

# St. Elizabeth Seton

## Religious Education Handbook

### **2009-2010**



Dear Parents,

We welcome you to another year of Religious Education. We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with you in catechizing your child. Together we are able to encourage our children to fully participate in the sacramental life of the Church, nurture their own spiritual growth and provide opportunities for putting their faith into action.

The Saint Elizabeth Seton parish family welcomes all and we would like to encourage you to invite your neighbors and friends and your children's friends, to join us for Mass and social events so that we have an opportunity to embody the power, beauty and consolation of God's love and grace.

This handbook covers pertinent information about our Religious Education Program and policies. **Please read the handbook and if you have not already done so, sign and return the Acknowledgment Form included in the registration packet and available on our website.**

We have an open door policy and encourage your ideas, questions and comments. Our resources are available to all parents and catechists of children in the RE program. Our common goal is to pass on the rich traditions of our Catholic heritage and to lead the children to a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Christ's Peace Be with You,

*Peggy Idstein*  
Director of Elementary  
Religious Education

*Sheila Stevenson*  
Director of Junior High  
Religious Education

*Mike Kuhn*  
Director of High School  
Youth Ministry and Formation

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## **Mission Statements**

### **Parish**

We are the people of God gathering together in prayer and faith as the community of St. Elizabeth Seton.

The Eucharist is our gathering point, where evangelization is lived through worship, word, service and community. Lay leadership and responsible stewardship are integral to our Parish.

Our mission, individually and collectively, is to create a loving environment in which people feel welcome to participate, grow, worship and share their talents in service to God and neighbor.

We shall strive to become more prayerful, peaceful people.

### **Religious Education**

We are entrusted with the responsibility of educating the children of the parish in a welcoming and safe environment.

Our mission is to teach, nurture, and share the faith with the children of the parish so that they will be rooted in the beliefs of the Catholic Church, living their faith, and sharing the Good News with others.

We will cultivate the seeds of faith sown by parents - the primary catechists.

## **Religious Education Personnel**

### **Pastoral Staff**

Reverend Thomas Paul, Pastor  
Sr. Karen Nykiel, OSB, Pastoral Associate

St. Elizabeth Seton Parish Office  
2220 Lisson Road  
Naperville, Illinois 60565  
Phone: 630-416-3325  
Fax: 630-416-3642  
Office hours 8:30 AM-4:30PM Monday – Friday, 8:30-12:30PM Saturday

### **Religious Education Staff**

#### **Staff Members**

Peggy Idstein, Director of Elementary Ministry - [peggy.idstein@sbcglobal.net](mailto:peggy.idstein@sbcglobal.net)  
Sheila Stevenson, Director of Junior High Ministry - [sheilamce@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sheilamce@sbcglobal.net)  
Mike Kuhn, Director of High School Formation – [mike\\_kuhn@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mike_kuhn@sbcglobal.net)

#### **Office Support Staff**

Evelia Stueber, Senior Administrative Assistant  
Heather Van Gessell, Administrative Assistant  
Mary Mellens, Administrative Assistant

St. Elizabeth Religious Education Office  
2220 Lisson Road  
Naperville, Ill 60565  
Phone: 630-416-1992  
Fax: 630-416-4086  
Office Hours: Sunday 9:30AM-Noon; Monday-Wednesday, 9:00AM - 7:00 PM;  
Friday, 9:00AM - 5:00PM  
Summer Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:00AM-2:00PM, Friday 9:00AM-Noon

#### **Christian Formation Commission**

Mike Mikus – Chair  
Guy Bagger  
Kathy Cavanagh  
Doug Christoff - Stewardship Liaison  
Mike Kuhn -Staff Liaison  
Gina Novotny - Evangelization Liaison  
Sr. Karen Nykiel – Staff Liaison  
John Potterton  
Karen Udell  
Nan Yancey– Pastoral Council Liaison

## **Early Childhood and Elementary Curriculum Goals and Objectives**

### **Early Childhood**

The goals of Early Childhood Religious Education are for the children to grow in their knowledge and experience of God as a loving parent and Jesus as a friend and model. Children will listen to stories from scripture, observe the beauty of God's love through nature and experience God's love through their parents and others. They will learn they are part of another family, the Catholic Church.

