

*St. Columbkille*



2011 - 2012

**PARENT HANDBOOK**

**RELIGIOUS FORMATION PROGRAM**

224 E 5 Street  
Papillion, NE 68046  
Phone: 339-0990



**Pastor**

Father Damian Zuerlein  
dzuerlein@saintcolumbkille.org

**Director**

Judy Thome  
jthome@saintcolumbkille.org



**Office Manager**

Judie O'Connor  
joconnor@saintcolumbkille.org

**Website:**

<http://www.saintcolumbkille.org/education/formation/children/>

All the latest 2011-2012 information and forms:

Religious Formation Program  
Sacramental Programs  
Summer Formation Program  
Religious Formation Calendar

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## Schedule of Class Times

### KINDERGARTEN

Monday 5:00 p.m.

or

Wednesday 5:00 p.m.

### GRADES LEVELS 1 through 8

Monday 5:00 p.m.

or

Wednesday 5:00 p.m. or 6:45 p.m.

**CLASS TIMES ARE ONE HOUR AND 15 MINUTES.**

## Curriculum

Sadlier **We Believe** with *Project Disciple*

The **We Believe** Program is...

- ✝ **Rooted** in Scripture
- ✝ **Faithful** to the Tradition of the Catholic Church
- ✝ **Spirited** by the General and National Directories for Catechesis
- ✝ **Christocentric**, centering on the Person of Jesus Christ
- ✝ **Trinitarian**, inviting relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit
- ✝ **Ecclesial**, supporting faith that is lived in the domestic church and the universal Church.

*Project Disciple* is built on the Six Tasks of Catechesis:

1. **LEARN** about their faith
2. **CELEBRATE** the Mass and sacraments
3. **CHOOSE** to show love and respect
4. **PRAY** every day
5. **SHARE** faith with others
6. **LIVE** out their faith

# First Reconciliation/First Communion Sacramental Programs

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Students in the second grade will prepare and receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sign of God's love for us. It is a time we tell God that we are sorry for what we've done and hear the words of forgiveness that make us whole again.

### Student Requirements

Students must be Baptized

Students will have completed first grade religious formation

There are two **Mandatory** Reconciliation *Parent Only* Meetings that will be held on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm in the Church. One meeting will be in October 2011 and one in November 2011.

### Reconciliation Centers

This activity is for all second graders and their parents (for students in religious formation) this is in place of class time:

Monday & Wednesday

Between 5-8:00 pm

Church Social Level

You may attend either of the above days. They will take approximately one hour to complete.

*(Dates to be determined and will be posted on the website)*

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Students will be divided into two groups. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on two different Saturdays in January at 10:00 am in the Church

Families are encouraged to receive Reconciliation along with their second graders.

*(Dates to be determined and will be posted on the website)*

## Sacrament of First Holy Communion

The Sacrament of First Holy Communion is the very first time the students receive the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ. This is a very special time for students and their families.

### Student Requirements

- Students must be Baptized
- Students must have completed first grade religious formation
- Students must have made their First Reconciliation
- Students must attend the Saturday First Communion Practice

### Parent Requirements

- Parents will complete a First Holy Communion information sheet
- Parents will provide a copy of their child's baptismal certificate
- Parents will pay the sacramental fee
- A parent will attend a Saturday First Communion Practice

There are two **Mandatory** meetings that will be held on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm in the Church. One meeting will be in February 2012 for *parents only* and one in April 2012 for the *parent/student*.  
*(Dates to be determined and will be posted on the website)*

### Sacrament of First Holy Communion

Students will be divided into two groups. The Sacrament of First Holy Communion will be held on two different Sundays in May at 2:00 pm in the Church.

The mandatory practices will be scheduled the day before in the Church at 9:30 am.  
*(Dates to be determined and will be posted on the website)*

### Seating

First Communicants and their parents will process in together. Other family members and guests are invited to sit elsewhere in the church.

### Dress

Boys: Dress shirt, pants and tie. Suit coats are optional

Girls: White dress, veil or flower head piece. NO gloves, purses, etc.

### Pictures

Group photos will be taken at 1:15 pm in the Church Social Level on First Communion days.  
*(Dates to be determined and will be posted on the website)*

### Weekend Mass Option

There will only be **one** weekend available for individual Masses. Completion of a Weekend Mass Option Form (found on the website) is required. **Space is limited**. First Communicants and a parent **must** attend a practice for the weekend option mass.

