



Parent Handbook 2025–2026

Saint Raphael Religious Education

🧡 **Welcome!**

We're so glad you're here and feel incredibly blessed to walk alongside your family as your child grows in faith at St. Raphael's.

This handbook is your go-to guide for everything SRRE - from class schedules to special events, and all the things in between. If you ever have a question or need support, please don't hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to a wonderful year of learning, growing, and celebrating our Catholic faith together!

With joy,

Karen Watson

St. Raphael Religious Education

🌿 **Our Parish Mission**

Saint Raphael is a vibrant Catholic community centered on the Eucharist and inspired by Scripture and Tradition. We strive to love God, love others, and live out the Gospel



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every day. Through worship, learning, and service, we grow closer to Christ. We're so happy your family is part of that journey.

What is Religious Education?

Religious Education (SRRE) at Saint Raphael is for children in preschool through high school who don't attend Catholic school.

Our goal? To help kids fall in love with Jesus, understand our Catholic faith, and learn how to live it joyfully.

We offer age-appropriate classes, sacrament prep, prayer experiences, and family events all rooted in love, truth, and community.

Your Role as a Parent

You are **the most important faith teacher** your child will ever have!

What you say, do, and believe speaks louder than anything we could teach in a classroom.

We hope every family in our program will share in the celebration of Mass. When you make Sunday Mass a priority, you show your child that our faith is not just something we learn it's something we live.

When you:

- **Bring your child to Mass**
- **Pray together** as a family
- **Talk about Jesus at home**

...you help their faith **come alive** in a way only you can.

We're here to walk with you and support you every step of the way because we're **partners** in sharing the Good News with your child.

What We Ask of You

- Be on time and make class attendance a priority (please aim for no more than 4 absences during the year).
- Let us know if your child will miss class or needs any special support.



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- Chat with your child about what they're learning.
- Pray together at home (even a few minutes a day is great!).
- Celebrate Mass as a family on Sundays and Holy Days.
- Be a role model - your example of faith matters more than you know.
- Lend a hand if you're able. We always love helping hands!

💰 Tuition & Sacrament Fees (2025–2026)

Tuition is \$200 per student. If this creates a financial hardship, please don't hesitate to reach out - we have limited scholarships available and we're happy to help. Please note that tuition and sacrament fees are non-refundable.

Sacrament fees:

- First Holy Communion: \$100
- Confirmation: \$85

There are no other additional fees that will be incurred during the school year.

Need-Based Scholarships

At Saint Raphael, we believe that every child should have the opportunity to grow in faith - regardless of a family's financial situation. If tuition creates a hardship, we invite you to apply for a need-based scholarship.

Who Can Apply

- Families registered with Saint Raphael for at least 6 months.
- Active parish participation, including regular Mass attendance.
- Children must be enrolled in the Saint Raphael Religious Education (SRRE) program.

What the Scholarship Covers

- Partial or full coverage of the \$200 per student SRRE tuition.
- Sacramental preparation fees (\$100 First Communion, \$85 Confirmation) are not typically included but may be reduced in special situations.



How to Apply

1. Complete the **Scholarship Application Form** available from the SRRE office
2. Submit your form by **August 31st** along with:
 - Your SRRE registration form.
 - A brief financial statement (recent tax return or other proof of need).
 - An optional note explaining your circumstances.
3. All applications are reviewed confidentially by the Director of Religious Education.

Award Decisions

Scholarships may cover 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% of tuition. Priority is given to families with multiple children in the program or with extraordinary financial challenges.

Our Hope

We encourage scholarship recipients to be active in parish life whether through ministry, volunteering, or community events. Together, we make Saint Raphael a place where faith grows and families feel at home.

Weekly Schedule

- Sunday: 7:05–8:20 PM (Grades 2–High School)
- Monday: 4:30–5:45 PM (Grades K–8)
- Monday: 7:00–8:15 PM (Grades 1–High School)
- Family Catechesis: 6 Sundays during the year. Class time 4:30 PM to 5:45 PM and Class dates are: **2025:** 9/14, 10/19, 11/30 **2026:** 1/25, 3/8, 4/26

Our SRRE program runs mid-September through early-May.

Snow Day & Emergency Policy

For the safety of our families and volunteers, SRRE follows Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) as a guide for weather-related or emergency closings. If MCPS schools



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are closed, close early, or cancel evening activities due to inclement weather or other emergencies, SRRE classes and events will also be canceled. We will communicate any closures or schedule changes via email and the parish website.

Please check your email and www.straphaels.org/religious-education for the most up-to-date information.

In the Classroom

Our **volunteer** catechists and aides are the heart of our program. They prepare thoughtfully, pray for your children, and create a welcoming space to grow in faith.

Please take a moment to thank them - they do this out of love!

We use Loyola Press textbooks, specifically the Finding God series. We'll let you know if your child needs to replace a lost one (\$20–\$25 depending on grade).