### **Preschool**

Discovering God series, published by Wm. Sadlier

#### *Discovering God's World*

- Develop a strong, positive feeling of God's love for them.
- Learn how God made them special with many gifts to help others: with feelings, senses, imagination.
- Understand that special days are given religious significance: Easter, Christmas, All Saint's Day, Mother's and Father's Day.
- Develop an appreciation of the celebration of God's goodness through Scripture, music and prayer.
- Learn the *Sign of the Cross* and *Grace Before Meals*.

### **Kindergarten**

We believe Series, published by Wm. Sadlier

#### *God Made the World*

- Learn how God created us and all things.
- Develop an understanding of belonging to our individual family and also God's family through Baptism.
- Deepen awareness to the Church's special times: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Times.
- Develop an appreciation of God's love for them and awareness that they can talk to God through prayer.
- Review the *Sign of the Cross* and learn the *Our Father*.
- Become aware of others through gathering for a Large Group event, **The Christmas Story** and donating for those in need.

### **Elementary Religious Education**

The goal of Elementary Religious Education is to present to our children the beliefs and practices of the Catholic tradition. They will read Scripture, develop an ability to pray formally, communally and personally, explore their call by God to life and membership in the Church and develop skills of Christian living. Classes meet for one hour and fifteen minutes following the respective grade level calendar.

## First Grade

Finding God, published by Loyola Press

*Our Response to God's Gifts 1*

- Explore the fact that God the Father created us, loves us and wants nothing but the best for us.
- Develop an understanding of belonging to the Catholic Church where all are welcome.
- Acquire an understanding of the Trinity; the Holy Spirit is God's presence among us.
- Comprehend that Jesus, God's Son was born in Bethlehem, lived among us, taught us how to pray, and died and rose to save us. Nativity story is studied and the First Graders create Nativity posters to enhance the Narthex.
- Recognize that we meet Jesus in our every day lives in the sacraments, in celebrating Mass and when we pray.
- First graders are taught how to live like Jesus. They gather for a Large Group experience, "**A Day in the Life of Jesus**" where they will rotate through different stations experiencing what the child Jesus might have experienced.
- Learn the *Hail Mary* and review the *Sign of the Cross*, and the *Our Father*.

## Second Grade

Finding God, published by Loyola Press

*Our Response to God's Gifts 2*

- Second graders will review Baptism and discuss being members of the Church where all are welcome.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is studied. God's forgiveness in the sacrament is explained and the notion of sin and its effect on others is discussed. Children and parents will gather for a **Reconciliation Retreat** to grow in awareness of this sacrament.
- The Sacrament of the Eucharist is explored and the fact that Jesus is really present in the bread and wine is presented. The children and parents come together for a **First Communion Retreat** to help them prepare for the sacrament.
- Mass is studied and Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist are discussed. Mass responses are reviewed and practiced.
- Children will receive Reconciliation and Eucharist this year and the new prayer they will learn is the *Act of Contrition*.

## Third Grade

Finding God published by Loyola Press

*Our Response to God's Gifts 3*

- Third graders learn that Jesus gave us His Church and He called the Apostles to carry on His mission.
- A deeper understanding of the saints is sought. Children research one saint and make a Saint Shield to be displayed.
- Children will understand that our parish Church helps us live the way of Jesus. The children come to Church for a Large Group "**I Spy Event**" where they tour and learn more about St. Elizabeth Seton parish.
- Third grade children will learn the four marks of the church (one, holy, Catholic, apostolic). They will study some of the core beliefs of the Catholic Church through their examination of the *Apostles Creed*.

- We meet Jesus in the sacraments and we are shown ways to live like Jesus.
- Learn the *Apostles Creed* and review previous prayers

### **Fourth Grade**

Finding God published by Loyola Press

*Our Response to God's Gifts 4*

- Fourth graders will focus on the study of morality. The Ten Commandments are studied and discussed.
- Beatitudes are learned as the way to live.
- The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy are presented as important ways to live out life.
- The student will learn that the Holy Spirit is given to us to gift and guide us in times of temptation.
- Fourth graders come together for a **Retreat Day** to experience and reinforce the notion of being part of the Body of Christ and the responsibility that means.
- Know all the prior prayers and the Ten Commandments.