### Weekend Seating

Your family will have one pew reserved. First Communicants and their parents will process in together.

### Weekend Pictures

Your child may have their picture taken with either class.

## Confirmation Program

The two-year program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, aims to develop and deepen their relationship with Jesus by making them more familiar with His ministry and His teachings.

Confirmation flows from Baptism, which it seals and affirms. Confirmation celebrates the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, in its own unique way and confers on the individual the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

**Sponsors:** It is desirable that the sponsor for Confirmation be the Baptismal sponsor. Parents MAY NOT be sponsors. Non-Catholics may not be sponsors. The sponsor must be confirmed and a Catholic in good standing. They should be at least 16 years of age.

### PREPARATION OF THE CANDIDATE:

1. The period of candidacy is a two-year process (7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade)
2. The preparation includes service projects, formation classes, and retreats
3. **Retreats:** At least 2 retreats are offered to the candidate during their preparation of the sacrament. (One in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and one in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.)

### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade - Year One

Candidates must complete 3 service projects in the areas of Parish, Family and Community (written & oral reports).

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade - Year Two

Candidates must be registered in the School, Religious Ed or Youth Ministry programs. Candidate and Parent/Sponsor must attend mandatory Confirmation classes which are held separately from school and religious formation classes.

*(Dates to be determined and will be posted on the website)*

# St. Columbkille Religious Formation Program Policies

## Admission – Placement Guidelines

1. All families must be registered and a tithing card completed for St. Columbkille Parish.
2. All registration forms need to be completed before a student is placed in the Religious Formation Program.
3. Each student will be placed at the grade level that he/she attends in public school unless there is a special case designated by the parent/Director.
4. Class day and time is assigned on a first come, first serve basis throughout the registration process.

## Alcoholic Beverages

State law and Catechetical policy strictly prohibit possession or use of alcohol beverages by students at the Parish Educational Center or at any Catechetical sponsored function. Students who violate this policy may be suspended or referred to legal authorities. Repeated violations of this rule may result in expulsion.

## Attendance

To assure continued quality of Religious Education for your child(ren), your assistance is requested by having your child(ren) present for all classes. If a child cannot attend class, parents are asked to notify the **Religious Formation Office at 339-0990** before class begins. If you fail to notify the Religious Formation Office of the absence, we are required to telephone the absent student's family. This policy is for the safety and welfare of the child(ren). If your child misses more than 5 classes (Sept – May) they will automatically need to repeat their current grade.

## Authorized Dismissal from Class Attendance

**The Parent/Legal Guardian must come to the office, and the student will be dismissed from there.** No student will be released from a Religious Formation classroom, they must be sent to the Religious Formation Office for dismissal.

## Care and Use of Parish Education Center

Students who damage or destroy parish facilities will be required to make complete restitution and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

## Class Size

St. Columbkille Religious Formation Program will maintain 15 to 1 student/catechist ratio.

## **Complaint Procedures**

A parent/guardian who has questions regarding a situation involving his/her child is urged to follow the following procedures

***Every effort should be made to resolve questions, concerns and problems at the earliest possible stage in a manner appropriate for Christians.***

1. Contact the student's teacher to discuss the situation and work with the teacher to arrive at possible solutions. Appointments with the teacher must be made by writing a note requesting a conference or by calling the Religious Formation Office at 339-0990 and asking that the teacher return the call as soon as possible.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the teacher, the parent/guardian should then request a conference with the Director. After discussing the situation with both parties, the Director will act as a facilitator making every effort to resolve the problem and initiate reconciliation between the two parties.
3. If resolution and reconciliation have not been achieved after discussing the problem with the teacher and the Director and the parent/guardian still feel that the complaint has not received proper consideration, the Pastor will be asked to assist in resolving the situation and achieving reconciliation.

## **Dismissals for Inclement Weather**

In times of inclement weather, St. Columbkille Religious Formation Program will follow the decision made by Papillion/LaVista or Omaha Public/Catholic Schools.

If Papillion/LaVista or Omaha Public/Catholic Schools cancel classes for the day or close during the day because of bad weather, St. Columbkille Religious Formation Program will not have classes that evening.