Homeschool Policy

Families who choose to homeschool for Religious Education are welcome in our parish program. We recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith and may opt to lead catechesis at home. If you choose this option, we ask that you:

- Register your child for the SRRE program each year.
- Use the parish-approved catechetical materials (Loyola Press Finding God series) to ensure continuity with our parish curriculum.
- Participate in parish sacrament preparation events, retreats, and assessments as scheduled.
- Meet with the Director of Religious Education at least twice a year to share progress and discuss any needs.

Our goal is to partner with homeschool families so that children experience both home-based learning and connection with the larger parish community through liturgy, service, and celebration.



😊 Behavior Expectations

To help create a positive and faith-filled learning environment, we ask all students to:

- Follow directions the first time they are given.
- Treat catechists, classmates, and all materials with respect.
- Keep personal belongings and outside items at home.
- Participate attentively and with a positive attitude.

We want every child to feel safe, respected, and valued. If a behavior concern comes up, we'll respond with kindness and clarity:

1. **First:** The catechist will speak with the child privately.
2. **Second:** If it continues, the child will take a break in the office to regroup.
3. **Third:** If needed, we will ask a parent to pick up the child.
4. **Fourth:** Continued issues may be addressed through at-home learning with assignments and assessments.

Our goal is always to partner with families so every child can thrive.

📱 Cell Phone / Wearable Technology Policy

We want our classrooms to be focused on prayer, learning, and community. To help everyone stay engaged:

- Students are asked to keep cell phones and wearable technology e.g. smartwatches or ear buds, etc. **silenced and put away and not used** during class, prayer, and events unless a medical need has been indicated on the SRRE registration form or directed by the **catechist specifically directs their use** for collaborative research and learning.
- If a phone or wearable technology becomes a distraction, the catechist may ask the student to place it in a safe spot until class is over.
- In case of emergency, parents can always contact the SRRE office, and we will connect with your child right away.
- Catechists may occasionally use phones for class activities (such as scripture look-ups or Catholic apps), but only when directed.

Our goal is to create a space free from distractions where children can grow in faith and friendship.



Special Needs

If your child learns differently or has any unique needs, please let us know!
We'll work with you to find the best classroom fit and support plan.

Sacrament Preparation

We prepare children and teens for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation over two years.

If your child is in Catholic school, please contact us for a sacrament registration form.


Unbaptized children age 7+ join our OCIA Adapted for Children program and receive Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

Special Events

- Children's Liturgy of the Word (during 10 AM & 1 PM Sunday Spanish Mass)
- Family Prayer Services in Fall and Spring
- Advent & Lent Confession Services
- End-of-Year Mass of Thanksgiving
- Service Projects all year long!

Stay in Touch

Karen Watson, Dir. St. Raphael Religious Education

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SRRE 2025-2026 Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
09/01	SRRE Class Registrations still accepted with \$25 Late Fee
09/01	Confirmation Service Project Log and Reflection due to SRRE - Confirmation 2 students
09/06	9:00 am - Catechist Morning of Reflection - Trumpet Room
09/07	7:05 pm - Parent Meeting, Meet and Greet Your Child's Catechist - Trumpet Room
09/08	4:30 pm - Parent Meeting, Meet and Greet Your Child's Catechist - Trumpet Room
09/08	7:00 pm - Parent Meeting, Meet and Greet Your Child's Catechist - Trumpet Room
09/14	4:30 pm - Family Catechesis Grades K - 5 - Trumpet Room
09/14	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
09/15	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K – 8
09/15	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
09/21	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
09/22	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K – 8
09/22	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
09/28	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
09/29	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K – 8
09/29	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
10/01	7:00 pm - Confirmation Year 2 Parent Meeting - Trumpet Room
10/03	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour - St Raphael Catholic Church
10/05	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
10/06	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
10/06	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
10/08	7:00 pm - First Penance Parent Meeting - Trumpet Room
10/10	Permission Form for Confirmation Retreat Due to SRRE office
10/12	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
10/13	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8

*Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Tuesdays: 6:45 pm – 7:15 PM

& Thursdays at 9:30 am – 6 PM

*Children's Liturgy of the Word each Sunday during 10 AM Mass



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<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
10/13	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
10/15	7:00 pm - Confirmation Year 1 Parent Meeting - Trumpet Room
10/19	4:30 pm - Family Catechesis Grades K - 5 - Trumpet Room
10/19	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
10/20	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
10/20	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
10/25	8 th grade Confirmation Retreat - Trumpet Room
10/26	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
10/27	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
10/27	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
11/02	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
11/03	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
11/03	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
11/07	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
11/09	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
11/10	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
11/10	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
11/16	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
11/17	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
11/17	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
11/23	NO SRRE Classes - Thanksgiving Break
11/24	NO SRRE Classes - Thanksgiving Break
11/24	NO SRRE Evening Classes - Thanksgiving Break
11/30	4:30 pm - Family Catechesis Grades K - 5 - Trumpet Room
11/30	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
12/01	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
12/01	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
12/05	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
12/07	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
12/08	4:30 pm - Holy Day of Obligation - all SRRE Classes Grades K - 8 will attend Mass before going to class - St. Raphael Church
12/08	7:00 pm - Holy Day of Obligation - all SRRE Classes Grades 1 - HS will attend Mass before going to class - St. Raphael Church