### **Fifth Grade**

Finding God, published by Loyola Press

*Our Response to God's Gifts 5*

- Fifth graders will concentrate on studying the seven sacraments of the Church which are presented as sacred signs as well as celebrations.
- The Church carries on Jesus' mission on earth.
- In Fifth grade, morality is studied more in depth as students look at how to be a follower of Jesus and steps in making a moral choice and living a moral life.
- Different liturgical seasons are studied and the students will gather for a dramatization of the Stations of the Cross for the parish. Fifth graders also have the opportunity to attend Cathedral Days at the Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus in Joliet, Illinois.
- Previous learned prayers are to be reviewed and children should learn and understand the seven sacraments.

## **Junior High Curriculum Goals and Objectives**

The Junior High Religious Education Program aims to provide age appropriate catechesis, activities and experiences that enhance the faith development of the young adolescent. In addition to small group catechesis and faith sharing, teens will have opportunities to participate in a variety of social and service activities in the community.

Students will become familiar with the Old Testament, study the various forms of personal and communal prayer, explore the sacraments, and examine how the Church, its teachings, prayers and sacraments affect us today.

Grade six meets in the catechist's home in small groups, twice per month, for two hours. For families that qualify, we offer small group meetings in the building; the sixth grade group meets weekly for one hour and fifteen minutes. We are using the textbook series, *Christ Jesus the Way*. This series provides an integrated curriculum. Copies of all texts are available for preview by parents/guardians.

Grades 7 and 8 meet twice per month at the Church on alternating Mondays, from 6:30PM-8:30PM for the EDGE program. This is a two year curriculum and grades 7 and 8 will follow the same curriculum. Students will be led by one adult and one high school teen Core Team Leader.

Students that are unable to attend on Mondays or that cannot learn in the large group environment have the option of home schooling or small in-home groupings by special arrangement. The home school curriculum and in home groupings will use the textbook, *Christ Jesus the Way*.

### **Sixth Grade:**

*Christ Jesus the Way*, Published by Benziger/ Mc Graw -Hill

- Find the roots of their faith in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures.
- Become aware of the deep involvement of God, our Creator, in every aspect of our lives. Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the Old Covenant; one who proclaims the coming of the kingdom and who brings the New Covenant.
- Visit a Synagogue and discuss Jewish customs and traditions. Attend a follow up presentation to relate those traditions to the roots of our faith.
- Participate in several Large Group activities and service projects.

### **Seventh and Eighth Grade**

#### **Year One: The Mass, Our Relationship with Jesus**

*The EDGE – Catholic Middle School Ministry* by Kevin McGloin, Lifeteen resources, additional approved textbook resources.

- Review general facts about the Catholic Faith
- Study the History and Parts of the Mass.
- Review Sacrament of Reconciliation, decision making.
- Know the Stations of the Cross. Practice leadership in prayer.
- Attend Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- Mary's role in the church and praying with Mary and the Saints.
- Discuss issues pertaining to Junior high age students
- Participate in a variety of service projects.

### **Seventh and Eighth Grade**

#### **Year Two: Morality, Discipleship**

*The EDGE – Catholic Middle School Ministry* by Kevin McGloin, Lifeteen resources, additional approved textbook resources

- Morality – discuss the teachings of the Catholic Church on major topics relating to morality.
- Study the Ten Commandments and Beatitudes.
- Review the Sacraments of Healing and Vocation.
- Discuss issues pertaining to junior high age students.
- Faith in Action, Service projects i.e. Harvest Sunday.  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade only –TEENQUEST service projects, Retreat.

### **Seventh Grade (home school or special in-home grouping)**

*Christ Jesus the Way*, Publisher Benzinger/ McGraw-Hill

- Learn about the life of Jesus.
- Develop an awareness of Jesus as Sacrament in the Holy Eucharist.
- Look into the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

- Know the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Study the teaching authority of the Church, decision making and moral choices and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Review the Sacraments of Vocation.
- Discuss how the Church serves others and how we are called to work for peace and Justice out of love for Christ.
- Become familiar with the various forms of public and private prayer.
- Know the Stations of the Cross. Practice leadership in prayer.
- Participate in a variety of service projects.

