

THINKING ABOUT STEWARDSHIP

Christians give to the Lord because they are grateful. The giving of themselves in totality – body, mind, spirit, talents, time and material resources – is the Christian way of expressing their thankfulness to God for all that they have. Responding to the immeasurable love and grace of God, dedicated Christians open their hearts and hands toward God in a spirit of appreciation and love.

This teaching ministry may be achieved by VOLUNTEERING as a:

1. Classroom Catechist or co-catechist
2. Catechist's Aide or helper
3. Substitute Catechist
4. Office Aide

If you are interested in sharing your time and talent with our youth in this ministry, please call the office and leave a message @ 283-4296, or email us at stc-religioused@sbcglobal.net.



Jesus Loves Us Always

Revised 8/31/2016

St. Thomas Religious Education Policy and Procedures



Jesus said "Let the children come to me"

Mission Statement

It is the mission of St. Thomas Office of Religious Education to educate the children and adults of this parish in the teachings and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church so that we can live our faith and follow in the foot steps of Jesus.

St. Thomas Religious Education Policies and Procedures for Parents and Students 2016-2017

Welcome to the St. Thomas Religious Education program.

Please take a few minutes to review the parent and student Policies and Procedures handbook. It is very important that you confirm that you have read, understand and agree to the above Religious Education Policies and Procedures and have discussed them with your child.

Located on the bottom rear on the back of the registration form is a place for your signature. Additional registration forms can be downloaded from our web site at www.stthomasthomaston.org. This serves as confirmation that you have read the handbook and explained the policies and procedures to your child. You and your child agree to do what the program asks of you.

The Office of Religious Education

St. Thomas Office of Religious Education is located in St. Thomas School's main lobby near the gym.

Office hours are from September to May

Sunday 8:00am – 10 am Tuesday 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Meetings with the office of Religious Education staff can be made by appointment. You can call the office at 283-4296 anytime and leave a message on the answering machine. We will gladly get back to you as soon as possible.

Mrs. Lucy Santopietro, Dir. Religious Education 860-283-4296
E-mail stc-lucy@sbcglobal.net

St. Thomas Church Website: www.stthomasthomaston.org

Safety and Health

- In the case of a fire drill, each catechist has a plan for the safe evacuation of their classroom. Students will be informed of the plan at the beginning of the school year.
- Make sure you fill out the student "allergies" section of the registration, so the catechist can be notified.
- The Religious Education curriculum includes a program called Lures. This teaches our children about safety from predators, etc. It is introduced only in the 1st. grade and further updated every year. It is a requirement of the Archdiocese.

For Catechists: Child Abuse/Safe Environment Program Virtus - Protecting God's children

Child abuse is of serious concern. Consistent with diocesan policy and local legal codes, the parish catechetical staff has a moral and legal duty to comply with the law to ensure the welfare of a child. Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow diocesan policy on such matters.

Volunteers

We are looking forward to planning this year's program. To insure its success we need an adequate number of Religious Education Catechists and aides. The volunteers are the *backbone* of our program. **The only requisites are you must be a practicing Catholic** (training & teaching materials will be available to anyone interested), attend "Protecting God's Children" and submit a background form **before** beginning in this ministry.

- **There will be a Religious Education Catechist Meeting in before the start of the school year. Check the website or e-mails for dates.**
- **Protect God's Children Program in Sept & Oct.**

Discipline

Our program is in the school setting. Even in the best circumstances, very few hours of instruction are given each year. **Misbehavior will not be tolerated.** Running, sliding and general horseplay is not appropriate behavior and will not be allowed.

Catechists will instruct the students on the first day of classroom rules and behavior. Each time a student misbehaves, the catechist will instruct the student of the rules. Upon the **third** warning the student will be sent to the office. Students that are sent to the office **two** times will be removed from classes until the director has had a meeting with the parents. If after this meeting misbehavior still occurs, the parents, director and the Parish Priest will meet to resolve the problem.

St. Thomas Religious Education program will be **“food free”**. Meaning there will be **NO food, gum, candy, etc allowed during regular scheduled classes.** Stickers, pencils, or any non food items are always welcomed.

Attendance Policy

It is required that students attend all classes, mass, retreats, special services and service projects. If on a rare occasion, one must be absent from class or other scheduled activity parents must notify the Religious Education Office that they will be absent. If a student misses a class or other scheduled occasions, make up work is required.

Registration

The registration fees that are collected help pay for student books, bibles, supplies and other materials needed to run our program for the year.

