



ST. AUGUSTINE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

MIDLOTHIAN • IL

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Student/Parent Handbook 2025-2026

St. Augustine Religious Education guides parents and guardians in leading their children to a loving encounter with Jesus Christ. Our curriculum integrates liturgy, prayer, church traditions, service, and study to prepare the next generation of active participants and leaders of Catholic Church.

We ask all students and Parents to review this handbook prior to the start of classes each year and sign the Family Code of Conduct Form link at the end of this handbook, prior to the start of classes.

REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Registration begins in April for returning families and opens to new families in May-June. Registration will close for the month of July and reopen (if class space allows) in August for late registrants.

TUITION

Tuition statements will be emailed to families every month beginning in October.

Remaining balances must be paid by March of the class year to be in good standing and be eligible for continued participation in the program.

Cash, check (payable to St. Augustine), or e-pay payments accepted.

Payments may be made-

- In the Religious Ed Office on class nights, or by appointment during the week.
- At the Parish Office during regular business hours.
- Sent with child to class.

Tuition Payments must be sent in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the family name and students' name and year level to be properly credited to your account.

It is HIGHLY encouraged that all participating families register as members of the Parish and support the Parish through the weekly Mass collection envelopes. Please register at the Parish Office.

ALL REGISTERED STUDENTS MUST SUBMIT COPIES OF:

- Birth certificate AND Baptismal certificate at the time of registration
- First Communion certificate if they celebrated this Sacrament at another Parish.

ADDITIONAL FEES Students in year two preparations for Sacraments require payment of the following fees to cover the costs of Sacramental Curriculum, Retreats, Certificates, etc.

First Communion: \$50

Confirmation: \$75

Fee may be paid at the time of registration or at the time of the first sacrament meeting.

PROTECTING GOD’S CHILDREN All Staff and Volunteers in the RE Program at St. Augustine are required by the Archdiocese of Chicago to complete the “Protecting God’s Children” training, Illinois Mandated Report training in addition to completing a Criminal Background check, and to complete monthly and yearly training bulletins through their Virtus account. This must be completed before any work or volunteering with children.

New volunteers wishing to complete VIRTUS Training, please see the RE website www.staugustinemidlothian.org/re.

All staff members and volunteers are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have read and understand the conduct policies established by the Archdiocese of Chicago.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION All parishes are required to present Safe Environment Instruction program for children as a way to help students recognize improper touch, understand that they can say “no” and tell a trusted adult. Parents will be notified prior to the classroom training and may come in to view the materials before they are viewed by the students. Parents have the right to opt their students out of the safe environment lesson by signing a waiver.

ENROLLMENT Religious Ed is NOT just Sacramental preparation, but life-long faith formation! Students are expected to enroll in Religious Education classes every year beginning in grade 1 and re-enroll each year until the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation (typically in grade 8) and then join youth ministry or participate in other ministries of the parish.

The Archdiocese requires students wishing to celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation to be enrolled in classes for at least 2 consecutive years.

CLASS TIMES

Classes meet most Tuesdays from 6PM to 7:30PM, September through May. A tentative Calendar will be provided in August and posted on the RE website.

ATTENDANCE

Thank you for making RE attendance a priority above other afterschool activities. We are happy to provide coaches with letters explaining your child's excusal from practices/games. Please speak with the Coordinator of Religious Education regarding our activity policy.

If your child is sick, please keep them and any siblings that are also enrolled in the program home! If the sickness is COVID-19 related, please follow CDC guidelines before returning to class.

Report absences to 708.388.4040 or via the REMIND app PRIOR to the start of class.

Students missing more than TWO classes per semester without a valid health exemption may be dismissed from the program and required to repeat the year.

Excessive "tardies" may be counted as an absence.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Love God. Love Others.

All rules and guidelines of our program are based on this belief.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF STUDENTS:

- Attend Mass every Sunday/Pray regularly.
- Be on time & prepared for class.
- Cooperate & participate
- Be respectful of Classmates, teachers & school property.
- Cell phones off during class.
- Listen, talk, and act appropriately.
- Always obey safety rules.
- Avoid bringing toys, electronics, weapons, illegal substances, or

- gang wearing related clothing/items to class.
- No food or gum in church or school
- Never wander the building or campus alone.