### **Eighth Grade (home school or special in-home grouping)**

*Christ Jesus the Way*, Publisher Benziger/Mc Graw-Hill

- Learn that by our Baptism we are set apart and called to serve.
- Know the language of our faith as it pertains to the Sacraments and the rites.
- Discuss our relationships with God and others. Seek to emulate the saints.
- Study the growth of the Church.
- Investigate the forms of personal prayer and the prayers of the church
- Develop an awareness of their mission to make a difference in the world.
- Harvest Sunday and TEENQUEST- service projects
- Participate in a grade level retreat.

## **9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Religious Education and Confirmation Preparation Curriculum Goals and Objectives**

The goals of 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade Religious Education and Confirmation Preparation are as follows: 1) to encourage teens to go deeper in their personal faith; 2) to help them grow in religious knowledge and connection to the Catholic Church; and 3) to empower them to express their faith in service and ministry.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Objectives**

- To support faith development by offering experiences of prayer, devotional practices, sacraments, retreat, and small group faith sharing.
- To advance their knowledge and provoke further thought about commonly misunderstood Catholic teachings.
- To help students understand the Sacrament of Confirmation and the roles of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the baptized and in the Church.
- To encourage students to serve the needy and to explore ministries/outreach opportunities – so that they will continue in ministry after Confirmation.

### **Overview of 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Program**

Religious Education students will typically have two classes per month – some classes will take place in the home (Home Meetings) of their catechist and others at the Church (Confirmation Large Group). In addition there will be periodic service experiences, a retreat, and special events.

**NOTE TO STUDENTS ATTENDING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL:** Catholic High School students preparing for Confirmation can choose a modified program of preparation that involves the same basic program elements in 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade except that they will only have one class per month, i.e., the Confirmation Large Group meeting. Students desiring this modified program must communicate this desire to the Religious Education Office at registration. Classes of all Catholic High School students will be gathered together – assuming that catechists step forward to lead these classes.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbooks & Resources**

*Life Teen /Life Night materials, Life Teen, Inc. (Mesa, AZ)*

These lessons explain Catholic doctrine on such topics as salvation, heaven/hell/purgatory, abortion/euthanasia, the meaning of suffering, and “real presence”.

*Did Jesus Have A Last Name by Matthew Pinto & Jason Evert, Ascension Press*

This text offers answers to 199 questions on faith/religion/morality from Catholic teenagers.

FAQs About Confirmation: What You Want to Know by Christina Bigatel Durback, Pflaum Publishing Group. This text is a good summary of Confirmation catechesis.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Grade Objectives**

- To support faith development by offering experiences of prayer, devotional practices, sacraments, retreat, and small group faith sharing.
- To further expose students to the wisdom and value of studying Sacred Scripture.
- To encourage further reflection on the Sacrament of Confirmation and ownership of their faith and religion.

### **Overview of 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Program**

Although we will have mid-year Confirmation, our R.E. program will continue for the whole school year. During the first semester Religious Education students will typically have two classes per month – some classes will take place in the home (Home Meetings) of their catechist and others at the Church (Confirmation Large Group). In addition there will be periodic service experiences, a retreat, and special events. Confirmation candidates will be asked to write a letter to the Bishop requesting Confirmation and a one page report on their Confirmation saint. During the second semester (post Confirmation), students will be asked to meet once a month at the Church for a Post Confirmation Large Group Meeting.

**NOTE TO STUDENTS ATTENDING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL:** Catholic High School students preparing for Confirmation can choose a modified program of preparation that involves the same basic program elements in 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade except that they will only have one class per month, i.e., the Confirmation Large Group meeting. Students desiring this modified program must communicate this desire to the Religious Education Office at registration. Classes of all Catholic High School students will be gathered together – assuming that catechists step forward to lead these classes.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Grade Book**

FAQs About Confirmation: What You Want to Know by Christina Bigatel Durback, Pflaum Publishing Group. This text is a good summary of Confirmation catechesis.

