

Welcome!

April 2017

Dear Parent,

St. Tarcissus Church is a great place. We are a community of faith. Jesus Christ is the foundation of that faith. Our Faith Formation programs (Religious Education) help children learn about Christ and help families grow in faith. Faith is not from a book; faith comes from God. What we learn in a classroom is only a small part of you and your child's faith formation. We need to experience faith. We need to practice our faith. We need to participate in growing in our faith. We encourage that here at St. Tarcissus. Religious Education classes are only a part of how we help each other grow in faith.

Faith, for children, starts at home. Children need to learn from their parents about God. Parents are not only role models of faith, but they are the primary teachers of the faith.

Family faith starts on Sunday. Sunday Mass is the place we learn what Jesus teaches. On Sunday we gather together as a community of faith in Jesus Christ. Children need to attend Sunday Mass to understand the faith.

Children learn about Christ. Families grow in faith.

Peace!



Larry Cubalchini
Director of Religious Education
Saint Tarcissus Church

Religious Education Philosophy – We Learn! We Do!

Religious Education (Catechesis) at St. Tarcissus is a combination of systematic teaching (classes and assignments) with opportunities to put into action (practice the faith) what is learned. Religious education is a partnership between students, parents, and parish catechists with all having vital roles in the process. The goal of religious education is to assist parents in teaching their children to be a new generation of Catholic/Christian Disciples.

Non-Discrimination

The St. Tarcissus Parish Religious Education Program is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

St. Tarcissus Parish Religious Education Program admits students of any sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities accorded or made available to students in the Religious Education Program.

Definitions

Catechesis

Catechesis is an education in the faith of children, young people and adults which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 5)

Disciple (Christian)

In Christianity, the term **disciple** primarily refers to students of Jesus and is found in the New Testament only in the Gospels and Acts. The New Testament records many followers of Jesus during his ministry, but only some became disciples. Some disciples were given a mission, such as the Little Commission, the commission of the 70 in Luke's gospel, the Great Commission after the resurrection of Jesus, or the conversion of Paul, making them Apostles, charged with proclaiming the Good News (or Gospel) to the world. –Wikipedia

Rules and Best Practices

Respect

Every student in the RE program is required to respect other students and adults. Students are also required to respect the property of other students and the parish. Disrespect of any type will lead to discipline up to and including dismissal from the RE program.

Records

Every student enrolling in RE is required to have a valid record of Baptism on file with the RE office. Each new student must also have completed Intake Form on file in the Faith Formation Office.

A record of each student's religious education progress is maintained in the RE office and retained for five years after the student is no longer enrolled in the program. A student transcript is available to any parent requesting his/her child's official RE Record.

Progress Reports

Students will receive progress reports twice per year to let the student and parents know how the student is doing. The report will include attendance, class participation, RE event participation, assignments, quizzes, tests and extra credit.

Attendance Requirements

It is important that children attend class on a regular basis. *Students are only allowed to miss two (2) sessions in any RE year. Students that miss more than two sessions need to complete extra credit to receive passing grades (and promotion to the next grade level).* Students also will be required to make up any missed assignments.

Class Times

Religious Education starts at 8:30 a.m. and runs until 11:00 a.m. We ask that students be on time. Students assemble at 8:30 in the small cafeteria on RE Saturdays.

Assignments and Homework

From time to time students may be assigned homework by their Catechist. Homework may be counted as part of the student's progress report.

Extra Credit Assignments

Students that need to complete extra credit (or make-up) assignments can get the information from his/her Catechist or the Director of Religious Education.

Grade Level

Similar to a regular school, students will be assigned a grade, so they are with students of similar age and knowledge levels. Most students will participate in the grade level they are in school (with some exceptions). From time to time some students will need to catch up to the level they should be in for class. It is normal for a second-grade student to start in RE First grade if they missed the first year.

Some students will be given extra work to be completed to catch the student up with his or her class. Please talk to the Director with any questions you might have regarding your child's grade level. Tests may be used to check a student's knowledge level.

Rules and Best Practices (Continued)

Security and Safety

Security and safety are important for everyone in the Religious Education program.

Arriving and Leaving Religious Education

All Students arrive and depart from the West doors on Ardmore Ave. of St. Tarcissus School unless there is a change for an entire class (i.e. maybe a certain grade is meeting in the Church on a certain Saturday, and the entire class will then depart from the church. We ask that students and parents pay attention to the student's catechist for special instructions.

Children in Grades 1 through 3 (Leaving)

Children in grades 1 through 3 are released to parents at the exit door (West Door) by their Catechist.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

Please check in at the RE Office in the school if your child needs to arrive late or leave early. Children leaving early must be signed out by a parent or guardian.