<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
12/14	Advent PS
12/14	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
12/15	Advent PS
12/15	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
12/15	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
12/17	5:00 pm - Christmas Nativity Play Rehearsal - Trumpet Room
12/21	NO SRRE Classes - Christmas Break
12/22	7:00 pm - Christmas Party - SRRE - Trumpet Room
12/28	NO SRRE Classes - Christmas Break
12/29	NO SRRE Classes - Winter Break
01/02	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
01/04	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
01/05	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
01/05	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
01/10	9:30 am - First Penance Get Ready Morning - Trumpet Room
01/11	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
01/12	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
01/12	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
01/18	NO SRRE Classes
01/19	NO SRRE Classes
01/19	NO SRRE Evening Classes
01/23	Confirmation 2 Students: Sponsor Certificate due. Please submit to SRRE Office
01/25	4:30 pm - Family Catechesis Grades K - 5 - Trumpet Room
01/25	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
01/26	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
01/26	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
01/28	7:00 pm - First Penance - St Raphael Catholic Church
01/31	10:30 am - First Penance - St Raphael Catholic Church
02/01	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
02/02	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
02/02	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
02/04	7:00p Confirmation 2 Parent and Student Meeting - Trumpet Room



<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
02/06	4:00 pm - Mount 2000 Retreat (2/6/2026 - 2/8/2026)
02/06	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
02/07	Mount 2000 Retreat (2/6/2026 - 2/8/2026)
02/08	Mount 2000 Retreat (2/6/2026 - 2/8/2026)
02/08	4:30 pm - Super Bowl Sunday SRRE Classes Time Change - Only for today
02/09	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
02/09	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
02/15	NO SRRE Classes
02/16	NO SRRE Classes Afternoon or Evening
02/18	Ash Wednesday
02/22	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
02/23	Bishop letter which includes your chosen saint due in SRRE Office
02/23	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
02/23	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
02/25	7:00 pm - First Eucharist Parent Meeting - St Raphael Catholic Church
03/01	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
03/02	Confirmation Interviews and Testing Start
03/02	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
03/02	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
03/06	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
03/08	4:30 pm - Family Catechesis Grades K - 5 - Trumpet Room
03/08	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
03/09	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
03/09	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
03/14	9:30 am - First Eucharist Get Ready Morning - Trumpet Room
03/15	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
03/16	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
03/16	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
03/22	7:05 pm - Lent PS during SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
03/23	4:30 pm - Lent PS during SRRE Classes Grades K - 8



<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
03/23	7:00 pm - Lent PS during SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
03/29	NO SRRE Classes
03/30	NO SRRE Classes Afternoon or Evening
04/03	CONFIRMATION 2 STUDENTS: ALL OUTSTANDING ITEMS DUE IN SRRE OFFICE
04/03	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
04/05	NO SRRE Classes
04/06	NO SRRE Classes Afternoon or Evening
04/12	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
04/13	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
04/13	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
04/19	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
04/20	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
04/20	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
04/26	4:30 pm - Family Catechesis Grades K - 5 - Trumpet Room
04/26	7:05 pm - SRRE Classes Grades 2 - HS YG
04/27	4:30 pm - SRRE Classes Grades K - 8
04/27	7:00 pm - SRRE Evening Classes Grades 1 - HS
04/29	5:00 pm - 6:00 pm - First Eucharist Mass Rehearsal - St Raphael Catholic Church for 11 AM Mass
04/29	6:30 pm - 7:30 pm - First Eucharist Mass Rehearsal - St Raphael Catholic Church for 1 PM Mass
05/01	6:00 pm - Family Holy Hour – St. Raphael Church
05/02	11:00 am - First Eucharist Mass - St Raphael Catholic Church
05/02	1:00 pm - First Eucharist Mass - St Raphael Catholic Church
05/03	6:00 PM End of Year Mass and popsicle party for Sunday evening, Monday afternoon and Monday evening sessions
05/04	No Class for Monday Afternoon and Evening – See 5/03
05/06	5:30 pm - Confirmation Rehearsal for 10:30 AM Mass - St Raphael Catholic Church
05/06	7:00 pm - Confirmation Rehearsal for 1 PM Mass - St Raphael Catholic Church
05/09	10:30 am - Confirmation Mass - St Raphael Catholic Church
05/09	1:00 pm - Confirmation Mass - St Raphael Catholic Church





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