## Sacraments

The initial sacraments are always a beginning. Children will expand their understanding and experience of the sacraments as their faith deepens. Age, participation in catechetical formation, developmental understanding and personal faith appropriation and assent are all factors in the discernment of readiness.

### **Baptism**

Baptism is a Sacrament of Initiation into the Catholic Church, the beginning of new life in Christ. At St. Elizabeth Seton, Baptisms are celebrated most Sundays at 1:00 PM or at the Sunday Liturgy by appointment. Please call the Parish Office to make arrangements to attend the required Pre-Baptism Meeting held every third Sunday of the month. All children enrolled in our program should be baptized. Older children can also receive instruction and receive the Sacrament of Baptism either as part of the Religious Education Program or as part of the R.C.I.A. Program. Call Parish Office (630) 416-3325 for more information.

### **First Reconciliation**

Reconciliation is a sacrament that requires a fundamental understanding of right and wrong. This sacrament celebrates the continual forgiveness that God extends to us. The focus is on God's mercy and willingness to always forgive us. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we are moved to recognize our sinfulness, to express our sorrow, and to ask for God's forgiveness.

In second grade, the students will come together to receive the sacrament at a First Reconciliation service. It is the norm that a child needs to be in the Religious Education program for one year before he/she is able to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

There is a program for older children who have yet to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This provision includes a period of study followed by reception of the sacrament, usually in the spring.

### **First Eucharist**

In the Sacrament of the Eucharist, Catholics have the primary, absolute sign of Christ's presence in their midst; the sharing of bread and wine as Jesus' own body and blood. Receiving the Eucharist for the first time represents the fullness of Christian initiation by closely uniting the person with the mystery of Jesus. After that first reception, frequently celebrating the Eucharist becomes a way for Catholics to deepen their lifelong initiation into Christ's life, death and resurrection.

Preparation for the reception of First Eucharist has as its base a simple understanding of the place of Jesus in Christian life. This includes an understanding that the Eucharist is not just ordinary bread and wine, but the body and blood of Christ, the real presence of Jesus Christ, with the potential to transform both the individual and the community.

Children should be in the Religious Education program for one year before receiving the sacrament. The children will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist.

There is a program for older children who have yet to receive the Sacrament of Eucharist. This provision includes a period of study followed by reception of the sacrament, usually at the time of First Communion.

## **Confirmation**

Confirmation is one of three Sacraments of Initiation by which we become full, complete members of the Church. In Baptism, we receive new life in the Spirit. In the Eucharist, we nurture that new life with the Body and Blood of our Lord. In Confirmation, we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit that enable us to live that new life in a public way, bearing testimony to the grace of God alive within us. The three Sacraments of Initiation are intimately bound together, even though they may be received at different intervals in our lives.

Confirmation is a two year program of preparation at St. Elizabeth Seton Parish with students normally receiving the sacrament in their sophomore year. Older students desiring to be Confirmed should contact the Religious Education Office for information on a modified Confirmation Preparation Process. The Church wants to bless its members with this wonderful Sacrament, so we look forward to working with you!

## **R. C. I. A.**

The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults is the process by which older children and adults prepare to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) through a period of formation and study in the faith. Those who have never been baptized are formally known as the Catechumen and those who have been baptized in other faith traditions and seek full communion with the Catholic Church (reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist) are referred to as Candidates. The three Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated together at the Easter Vigil, where the Catechumen and Candidates are symbols to the community of the risen Christ.

Older children who are not baptized can receive the Sacrament of Baptism as part of the R.C.I.A. process with other family members who are seeking to enter the Catholic Church. Alternatively, they may receive the sacrament when they enter as new parishioners and/or students of the Religious Education Program, in consultation with the pastoral staff.

Sponsors are required to guide, lead and model the faith for the Catechumen and Candidates. They should be Catholics of good standing. Anyone who wishes to enter the Catholic Church, desires to complete their reception of the sacraments, or has questions regarding entry into the Church and starting dates for the program, should call Deacon Bart Federici at the Parish Office, (630) 416-3325 for more information.