If weather becomes inclement in the afternoon, an announcement to close will be made on the three local television stations before 3:30 p.m. or by e-mail.

## **Dismissal for Hot Weather**

St. Columbkille is air-conditioned. There will be no hot weather dismissals.

## **Dressing and Grooming Regulations**

Although a student's personal appearance is basically a concern of the student and his/her parents, the administration of the program has the responsibility to help develop values which contribute to good taste in matters of dress and appearance. The development of good taste in personal appearance should be a cooperative effort between the home and program.

With the majority of the community favoring a basic guideline and the administration's realization of continual changes in standard of dress and grooming, the following guidelines will be followed:

1. Student appearance should be of a high enough standard as to contribute to the general learning environment. Dress and appearance that is disruptive to the educational process in the judgment of the administration will not be allowed.
2. Interpretation of the rights of a minority of the student body should not be such that it negatively influences the general image of the student body or that of the school.
3. Students must accept the fact that appropriate dress for some activities and learning situations are not necessarily appropriate for others. The health and safety of the individual will not be jeopardized in favor of his personal preference as to appearance and attire.
4. Shoes will be worn at all times. Repeated violation will result in possible suspension.
5. Printed wording or pictures on clothing that advertise or promote drugs, alcohol, and tobacco or are vulgar in interpretation will not be permitted.
6. Coats, jackets and any type of headwear are not to be worn in the school building during the school day.
7. Shorts/Skirts - students wearing shorts and skirts that are deemed inappropriate by the school administration will be sent home to change. Repeated violations will result in disciplinary action.
8. Students will not be allowed to wear shorts/pants that are pulled down below the waistline. Repeated violation of this policy may result in a suspension from school.
9. To improve personal appearance, halter-tops, see-through clothing, tank tops, and tops that expose the midriff will not be permitted. Sleeveless tops, which extend from the neck to the shoulder will be permitted. Tank tops, spaghetti straps, basketball shirts, etc. may be worn in combination with either a T-shirt or capped-sleeve shirt. Violation of this policy will result in the student being sent home to change. Repeated violation may result in a suspension from school.

The existence of some basic limitations and standards are a necessity. If, after a conference with the student, the problem still exists, a conference with the parents and administration may be necessary to resolve the matter.

## **Explosives, Firearms, Weapons**

Students are never to bring or possess weapons (fire-crackers, smoke bombs, lighters, matches, home-made bombs etc.) on school property or school vehicles regardless of whether or not they are intended to be used. The same is true for firearms (including BB and pellet guns), bludgeons, ammunition, knives, or weapons of any kind, whether concealed or not. Students are prohibited from possessing any article that bears a reasonable resemblance to a weapon, such as a toy gun or knife on school property or in school vehicles. Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, and if in violation of Civil, State or Federal Law the case can be referred to the proper law authority. Federal Law requires a request for expulsion of 1 year for possession of a firearm in school.

The use or intended use of a weapon or any article, which is capable of causing injury when used in an aggressive or belligerent manner is prohibited. Violation of this policy will result in suspension and/or expulsion and referred to the proper law authorities.

## **Fighting and Other Disturbances**

When a fight occurs, the possibility of injury or damage to other persons or property exists. For the protection of persons and property, such activities will not be tolerated at St. Columbkille Education Center.

Throwing snowballs, rocks or other objects also involves the possibility of injury or damage to persons or property. Such activities will not be tolerated.

If students choose to violate this policy, they may be suspended. Repeated violation of this rule may result in meeting with the Director and the Pastor.

## **Fire Alarm**

Students caught pulling the fire alarm will be subject to suspension or expulsion and will be turned over to the proper authorities.

## **Fire Hazards**

Items considered fire hazards (i.e. fireworks, smoke bombs, lighters, etc.) are prohibited. Students who violate this regulation may be suspended. Repeated violation may result in expulsion.

## **Fire, Tornado and Disaster Drills**

- Fire, tornado and disaster drills are held during the first month of class. The Fire Department and the Civil Defense Department have defined procedures for each respectively.
- Directives are posted in each classroom for exiting the building in case of fire or tornado drill.
- Directives for each classroom to get to shelter for tornado or disaster are defined and posted in each classroom.
- All Catechetic personnel are versed in the defined procedures for emergencies.
- The following procedures will be used in conjunction with the approved tornado plan.
- In case of a tornado warning, all students and staff will go to designated areas and take cover.
- No personnel will remain in the office to answer telephones. An answering machine will record any incoming messages.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to guarantee their own safety by remaining within a shelter. Parents/guardians are encouraged to guarantee their children's safety by allowing them to remain within the shelter of the St. Columbkille building.
- St. Columbkille is not responsible for any injury occurring to parent/guardian or student choosing to leave the building during a tornado warning.
- Personnel will remain at St. Columbkille until parents have claimed all children.

