

Welcome to our
2017-2018 Fall Religious Education Program!



Hello Families!

As we begin this new year, I wanted to give you some general information pertinent to the coming weeks and the year in general. A good place to go if you are looking for updates, general information, documents and other resources for the Fall Program is our web site at <https://parishofsacredheart.org/fall-program>. Also please be sure to read our Family Handbook (found at this link) if you haven't already. Included below are some important highlights from the handbook concerning policies and procedures most pertinent to the day-to-day operations of our program.

- ⇒ **Next Week's Welcome Back Masses:** We will have special Masses next week (September 26th and 27th) to welcome everyone to our 2017-2018 Religious Education year. Mass will begin at 5:45, and we welcome our parents and family members to join us! Please note that children will head back to the school after Mass and will be dismissed from the classroom. Because we have a large number of children and catechists are still getting to know which adult is picking up which child, this dismissal procedure is very important.

As next week (Wednesday) is the feast of St. Vincent de Paul, we will be collecting food donations at the 'Welcome Back' Masses as well for our food pantry, which serves many local families in need. **Please note that donating is *not required* and is completely voluntary.** The most needed food items for the food pantry are: peanut butter, spaghetti sauce, jelly, meals in a can, canned soup, canned fruit, tuna, baked beans and canned vegetables. (While this list reflects what is currently most needed, our pantry volunteers are most grateful for any food donations offered.)

- ⇒ **Arrival/Dismissal:** Our arrival and dismissal policy is as follows, and it is mandatory that all families adhere to it – children in grades 1st through 4th must be walked to the classroom by an adult (5th through 8th graders may walk to the classrooms by themselves). For dismissal, ***all*** children in grades 1st through 8th must be picked up from the classroom by an adult. If a physical limitation prevents a parent from classroom pick-up, please let us know and we would be happy to make alternative dismissal arrangements for your child.
- ⇒ **Classroom Behavior:** Expectations of behavior for Religious Education reflect what is expected in all classroom settings: respect for the teacher (catechist), the other students, and oneself. Please be sure to discuss the importance of good behavior with your child. Our catechists and aides are dedicated volunteers, and it is important that the time and effort they offer our program is not compromised by classroom behavior issues.
- ⇒ **Attendance:** Good attendance is critical for children to have a fruitful and enriching faith formation experience. We understand that occasionally a child has to miss class due to illness or another circumstance. When your child needs to miss class, please contact our office to let us know.

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- ⇒ **Volunteers:** We are very blessed this year to have had so many people come out to volunteer with us! Even when we are “fully staffed,” we always welcome additional help, and are always in need of substitutes. Substituting is a great way to support your child’s catechist, and a good way to test out being a catechist if you have interest in joining us in that capacity in the future. ☺ If you would like to be on the substitute roster for your child’s class day, you can contact us in the office or let your child’s catechist know.
- ⇒ **Honeywell Alert System:** This is the system we currently use to send alerts electronically to phone/email, and it is very important that all families set up their Honeywell accounts. Once accounts are set up, families should check them annually to make sure the information is still accurate. To do this, go to <https://instantalert.honeywell.com/InstantAlert/Login.aspx>. From there, you can either log in to your account and review the contact information there, or click ‘Parent’ to create a new account. (Please be sure to choose ‘Sacred Heart Rel. Ed.’ in the ‘District’ drop-down box, and not ‘Sacred Heart School,’ as that is a separate database.)
- ⇒ **Youth Ministry** – Last year we saw the beginning of Youth Ministry at Sacred Heart, and it was a very successful first year! There are so many great opportunities coming up this year through our Youth Ministry Program, for our children and for our families. We offer Youth Ministry at the elementary, middle school and high schools levels. More information will be sent home during the year by Mrs. Raimondi, our Youth Ministry Coordinator, and you can also find information online at this link: <https://parishofsacredheart.org/youth-ministry>. Our Youth Ministry Kick-Off event is Saturday, September 23rd – families are attending the 4:30 Mass and there is a social afterwards. Come join us and find out about the great things our Youth Ministry is doing this year!
- ⇒ **Re-Registration:** It seems very early to bring this up, but please be aware that registration is expected for new and returning students each year. There is a direct correlation between registrations being submitted on time, and our ability to accommodate scheduling requests. For example, if we know there are 45 children in 7th grade and most parents request Tuesday classes (which we can only know when we receive registrations with preferences noted), we will recruit and assign two catechists on Tuesday and one on Wednesday in order to accommodate our parents’ requests. If re-registrations do not come in on time, we have to make our “best guess” as to how many catechists we need for each grade on each day, and the result is that parents may not be able to get the day they want, as class sizes cannot exceed a certain number. Recruiting catechists, giving them time to pursue catechist classes, getting their rosters to them so they can plan for their students, and keeping class sizes manageable are all very important aspects of our program. When all parents meet the registration due date, we are able to give our catechists the necessary preparation time for teaching, offer class sizes most conducive to a good teaching and learning environment, and offer parents the class day most convenient for their schedules. Registration information will come out early next year and will be posted on the web site then as well.

Father John, Mrs. Raimondi, our catechists and I are all looking forward to a wonderful year as our children learn more about Our Lord and His love for each of them! We look forward to seeing you all each day and hope this year provides your children with an enriching experience as they grown in their faith here at Sacred Heart.

Yours in Christ,

Mrs. Jessica Donohue
Director of Religious Education