We have a zero-tolerance policy for violence against another person or for bringing on the premises any object that could be a weapon. Any child in violation will immediately be sent home and will require a meeting with parents to decide if further participation in RE.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF PARENTS:

- Take an interest in what your child is learning in class.
- Bring your family to Mass weekly and pray regularly as a family.
- Read all communications sent from Religious Education.
- Review class materials and handouts with your students on a regular basis.
- Attend Parent Sessions.
- Attend all Sacrament meetings.
- Continue to enrich and educate yourself as a Catholic.
- Display a positive attitude toward Church, church leaders.
- Follow all RE policies.
- Cooperate with arrival/dismissal procedures.

CODE OF CONDUCT & MEDICAL WAIVER

Parents and students must sign and complete the Code of Conduct/Medical Waiver Form each year. The form will be available in each student's green folder.

MASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Sunday Mass prepares us for the days ahead and sets the spiritual tone for the week, filling us with God's word and grace so we might glorify the Lord with our lives. The Catholic Church calls us to Mass in its Code of Canon Law: "On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass" (1247). We invite families participating in Religious Education to fully live out the Catholic Faith that they wish to pass along to the children in our program. This cannot be accomplished without including Mass in your weekly faith routine.

All students are asked to attend Mass each Sunday at St. Augustine Parish or the Catholic Parish of your choice. Students will be given a Mass card that they will bring

to church each week to receive a stamp (or signature if attending Mass at another Parish). Bring the card to class each week.

COMMUNICATION As your partner in Faith Formation, please don't hesitate to speak with us regarding your student's classroom and faith life experiences.

All communication with parents will be done via **e-mail** and the **REMIND** texting group app, phone or in person. Please be sure to sign up for the REMIND app using the code provided at the class open house, and that we have a current and correct e-mail and phone number on file.

If either should change, please contact our office immediately.

Since most communication will come through e-mail, please be sure to check your e-mail on a weekly basis.

If you need to speak with your child's catechist, please call the religious education office or the information provided by your catechist at the beginning of the year to arrange an appointment. *Children may not communicate directly with catechists-a parent must always be involved in any electronic or phone communication.*

BUILDING USAGE RULES St. Augustine Church and St. Christopher School is a place of gathering, worship, and parish activity. The facility is a shared space by many including students at the School, Religious Education, Parents, Parishioners and Staff members. It is to be expected that there is proper respect for the building, landscaping, and classroom space. It is the responsibility of the catechist along with the support and cooperation of the parents to enforce the following:

1. Students are NOT permitted to be anywhere on campus unsupervised.
2. Food is NOT permitted in the classrooms. (water only)
3. Students are not to touch/take items found in the classrooms.
4. Students are NOT allowed to use school computers or other electronic equipment belonging to the school.
5. Students are NEVER allowed to write on school / parish property, i.e. desks, books, bathroom walls, etc.
6. Parents will be responsible for any property damaged by a student.

Catechists will keep a seating chart and report any incident to the coordinator regarding the damage to property.

CELL PHONES A goal of our program is to give all students an experience with the sacred...a time where the outside world is put aside to make time to be with God. We ask that students silence phones and put them away in their bag during class unless their catechist has allowed the phone to be used for a class activity. (phone holders will also be provided) Students may not take pictures or videos of other students, catechists or staff while on church property

CLASS CANCELATIONS If district schools or St. Christopher School is closed, our classes will also be cancelled.

In case of emergency closing or an unforeseen circumstance when classes need to be cancelled, you will receive an email and a message via the REMIND app.

SAFETY DRILLS Students will review campus safety plans for fire, tornado, and active shooter situations during the first weeks of class. An official fire drill will be conducted under the supervision of the Midlothian Fire Department in the month of October.

CURRICULUM All levels will use the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies as their main textbook. Year1: *Promise* Year 2-3: *Good News*; Year 4-6: *Venture*; Confirmation & High School: *Visions*. The Gospel Weeklies follow the liturgical year and are based off the Sunday Gospel making it easy for families to continue the discussions at home that were started in the classroom. Children in their second year of First Communion prep will also use Pflaum *Together with Jesus* First Reconciliation & First Communion magazines. All Confirmation Level students will use the Pflaum *Gifted with the Spirit* Confirmation program and are expected to complete Mass reflections and service throughout the year in addition to the Gospel Weeklies.