## **Harassment**

### **General Statement**

Students are expected to conduct themselves as Catholic Christians at all times, free of any harassing behavior toward others. Harassment of another student, school employee, agent or official on the basis of the person's gender, race, color, age, religion, national origin, marital status or disability is strictly prohibited.

## **Definition of Harassment**

Harassment is defined as any intentionally harmful, demeaning or disparaging acts, words, symbolic representations, or behaviors used by a student or students against others that is disruptive of the spiritual process. This includes, but is not limited to, bullying, verbal, physical, visual or graphic actions such as name-calling, taunting, mocking, slandering, humiliating, teasing, pestering, making derogatory remarks, demeaning jokes or disparaging drawings or notes.

Bullying is further defined to include any intentional, hostile or offensive verbal, written, graphic, demonstrative or physical act that has the purpose of exerting domination over another student, and that is disruptive to the educational process.

## **Illegal Drugs**

State laws and Religious Formation policy strictly prohibit the use, evidence of use, or possession and/or transfer of narcotics, depressants, stimulants, hallucinogens, look-a-like pills of any type or possession of drug-related paraphernalia anywhere in the Parish Education Center or any Religious Formation Program sponsored activity. If students choose to violate this policy, they will be suspended and referred to the appropriate legal authorities.

## **Inappropriate Language and Gestures**

The use of abusive, profane or obscene language or gestures is prohibited. Offenders may be suspended or excluded from class and/or school. Abusive and profane or obscene language/gestures include, but are not limited to, slandering or abusing the ethnic background, sex, race, religious preference, or physical appearance of any student or school employee and “fighting words” which by their very utterance inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of peace.

## **Medication**

The Religious Formation Office will not dispense any medications. Students are present for 75 minutes each week. Any medication a student would need should be dispensed before or after class at home.

*St. Columbkille Religious Formation personnel will not dispense medication. The Director must authorize exceptions to the policy.*

## **Nuisance Items**

Nuisance items which may cause disruptions in Religious Formation classes are not allowed. All nuisance items brought to the Formation Office will be confiscated and turned into the office. A parent and the student will need to come to the Religious Formation Office for retrieval of the item.

## Registration Fees

- ✓ Registration fees will be reviewed and established annually by the Finance Committee. Parents/guardians shall be advised of registration fees prior to the beginning of the Religious Formation year.
- ✓ 100% of the fee is refundable before September 1st.
- ✓ The cost of materials students receive at the first class consists of 20% of the fee. This amount will not be refunded after the first class.
- ✓ Refund will be determined based on the data of official notification to the Religious Formation Office.
- ✓ Prior to January 15<sup>th</sup>, 50% of the remaining amount will be refunded.
- ✓ After January 15<sup>th</sup>, no refund will be given.
- ✓ A fee of \$10.00 will be charged for registration changes after September 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Smoking

State law and Religious Formation policy prohibit students carrying and/or smoking tobacco products on parish property or at parish sponsored activities. Use of tobacco products by anyone will be prohibited in the St. Columbkille Education Center. Students who violate this policy are subject to suspension. Repeated violations of this rule may result in expulsion.

## Student Illness During Class Time

In case of illness or injury, the parent/guardian or those designated by the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student. **Under no circumstances will a sick or injured student be allowed to walk home.** In case of emergency a parent/guardian will be contacted. If a parent/guardian cannot be located, the Director will assume the parent/guardian's permission to take the student to the closest emergency service or to call for emergency help.

## Supervision of Students

St. Columbkille complies with State regulations that require students to be supervised at all times that the Parish is responsible for them.

## Visitation

Due to liability, non-registered students are prohibited from attending classes. All visitors are asked to come to the office.

## Weapons

Religious Formation policy prohibits students carrying and/or using weapons, i.e. guns, knives or any material intended to be used as a weapon. Students who violate this policy are subject to expulsion.