***St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church does not assume responsibility for the recovery or replacement of lost stolen or damaged personal property.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

MEDICATION

Catechists and other personnel in the Religious Education Office cannot administer, maintain or supervise the taking of prescription and non-prescription medications. Students are not allowed to carry medication on their person, including non-prescription medications during religious education classes. If your child requires medication to be given to him/her, you, the parent/guardian must come to class to administer it. Prescriptions must be in their original container. Your child will be permitted to take medication only in extraordinary cases, but a Medication Permission Request Form, signed by the parent/guardian, must be on file in the Religious Education Office.

ILLNESS/INJURY

In the event that your child becomes ill or injured during his/her religious education class time. We will contact you, the parent/guardian, by phone call. If you the parent/guardian cannot be reached by phone, the emergency contact that is listed on the Emergency Contact Information/Release Form on file in the Religious Education Office will be contacted. If we are unable to contact either you or the emergency contacts and time is of the essence, we will act in a manner that is both responsible and reasonable. Should the injury or illness be of such severity that immediate care is warranted, we will immediately call the Lake Villa Fire Department (911).

Please keep the Religious Education Office informed and up-to-date about any health issues that your children might have, including allergies. We will treat such information as confidential and release it only as necessary.



**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IS A
COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AMONG YOU, THE
PARENTS, THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
OFFICE & THE PARISH AS A WHOLE**

HEALTH AND SAFETY, CONTINUED

Your children's safety is of the utmost importance to us. Fire and tornado drills are necessary for the safety of the students, parents, catechists and other personnel. It is crucial that everyone be aware of how to reach a point of safety from those areas of the building in which he/she might be. Parents, please impress upon your children the seriousness of these exercises.

Fire and tornado safety information & rules are posted in every room.

FIRE DRILL RULES

- ☐ Close windows
- ☐ Students will follow designated exit instructions, keep in single file, walk, not run, refrain from talking, and proceed to a designated place, approximately 100 feet from point of exit.
- ☐ The catechist should be the first one out of the room, should take the class roster and remain with the class.
- ☐ The catechist aide will close the door.
- ☐ The catechist will take attendance once the group has reached its designated place, at a proper distance from the building.
- ☐ When the all clear is sounded, all will return to their classrooms in the same orderly fashion.

TORNADO DRILL RULES

- ☐ Students will follow designated exit instructions, keep in single file, walk not run, refrain from talking, and proceed to an interior hallway.
- ☐ The catechist should be the first one out of the room should take the class roster. And remain with the class.
- ☐ The catechist aide will close the door.
- ☐ The catechist will take attendance once the group has reached its designated area.
- ☐ Students will be instructed to respond to specific commands to assume protective postures and to face interior walls when the danger is imminent.

STUDENT RELEASE POLICY

The Religious Education Office at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church presumes both parents of every student have equal access even if the parents are divorced or separated unless there is a form on file in the Religious Education Office stating otherwise.

Students will only be released to a parent, unless the Emergency Contact Information/Release Form, stating the names of the individuals who are authorized to pick up the student, is on file in the Religious Education Office. Parent designates must pick up the student in the classroom.

ELECTRONICS POLICY

Students are allowed to bring cell phones, but are required to keep them turned off during class time. If there is a family emergency parents are asked to contact the catechist and/or the religious education office.

Students are not allowed to bring electronic entertainment, gaming devices into the class. These devices include, but are not limited to, iPods and other MP3 players, PSP, Game Boy or other video game devices.

Students are not allowed to bring electronic readers, e.g., Kindles, Nooks, iPads, etc. into the classroom, unless required to do so by the catechist.

Students who violate this policy will have their electronic device confiscated. It will be returned to the student at the end of class. If this violation of policy becomes a repeated problem, the electronic device will only be returned to the parent at the end of class.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

As in any partnership, clear and open communication is essential. We will keep you informed of news and events through various media, including email, telephone, the parish website and U. S. mail. And we ask you to keep in contact with us because we welcome and value your input. Please do not hesitate to call or email the Pastor or Coordinator of Religious Education, if you have any questions or concerns.

The St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church Religious Education Handbook contains pertinent information for parents and students.

Please go to our website: www.straphaelcatholic.org where you will find an online version of the handbook that can be downloaded and printed.

Newsletters and letters to parents are important vehicles of communication and provide a strong link between Religious Education Office and parents. Catechists will inform parents of the method by which letters will be sent home.

EMERGENCY CLOSING NOTIFICATIONS

If unexpected circumstances warrant the closing of Millburn Middle School or a change in the Religious Education Program school hours, notifications will be made through email. Additionally, catechists will be notified regarding closure by the religious education office. Catechists will notify parents via email. Please make sure your contact information on file in the Religious Education Office is complete and up-to-date.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church observes the Archdiocese of Chicago policy for sacramental preparation, which requires students to attend Religious Education classes for two years prior to the receiving a sacrament. That is to say, students should complete first and second grade Religious Education classes in preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and/or sixth, seventh, and eighth grade Religious Education classes in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation before they can receive these sacraments.

FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Children are normally prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist in the second (2nd) grade. According to Canon Law children must reach the age of seven before they receive these sacraments.

Children in the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation in the Winter and the Sacrament of First Holy Communion in the Spring.

CONFIRMATION

Children are normally prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the 7th and 8th grades. To receive this sacrament children must attend and successfully complete 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, including all Sacramental Preparation assignments in the Religious Education Program at St.

Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church. Confirmation usually takes place in Spring.

CURRICULUM

ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH

All books, materials and other resources used in the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church are approved for use by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Archdiocesan Office of Catechesis and Youth Ministry. They are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and bear the Nihil Obstat and imprimatur, certifying they are free of doctrinal or moral error.

Students in Preschool through Grade 1 use the Image of God series of books, published by Ignatius Press.

Students in Grade 2 – 8, use the Faith & Life series of books, published by Ignatius Press.

Please inform the Religious Education Office of any learning disabilities or other health concerns (physical/emotional/behavioral) that will affect your children's ability to learn. This information will be kept confidential and will only be used to help us meet your children's needs.

HIGH SCHOOL

Currently St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church does not offer High School Religious Education Classes. High School students requesting preparation for Sacraments should contact the Religious Education office.

PARENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As parents, you have a vital role in helping your children learn about the Catholic faith, build a habit of prayer, gain familiarity with the parts of the Mass and scriptural readings, grow in their personal faith, and develop and the Church

- ☐ Pray together as a family.
- ☐ Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- ☐ Discuss with your children the different parts of the Mass.
- ☐ Impart to your children the six pillars of character, caring, fairness, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, and citizenship (Character Counts!)

WAYS FOR PARENTS TO STAY INVOLVED

- ☐ Ensure your children attend and are punctual to class
- ☐ Check folders for notes, assignments, etc.
- ☐ Review, discuss, and reinforce the material/lessons presented in class
- ☐ Review and discuss material contained in your child's textbooks
- ☐ Encourage your children to do the assigned homework
- ☐ Discuss your children's homework with them
- ☐ Assist your children with their homework when necessary
- ☐ Ensure that your children are learning the material as well as possible
- ☐ Assist your children in learning, by memory, the formal prayers of the Church
- ☐ Pray together as a family
- ☐ Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation
- ☐ Discuss with your children the different parts of the Mass (e.g. Homily, Scripture readings, etc.)
- ☐ Impart to your children the six pillars of character: caring, fairness, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, and citizenship (Character Counts!)

NEW & RETURNING STUDENT FORMS

NEW STUDENT FORMS

If your children are new to the Religious Education Program at St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church, you will need to provide the Religious Education Office with the following documents.

- ☐ A completed Religious Education Registration Form
- ☐ A copy of your children's Baptismal Certificate
- ☐ A copy of your children's Communion Certificate
- ☐ A transcript from previous parish where your child attended religious education
- ☐ A signed Acknowledgement form that you have read and will comply with the policies and procedures stated in the Religious Education Handbook
- ☐ An Emergency Contact Information/Release form, stating the names of the individuals who may pick up your children if you are not able to do so.
- ☐ A Medical Information/Emergency Authorization for Treatment Form

RETURNING STUDENT FORMS

If your children are returning students, please ensure that the following documents are on file in the Religious Education Office.

- ☐ A completed Religious Education Registration Form
Any changes to the previous registration information (i.e., name, phone number, email, etc.) can be updated online or reported to the Religious Education office as soon as possible.
- ☐ A copy of your children's Baptismal certificate
- ☐ A copy of your children's Communion certificate
This certificate must be on file prior to your children entering the seventh/eighth grade.
- ☐ A signed Acknowledgement form that you have read and will comply with the policies and procedures stated in the Religious Education Handbook.
- ☐ An Emergency Contact Information/Release form, stating the names of the individuals who may pick up your children if you are not able to do so.
- ☐ A Medical Information/Emergency Authorization for Treatment Form

FIND FORMS & HANDBOOK

All forms and Handbook can be found on the St. Raphael the Archangel Catholic Church website: www.straphaelcatholic.org You can submit the forms online at religiouseducation@straphaelcatholic.org or return printed forms to the Religious Education office or drop off at church with an usher at the Sunday mass for return to the office. Printed forms may also be picked up at the Parish Office.

The Religious Education Office presumes that both parents of every student have equal access even if the parents are divorced or separated unless there is a form on file stating otherwise.



**WE BELIEVE THAT OUR MISSION IS TO
HELP YOUR CHILDREN GROW IN
THEIR KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING
& CONSCIENTIOUS PRACTICE OF THE
CATHOLIC FAITH.**



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