Sick Calls

Parents may call the Saturday RE office in the school at 773-775-5061 anytime after 7:30 a.m. if your child will be absent from RE. THIS PHONE IS ONLY USED ON RE SATURDAYS.

Children Leaving Without a Parent

Some older children may walk to and from RE. Please let the RE office know if your child walks to and from RE.

Children Leaving with another Adult

Please notify the RE Office if your child will be leaving with another adult (e.g. a neighbor). We ask that you notify the DRE or your child's catechist with the information of who will be picking up your child (children).

Door Control

There will be a parent volunteer at the arrival door each week of religious education to control the door. In the event, there is no parent volunteer the door will be locked. Anyone needing access to the building will need to phone the RE office in the event of a locked door.

In Case of an Emergency

Students are to pay close attention to the adults (Catechists and aids) in the event of an emergency. All Catechists will have a communication device to be in communication with the RE office in the event of an emergency.

Building Evacuation Procedure

In the event, we need to evacuate the school building all students are to follow the directions of the Catechists and aids and proceed in an orderly fashion to the assigned meeting spot safely away from the building.

Permission Forms

Students attending off campus RE events need to have a signed parent permission form before leaving on an event.

Rules and Best Practices (Continued)

Student Special Needs

Please keep the RE Office apprised of any special needs for your child. This would include allergies, medical conditions, and all other special needs that your child may have.

Emergency Contact Cards

Every family must have a new (updated) emergency contact card on file with the RE office every year. It is the parents' responsibility to update the RE Office and Catechist of any and all changes to the family emergency contact information. Emergency contact cards should contain parent phone numbers (home, work, and cell), at least one phone number of another nearby family member or neighbor (for emergencies), the card should also list each student's allergies and medical information.

Protecting God's Children (VIRTUS)

Any adult working with children in the Chicago Archdiocese must complete VIRTUS training (Protecting God's Children). This includes any adult that volunteers in the RE program. The class takes between 2 and 3 hours to complete. It can be completed here at St. Tarcissus or at any other location that offers the class.

Class Cancelations

If Classes are canceled for any reason, parents will be notified via *FLOCKNOTE*. Please be sure to check for Flocknote information on RE Saturdays (especially during poor weather conditions).

Communication

Communication is very important when working with children and families. *Please note that the RE office has no full-time employees.* It is very important for parents to keep up to date by reading *Flocknote* messages, checking the parish website, and reviewing all materials that are sent home with your child. Some Catechists will use "Communication Folders" to send important items home with students.

Parish Website (www.sttars.org)

Parents should become familiar with the parish website. Important parish information of all types is found on the website including information about Religious Education and the Sacraments.

Student Photos

We often take photos of students for use in the Parish Bulletin or Website. Sometimes photos are also used in printed materials. Names are not used with student photos. If you do not want your child photographed, you must fill out the "Photo Opt Out" form. Forms are available from the RE Office.

Flocknote

The Religious Education Office uses *Flocknote* to send electronic communication to parents. Information is sent to the email of the parents' choice. Parent

Parents can receive *Flocknote* information via text message. To register, members can send a text message with the keyword **TARSRE** to **84576**.

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There is no charge for this service, but your carrier message and data rates may apply (~ 6 msgs/mo). Reply STOP to 84576 to stop text notifications at any time. View the Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions at flocknote.com/txt.

Parish Participation

Active Parish Families

The Saint Tarcissus Parish Religious Education Program is part of the mission of St. Tarcissus Parish. The RE program is for children of *active parish families*. An active parish family (minimum) is registered with the parish, attends Sunday Mass on a regular basis, and supports the financial needs of the parish.

It's All About Sunday (Sunday Mass Attendance)

Sunday is the day that Catholics are required to gather and worship God. Sunday Mass is the most important time you and your family will spend together each week. It is very important that parents reinforce what we teach in the RE classroom. It is important that you family make time for Mass each week.

Stewardship

Christian Stewardship is an important part of Christian Life. Often we talk about *Time, Talent, and Treasure* when we talk about stewardship. We are called to give a portion of everything we have been given by God back to God. We don't give back to God because we have to; we give because we want to share what we have been given.

Non-Parishioners in Religious Education

From time to time we admit students from neighboring parishes to the RE Program. Children of non-parishioners are admitted if space permits and the child is not able to attend his/her parish RE Program. Families from outside the St. Tarcissus Parish may be charged an "out of parish" tuition surcharge.

The Church

Roman Catholic Church

St. Tarcissus Parish is part of the Roman Catholic Church. The Church about 2,000 years ago by Jesus. Today there are over 1 billion members of the Roman Catholic Church all over the earth. The worldwide Church is led by the bishop of Rome, Pope Francis. Jesus gave us our mission when he told his followers to "make disciples of all nations."