## **Policies**

### **Registration**

Registration forms for the 2009-2010 school year were mailed in May, 2008 to all families. The completed registration forms are due into the Religious Education office on June 9. To be registered in St. Elizabeth Seton Religious Education program, one must be a registered parishioner.

Requirements:

a. Age:

- Children enrolling in the Preschool program must be 4 years old by September 1, 2009

- Preschool and Kindergarten Religious Education is optional.

b. Required forms:

- Completed registration form with registration fee.
- Baptismal certificate (copy of), unless baptized at SES, then only the date is required.
- Child custody forms if necessary.

c. Fees:

There will be a registration fee of \$25 per family to be paid at the time of registration. The deadline for returning the registration forms is June 1, 2009. For any family registering after this date, there is a late fee of \$25 plus the \$25 registration fee (\$50). This late fee will not apply to new families in our program. Any registrations received after August 15<sup>th</sup> will be charged a late fee of \$50 plus the \$25 registration fee (\$75).

Tuition for the 2009-2010 Religious Education school year is  
 \$75 for Preschool – No registration fee for Preschool only  
 \$125 - one child  
 \$225 - two children  
 \$275 - three or more children

A statement with tuition will be sent out with class lists at the end of July or beginning of August. Fees are used for supplies, books, resources, mailings, etc.

No one will be denied religious education for financial reasons. Please contact one of the Directors at the RE office at (630) 416-1992 for more information.

**Special Needs**

REACH (Religious Education Apostolate for Christian Handicapped) program meets twice a month on Saturday mornings at St. Raphael parish. One “Helper” is provided to assist each person in the program. For more information call: (630) 355-4545

**Classes in the home**

The majority of our classes are held in the catechist’s home at a time he/she chooses. We want the classes that are formed to be small Christian communities where the students can journey together to learn about the Catholic faith. We try to place students in classes in their subdivision or with students from their school as much as possible. Classes meet in the homes (with the exception of grades 7 and 8) except for their Large Group activity.

**Classes in the building**

We offer one class per grade level (K-6) in the Lower Level of the church on two days of the week. Class size will be limited to approximately 12 students with two catechists. A family who meets the following criteria has the option of enrolling their children in the building:

- Three or more children enrolled in our RE program – grades preschool through eight
- Single parent family
- Member of immediate family has extensive medical needs

If you are not a catechist in the building, you will be expected to help out three times a year as a hall monitor and /or babysitter.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance at religious education classes is an important factor in the faith development of children. Parents are expected to inform catechists of absence in advance of class starting time.

### **Elementary Level**

Three absences require make up work to be completed. Consult catechist or the R.E. Office for details. Three unexcused absences will result in parents being contacted by the Director of Religious Education.

### **Junior High**

Absence from any small group requires the completion of make-up work for each chapter missed. Facilitators will provide copies of worksheets and these should be completed and returned to the facilitator as soon as possible after the missed session.

Large Group misses will necessitate the completion of a comparable amount of time given to the service of others. A note should be sent to the R.E. Office with details regarding the type of work performed. Attendance Updates are mailed to parents of students with attendance issues. At the next registration, students with outstanding make-up work will not be placed in a class until all work has been completed.

### **High School**

Absence from any class – either in the home or at Church - will require a written Make-up lesson. Make-up lessons are available and can be downloaded from the following internet link: <http://www.sesnaperville.org/youth/confirmationquiz.htm>. Absences from Harvest Sundays or other Special Events will have a Make-up Assignment also. Details on Make-up work can be accessed on the parish website mentioned above.

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

Please be prompt with dropping off and picking up your children. The Catechist is not a babysitter and your child should not be dropped off more than five minutes before class and should be picked up at completion of class.

For children attending classes in the building, a parent should walk the child to and from the classroom for children in Pre-School – Grade 4. Students should arrive 5 minutes before class. If parents are late arriving in picking up their children, the children will be waiting in the RE office.

## **Communication**

Class lists and yearly calendars are mailed out to every family upon placement of students. The information included in the mailing will provide the names of the Catechist(s), location, day and time of the class. On a routine basis throughout the year email will be our primary tool for communication, so we ask that each family provide an email address that is checked regularly.

- You will be notified with information regarding parent meetings, sacrament preparation and other special events out by the R.E. Office as necessary.