Registration Fee **\$40.00/child, \$85.00/ (Family = 3 or more children)** for registered members who have a census card on file in the Parish Center. The registration fee for non-parishioner is \$60.00 per student. Classes begin in **September. NO CONFIRMATIONS WILL BE SENT.** Class lists will be posted in the cafeteria of the school. Please make check payable to: **St. Thomas Church**

It is very important that classes start on time. Children should arrive no less than 5 minutes and no more than 15 minutes before classes begin.

Class Days & Times

Sunday Morning	Gr. K-6.....	8:50am – 9:50am
Sunday Morning	Gr. 7-10	8:50am – 9:50am
Tuesday Night	Gr. K-6	6:15 pm - 7:15pm

It is very important to return your forms with all the necessary information completed, along with your registration fees as soon as possible. Classes are formed on a first come first serve basis. Class size is limited and they fill up quickly. The sooner you send in the registration in the better chance we have of fulfilling your request.

Cancellation of Classes

If school is cancelled or if there is an unscheduled early dismissal there will be **NO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES.** **That does not mean church is cancelled.**

Listen to **WTICAM, 1080AM, WTIC 96. 5FM & WFSB – TV Channel 3, 4 & 8** for cancellations. If an emergency arises on the day of scheduled class, we will contact the schools informing them of the scheduling change. The Office of Religious Education will post an announcement on their answering machine @ **283-4296.**

Student Books and Bible

Every student receives some type of textbook in grades K-10. Students are given a Bible in the 6th grade in addition to their textbook. It is required that they have their book and Bible (grades from grades 6th to 10th) with them at every class in their plastic bag.

Please write your child's name, grade, day of class and catechist's name on the inside front cover of the book. This helps us in returning lost books to their rightful owners. Students may cover their books and Bibles.

Bibles are given out in the 6th grade. **These Bibles should be treated with care & respect. They are blessed.**

If your child should lose their textbook or Bible, it is required that they be replaced. Replacement fees are as follows:

Textbooks for grades K -10	\$18.00 per book
Bibles for grades 6 - 10	\$6.00 per book

Parents

The Roman Catholic Church has for centuries taught that it is primarily the duty of parents to see to the Baptism and education of their children in the faith. Since that is a very difficult task because of the many demands put on the people who raise families, parishes have long supported systems to help them. Still, no matter how elaborate these systems are, they remain nothing more than aids to parents in performing their tasks of educating their children. If children learn to pray, if they learn the teachings of their faith, if they love and frequent the sacraments, if they practice Christianity in their lives; it is only because their parents have been faithful to their God given vocation of being a Christian parent.

Parents who take advantage of the education offered by the parish for their families thereby accept a number of responsibilities:

- Participate in Sunday Mass and Holy Days with their children. The Roman Catholic Church teaches, and our program in turn teaches, that every Roman Catholic **should attend Sunday Mass**. **If parents do not attend Mass, they confuse their children - not only about the authority of the church and their catechists regarding Mass attendance, but in other areas as well.**

- Parents will ensure their children's faithful attendance at classes and other activities such as prayer services, retreats and service projects. The calendar comprises of a minimum thirty class sessions.
- Parents will attend meetings with the director /coordinator before the reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. **Attendance at the scheduled parents meetings is required.**

Dropping off and picking up your children

All scheduled activities within the Religious Education program will begin at the noted times (see schedules). There will be **NO SUPERVISION** before any program activity.

****ALL students must REPORT TO THE CAFETERIA** entering through the lower level Cafeteria doors. **We will begin with a short prayer, announcements, then the students will go to their classroom with their teachers.** All students must be picked up by a parent or guardian in the Cafeteria. **No one** will be allowed to leave or enter through the upstairs front doors of the school.

Please park your vehicles in the church parking lot, or in a legal side street parking space. Please do not park in front of St. Thomas School to drop off or pick up your children. This is a no parking zone. Police will take notice. They will tag or tow your vehicles. When parking in the church parking lot, please park in an orderly fashion, so that cars can come and go easily. Parents should arrive **BEFORE** dismissal so those students can be picked up **PROMPTLY** and safely. These policies may change to provide for the safety of the students.

Sacramental Requirements

All requirements for reception of sacraments **must** be fulfilled at least two weeks before the Sacramental date. The list of names for the Sacramental program **must** be sent to the printer two weeks before the sacrament is celebrated. **Requirements are listed in the Sacramental handbooks.**

- *The Sacrament of First Reconciliation is in grade three.
- *The Sacrament of First Communion is in grade three.
- *The Sacrament of Confirmation is in grade ten.