Archdiocese of Chicago

Our local church, the Archdiocese of Chicago, is made up of all the parishes in the counties of Cook and Lake in Illinois. Cardinal Blase J. Cupich is the current Archbishop of Chicago.

Saint Tarcissus Parish

Our Parish is St. Tarcissus. We are one of several Roman Catholic Parishes located in the northwest area of the City of Chicago. Our parish is under the direction of Rev. Mike Grisolano, our pastor. Each of us is called in Baptism to participate in our church at all levels (local and worldwide).

RE Tuition, Fees, Parent Volunteer Time, Buyout, and Fair Share

RE Tuition

There is a modest tuition charged for children in Religious Education. The tuition covers the costs of books and other expenses for the children. The tuition also covers the expenses for training our volunteer catechists (teachers). Tuition can be paid in installments. *No child has ever turned away because of financial need.* Current tuition information is on the family RE Registration Cards.

Fees

There are fees for certain programs within the RE program (such as sacrament fees and retreat fees). They are used to cover expenses for certain activities.

Parent Volunteer Time (Parent Fair Share)

All RE parents are required to volunteer to work two events during the year. Parish volunteers run the entire RE program. As members of the Church, we are all called to help in the mission of the Church (and RE program). Some volunteer opportunities can earn tuition credits for parents. Please talk to Larry Cubalchini, Director of Religious Education for further information. Parents need to fill out a volunteer form at the beginning of the RE school year. ***Please check the “Parent Fair Share” booklet for additional information.***

Major Volunteer Opportunities

Major volunteer opportunities are opportunities that can give you 100% or 50% of your RE tuition. The major volunteer opportunities are ongoing commitments. Those major opportunities are Catechists, Catechist Aides, Door Security, Children’s Liturgy of the Word Leaders, and Confirmation Group Facilitators.

General Volunteer Activities

General volunteer activities are available throughout the RE (school) year. Parents may work extra general volunteer activities to help offset tuition costs.

Parent Volunteer Time Buyouts

There may be times that parents may not be available to assist with the RE program when needed. Parents may “Buyout” working an event by paying a \$25 fee (each event) with the approval of the DRE.

Parents can earn credits toward tuition and fees by working extra events (this is our “Fair Share” program). This can help parents make the cost of the RE program more affordable. Parents would contribute time to offset financial costs. Please talk to the DRE if you would like to get more information.

FIRST SUNDAY RE MASSES – “It’s All About Sunday!”

As part of our effort to involve the RE students and families in all aspects of the parish, we will again sponsor five (5) FIRST SUNDAY RE MASSES this year. Most months on the first Sunday of the Month the families of the RE program will participate together at the 9:30 am Mass.

FIRST SUNDAY MASS gives the RE students and families a chance to participate in different liturgical roles at Mass. It will give our Students a place to “Do” what we learn in the classroom. We will also have special refreshments (hospitality) after each First Sunday Mass in the church vestibule. The FIRST SUNDAY RE MASSES require both participation from our students and their parents. Our RE Choirs will provide the music for these Masses. Students will also be given a chance to be readers, ushers, and greeters at Mass. Parents and students will both help with hospitality and greeting at Mass.

We do track attendance at the FIRST SUNDAY RE MASSES, as this counts toward extra credit for the students. Please check the RE schedule for the list of dates.

Sacrament Preparation

Sacraments

Preparing children and their parents for the Sacraments is an important part of the Religious Education Program. Our preparation programs meet and exceed the basic requirements set by the Church and the Archdiocese. We do require parents to take certain classes and to participate in several parts of the preparation process. There are fees for each of the sacraments which cover expenses for the preparation process (e.g. books, flowers for 1st Communion, retreat leaders, etc.). *The Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation require two years of class preparation by the student.*

First Reconciliation

Most of our students receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time in second grade before First Eucharist. Parents will receive information about the parent meeting (for students receiving reconciliation) early in the RE school year. Information is also on the parish website under “Sacraments.”

First Communion

Most students receive First Communion in the 2nd grade. There is a mandatory two years of religious training before receiving the Sacrament for the first time. Students and parents attend a short retreat before First Communion. Parents may need to attend a short class and a parent meeting. Parents will get a schedule of events early in the RE school year. Information is also posted on the parish website under “Sacraments.”

Confirmation

Most of our students receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the 8th grade (after two years of preparation). Preparation begins during the 6th grade. Students complete classes, written papers, retreats, and service hours to fulfill the requirements for Confirmation. Sixth-grade parents will receive

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information about the parent meeting early in the school year. Information is also posted on the parish website under “Sacraments.”