- Catechists are encouraged to send letters or emails home with students as often as possible to keep parents up to date with all that is happening in the R.E. class. Catechists will pass on grade level specific information to the parents.
- Elementary Catechists will receive weekly newsletters via email. Additional information will be received by direct mail, email and through the bulletin.
- Parents will be notified by the catechist and/or the Religious Education Office of any class cancellations or changes.

### **Emergency Class Cancellation**

If Naperville School District 203 is closed due to an emergency situation, religious education classes will be canceled. All events and meetings at the church are also canceled. Please check [www.emergencyclosings.com](http://www.emergencyclosings.com) Classes in the home must be canceled.

- If a class is cancelled or postponed by the individual catechist, the office should be notified of the change.
- The catechist should make arrangements to make up the class on another day or to extend class the next two times to cover the material missed.

### **Fire Safety & Disaster**

Minors in the religious education program either in the home or parish setting, are made aware of the fire exits and procedures in the case of an emergency.

- SES Parish Building has all fire exits clearly marked in case of a fire.
- For home setting classes, catechists are mandated to explain how to deal with the need to escape from their house in the case of a fire and **provide a written plan for each minor of their group.** Catechists are to turn in a copy of their plan to deal with emergencies to the R.E. Office.

### **Health Concerns/Medication**

Health concerns regarding your child should be conveyed to the R.E. Office at the time of registration. All notations on registration forms and permission forms are treated as highly confidential.

- Allergies should be listed.
- Prescription drugs should not be brought to class without the prior knowledge and consent of the R.E. Office and the catechist.
- Representatives of the R.E. Program will only dispense prescription drugs if a signed note from parents that includes directions for dosage is presented.
- In the event that medication must be administered due to participation in an overnight retreat or mission, a supervising adult will hold and dispense any medication.
- Medical information is required on permission forms so that if an emergency should arise during a Church sponsored event, the proper treatment may be sought.

## **Child Abuse**

All catechetical ministers to minors, including SES leadership and catechists, are required, by state law to report evidence of reasonable suspicion of abuse and/or neglect of a minor to the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services. Catechists and classroom aides shall be required annually to sign the state form acknowledging that they are aware of their status as mandated reporters. The signed copy is to be kept on file in our office.

If such a reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect arises, one must immediately report such a suspicion to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. (1-800-252-2873). Any individual reporting suspected abuse and/or neglect is, as soon as possible, to work with the appropriate catechetical leader to document the incident. Such documentation is to be retained in secure and confidential files. All such documentation and the circumstances surrounding any such report to D.C.F.S. are confidential under Illinois Statute and shall not be disclosed, except as provided by Illinois law.

In the event that a parish minister, either paid or volunteer, is reported for suspected abuse of a minor, the Director of Diocesan Religious Education Office is also to be notified immediately.

## **Expectations**

### **Parents/Guardians**

- Ensure that classes are attended regularly and promptly.
- Communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect the child in the class setting.
- Participate actively in the children's faith development and support the catechist when needed.
- Model the faith and regularly participate in the sacramental life of the church.
- Volunteer to help in many areas of the Religious Education Program. Please call the R.E. Office to find out how you can help.

### **Students**

- Behave in a Christian manner at all times and show respect for adults, each other and property.
- Observe the rules of the classroom.
- Actively participate in classroom discussions and activities.

### **Catechists**

- Be a confirmed Catholic, modeling the faith by regularly attending mass and receiving the sacraments.
- Provide information for background checks and attend *Protecting God's Children* training session. Register participation date.
- First time Catechist must attend New Catechist Training.
- Attend ongoing local formation sessions offered to receive credit for certification.
- Attend grade level catechist meetings.
- Provide a caring, Christian environment that is conducive to learning and faith development.
- Be prepared for class and provide a variety of activities that appeal to different learning styles.
- Report any class cancellation to the R.E. Office.
- Report habitual absences.
- Communicate regularly with parents and involve them in the faith life of their children.

## **Volunteers**

- Provide information for background checks and attend *Protecting God's Children* training session.
- Model Christian values at all times.