PARENT SESSIONS To encourage parent involvement in faith formation and to build community, a parent is required to attend grade-level Family Sessions with their child throughout the class year. Please see the class calendar for the dates

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL no parking, pick-up or drop-off is allowed on Keeler Ave on class nights due fire safety codes. All cars should enter the parking lot via the entrance on Karlov Ave. and proceed west to the orange cones in front of the drop-off area. Exit on Keeler Ave. ([*Please refer to the map on the RE website.*](#)) For safety, students should exit the car on the passenger side. Students should arrive no more than 10 minutes prior to the start of class.

Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Students, Faith Formation Teen, and Confirmation 1 students, will enter the building at **door 212** of the school and be directed by hall monitors and classroom aides to their classrooms.

Confirmation 2 students will enter **door 210 of unit D** and be directed by hall monitor and classroom aides to their classrooms.

Students should NOT enter a classroom unless a catechist or aide is present and should wait quietly in the hall until they are permitted to enter.

Parents may walk their children to the lobby. Do not block the drop off zone. Please park in the lot and wait for a Parking lot monitor to signal you safely through the drop-off line.

Parents must complete a [waiver/permission](#) form for High School students who are driving themselves and siblings to class and follow the arrival/dismissal information provided on that form.

Class begins promptly at 6PM. For everyone's safety, doors will be locked at 6:10PM. After this time students must be let in and will be marked tardy.

Parents needing to come to the RE Office on class night, please park in the lot closest to the church to avoid disrupting pick-up lines and come to doors 212 between 6:15PM and 7PM. You will need to sign in. Please be patient as the coordinator and volunteers are busy assisting the children and catechists.

EARLY DISMISSAL If your student needs to leave early from class, you must notify the RE Office via email or phone PRIOR to the start of class. A parent or guardian must come to door 212 and sign a release for the student. Then a hallway monitor will escort your child from class to the lobby. No early dismissals will be allowed after 7:15PM.

PICK UP AUTHORIZATION If another parent or individual will be picking your child up, please send a note with the person's information, in writing with your child to the catechist or email the RE office. Please be sure your child is aware and knows the person who is coming to get them to avoid confusion.

DISMISSAL Please be prompt in picking up children. All cars enter the parking lot via Karlov Ave. Cars may return for dismissal as early as 7PM to begin lining up as directed by the parking lot volunteers. *(Please refer to the map on the RE website) Cars will form rows in the lot. All cars facing west. (see diagram on the RE website)*

Beginning at 7:25PM classes will be escorted to their designated areas in the drop-off zone.

Parents MUST walk to the drop-off zone to pick up students no matter their age. Catechists will not let students dismiss directly to cars.

Once you have collected your students from their designated areas in the drop-off zone, Parking volunteers will begin directing rows of cars to Keeler Ave. or Karlov Ave. exits. DO NOT try to exit the lot before this time as it is dangerous for the children and our volunteers!

High School Drivers will be permitted to go to their designated parking area and leave once the parking lot has been cleared.

If you are unable to leave your vehicle to pick up your children, please let the RE Office or Catechist know.

For safety, students of any age WILL NOT be allowed to walk home from class without an adult or older designated sibling for which you provide a note of authorization.

Students that are not picked up on time at dismissal will be brought to the RE Office for pick-up.

PARKING FOR FAMILY SESSIONS/ MEETING NIGHTS Parents will be directed to park their cars in dismissal staging lines closest to the church. Or in the southeast corner lot of the church. DO NOT BLOCK HANDICAP PARKING and leave the drop off/fire lane clear. Walk students to the drop-off zone before you go to church for the meeting. The remaining dismissal procedure remains the same as stated above. For all other meetings, specific parent instructions will be emailed.

Fr. Robinson Ortiz, Pastor rortiz@archchicago.org

Brenna Baker-Director of Children's Faith Formation bbaker@archchicago.org

RE Office: 708.388.4040

Parish Office 708.388.8190 www.staugustinemidlothian.org