

St. Mary Religious Education Commission: Religious Education Information

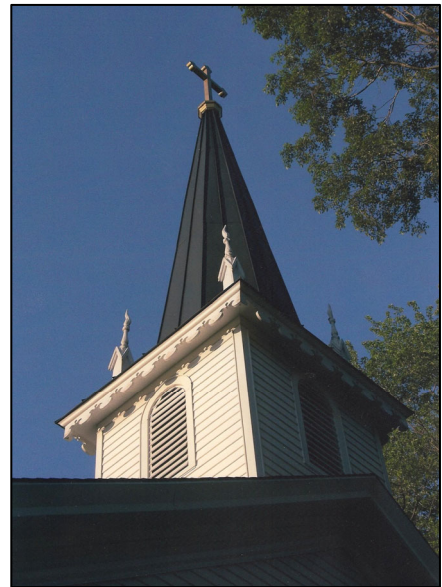
Revised on June 25, 2009

The Religious Education Program is a ministry of St. Mary Parish. Decisions about staff contracts, proposals for new programs and changes in religion textbook series require the signature of the Pastor.

Decisions regarding the day-to-day operations of the Religious Education Program are all under the direct supervision of the Director of Religious Education. Just as the Pastoral Council serves in a consultative role to the Pastor, the members of the Religious Education (Board) Commission serve in a consultative role to the Director of Religious Education.

The Religious Education Board, as a parish commission, discerns one of its members to be on the Pastoral Council. The Religious Education Board also discerns a commission chairperson and a commission secretary who assist the Director of Religious Education in planning and conducting Religious Education Board meetings. Please consult the Pastoral Council Charter for more information on commission membership.

The annual action plans and yearly calendar of events are prepared by the School (Board) Commission each spring and summer. These annual strategic plans are then considered by the Pastoral Council for final approval, along with the annual strategic plans of all the other commissions, to establish a common purpose for the whole parish.



Religious Education Board

- **Mission:** To work in partnership with parents in the formation of children so that, drawing from the life of Jesus, our young people may become active members of the Catholic community.
- **Membership:** Members of the Religious Education Board shall be the Director of Religious Education, and seven members from the Religious Education parents, catechists, and parishioners, who are chosen through a discernment process that is conducted by the Director of Religious Education. The Director of Religious Education represents the Pastor at all meetings.
- **Meetings:** The Board meets on the second Tuesday of every other month, beginning in May, at 7:00 p.m., in the Religious Education Office, unless announced otherwise. Special meetings may be called by the Director of Religious Education as the need arises. The Religious Education Board also attends general Parish Leadership Meetings, as scheduled by the Pastoral Council throughout the year.

Religious Education Curriculum

- Full Eight Year Program of Study: Children are to be enrolled in the Religious Education Program the entire eight years of the program. Acceptance into the First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation programs is contingent upon regular attendance of the students in their classes.
- Religious Education Textbook Series: The Religious Education Program uses Faith First Legacy Edition, published by Resources for Christian Living (RCL), for grades kindergarten through eighth. This textbook series has been approved by the Diocese of Joliet, and is in full accord with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and all the doctrinal and moral teachings of the Church.
- Requirements for Missing Grades or Home Study: Special arrangements for grades missed or for Home Study are made directly with the Director of Religious Education. Children in home study programs must be in attendance in Religious Education classroom classes for two years prior to the reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation. All students are expected to receive religious instruction for all eight years of grade school.

Special Events at each Grade Level

The following special religious education events take place annually at each grade level:

- Grade 1: Church Tour
- Grade 2: Play and Pray Day
- Grade 3: First Reconciliation, Agape, First Eucharist
- Grade 4: Hey, Hey, Mary Day!
- Grade 5: Church Connection Day
- Grade 6: Church Tour, Bible Bowl
- Grade 7: Jesus Project, Day of Fast, "Run for your Life" Refugee Experience
- Grade 8: Confirmation Interviews, Retreat, Evenings of Reflection, Confirmation, and Follow-up Workshops

Additional Religious Education program special events will be scheduled as deemed appropriate and timely. Please consult the current religious education handbook.

High School Confirmation Program

As needed, the parish provides a high school program for students who have not been confirmed in eighth grade. High school students are prepared for the sacrament of confirmation by Youth Ministry. The program is entitled, Catholic Stuff 101, and is in accord with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It includes catechetical instruction, parish involvement, and a spiritual retreat experience.

Junior High Youth Ministry Program

Junior High Youth Ministry is an integral part of the parish Religious Education Program, and all junior high students in St. Mary School and the Religious Education program are included in special educational, spiritual, service, and social programs for our parish youth. The educational dimension consists of school and religious education religion classes. The spiritual dimension consists of the Confirmation preparation program. The service dimension consists of Confirmation service projects. For the social dimension, the Director of Education invites junior high students to participate in selected social activities offered by the high school Youth Ministry program. An important goal of the junior high youth ministry program is to prepare school and religious education students to join the high school Youth Ministry program after their Confirmation.

R.E.A.C.H. Program

The R.E.A.C.H. program (Religious Education Apostolate with the Christian Handicapped) offers the option of special classes for young people with disabilities from the parish and the surrounding community. If a child has a disability, the Director of Religious Education will arrange for appropriate special religious instruction.

Catechist Certification Program

Volunteer Catechists work toward certification and recognition through regular programs sponsored by the Diocese of Joliet. Various opportunities are made available for the ongoing spiritual enrichment of Catechists and prospective Catechists as well. Catechist certification is achieved through attendance at training sessions, special retreats, parish and diocesan presentations and workshops, spiritual reading, etc.

Volunteer Assistants

Classroom and office volunteers provide valuable assistance to the catechists in the classrooms and to the religious education staff in the office. Volunteers are always needed as catechists, classroom assistants, and office assistants. Training is provided for all these volunteer roles.