## **DISCIPLINE**

### **Discipline and Problem Situations**

All students are expected to share in the faith learning experiences of the parish program. Class rules and house rules and consequences should be posted in the class. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him or herself or for others, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue.

- At the first incident the child will be reminded of expected behavior (refer to posted classroom rules) and the consequences of misbehavior.
- After the second incident, a call will be made to the parents by the catechist informing the parents of the situation.
- If inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be sent home (parents will need to pick up their child). A meeting with the Master catechist and/or DRE will take place and a course of action will be sought.

If the child's behavior continues to disrupt learning, it may be necessary for further steps to be taken.

## **OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES**

### **Permission & Medical Forms**

**All minors participating in a Parish or Diocesan sponsored outing are expected to have a permission & medical form signed by a parent or guardian of the minor. All staff and volunteers of Saint Elizabeth Seton must use this policy to take students to special events, programs, etc. that are away from the normal setting for religious education. It is important for the Religious Education Program to have information from parents regarding any health problems of their children. This information will be shared, as needed, with the appropriate catechists. It is important for parents/guardians to update the Religious Education Office aware of any changes in pertinent health information.**

### **Transporting Minors**

- Permission form on file and in vehicle for all minors and for each event.
- Driver who is at least 25 years old.
- Has a current Drivers Information Form on file with the Religious Education Office, which verifies the Driver has current valid Illinois State Driver's License and Vehicle Liability Insurance valid for the date of transportation.
- A copy of the driver's license and current insurance card needs to be on file in the parish.

Anyone acting as an agent of Saint Elizabeth Seton for the purpose of helping with minors on any trip is expected to follow these rules.

### ***Addendum Specific to High School Youth Ministry***

Transportation to and from on site or off site events is the responsibility of the parents. We recommend that teens do not drive themselves to events but recognize that this is at the discretion of their parents. Further, we recommend that teens do not transport other teens to events.

### **Administration of Medication**

Catechists should never administer medication, either prescription or non-prescription, to a minor participating in a catechetical session unless there is a signed permission form on file from the parents with clear instructions on how to administer the medication and under which conditions.

### **Adult Chaperones**

For junior high and high school diocesan sponsored events, adult chaperones must be at least 21 years of age or older. A ratio of one (1) adult per ten (10) youth (unless directed differently) should be followed. Adult chaperones need to be familiar with the Diocesan Adult Chaperone Guidelines.

## **Safe Environment Education**

The Diocese of Joliet has instructed us that “All Catholic schools and parish religious education programs in the Diocese of Joliet must offer instruction for children, grades K-12, and their parents to prevent child sexual abuse.” This education effort is the companion to our requirement for all staff and volunteers who work with minors to go through Protecting God’s Children seminar and have a criminal Background Check. Safe environment education focuses on child awareness and assertiveness skills. Age appropriate sessions are offered to all Religious Education students at St. Elizabeth Seton. The Religious Education Office has to report attendance at these sessions to the Diocese on an annual basis. Parents may elect to ‘opt-out’ their children out of parish instruction but they are to be provided with resources to enable them to teach the material at home.

### **RIGHT TO AMEND**

*This handbook is primarily a means of communication. It is meant to provide you, the parent/guardian, with helpful information on how we intend to go about our work. The St. Elizabeth Seton Catechetical Program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified, in writing, if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook.*



**ST. ELIZABETH SETON  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

## **2009 – 2010 Acknowledgement of Diocesan and Parish Policies Online**

This is to acknowledge that I have been referred to and have reviewed the following documents, which are accessible on the St. Elizabeth Seton website at the following link: [http://www.sesnaperville.org/re/re\\_policies.htm](http://www.sesnaperville.org/re/re_policies.htm) (there is an underscore between re and policies).

\_\_\_\_\_ **SES Religious Education Family Handbook**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Diocese of Joliet Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Diocese of Joliet Standards of Behavior For Those Working With Minors**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Guide: Internet Safety for Children & Teens**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Parent Guide: Understanding & Preventing Child Sexual Abuse**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Sexuality, Chastity & Our Youth: A Challenge for Parent's Today**

I understand that I am responsible to become familiar with the contents of the above documents.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print clearly)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Please Sign and Return with Registration**