

# *St. Columbkille*



*Go and Make Disciples*

2017 - 2018

## **PARENT HANDBOOK**

### **RELIGIOUS FORMATION PROGRAM**

Website: <http://www.saintcolumbkille.org/education/formation/children/>  
Visit us on Facebook: St. Columbkille Religious Formation

## **St. Columbkille Religious Formation Office**

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## ST. COLUMBKILLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MISSION

Our program at St. Columbkille serves as an aid to the parents in their own lives and the lives of their children. We are all catechists full-time through our Baptism. By being a Christian it is our mission to spread the Word, live the Gospel, and create, redeem and sanctify the world with our presence.

Particular emphasis in our Religious Education (Formation) Program is placed on adult development. "The documents of Vatican II and beyond clearly state the role of parents as the primary educators of their children in the faith." We strongly encourage modeling by parents as a chief source of educating their children, enriched with a strong prayer life and lived commitment. Where religion is a priority of adults in the household, so this priority will influence the total family response.

The church continues the mission of Jesus Christ whose teaching has come down to us through the apostles. The ministry of catechesis serves the Church in that mission. It enables our faith to become living, conscious and active through the catechetical ministry given by the bishops of the United States. We recognize catechetical ministry has three aspects:

- † To proclaim and teach God's Word by guiding families to a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith, Jesus' love for us and the traditions and history of the Catholic Church
- † To celebrate the Sacred Scriptures by assisting families with spiritual development and prayer when we celebrate Mass together as a community
- † To serve one another by nurturing relationships with families, the parish, and our community

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### HOURS: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE

The Religious Education Office is open: Monday – 7am – 6:15pm, Tuesday – 7am – 3:30pm, Wednesday – 7am – 7:15pm, Thursday – 7am – 3:30pm, Friday – closed/limited hours (call before stopping in).

### CLASSES OFFERED

St. Columbkille Religious Formation is for students in Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We also offer RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children) during the Wednesday evening class time and RCIC-Communion during the Monday evening class time.

### HOURS: CLASS TIMES

All Religious Education classes are one hour and 15 minutes. Class are held on Mondays from 5pm – 6:15pm or Wednesdays from 5:45pm – 7pm, September through May

We offer Summer Religious Education classes (Kdg-8th) that are held the first two weeks of June. The classes are held from 8am – noon, Monday through Friday.

In some instances, families request homeschooling for their child – if you are considering this option, please contact the Religious Education Office for registration information.

### CALENDAR

The RE calendar is published annually, listing days of attendance, holidays, meetings and activities. Dates and events are subject to change as necessary and notice will be provided whenever possible. Calendar and program information is also available on our website at <http://www.saintcolumbkille.org/education/formation/children/>.

# REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

## REGISTRATION – PLACEMENT GUIDELINES

Registration for Summer Religious Education classes start in February each year. Priority for class assignments is given by date that the completed registration forms and payment are received in the RE Office. The September – May Religious Education class registration begins in March. The same priority is given.

- Registration for the fall program is March-August 11th. No registrations will be accepted after Aug 25th.
- Registration is on a first come, first served basis.
- Register early. Class sizes are limited and will close when maximum is reached.
- There will be no switching of class days once registration has been submitted for the current year.
- Balances from the previous program year must be paid prior to registering for the current year.
- All families must be registered parishioners at St. Columbkille Parish.
- All registration forms need to be completed prior to a student being placed in the Religious Formation Program.
- 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.
- Class day and time is assigned on a first come, first serve basis throughout the registration process. We highly encourage families to register early so they have a better chance of being placed on the desired evening or program (Sept. – May program or summer).

## SUMMER RE FAMILIES

Families that enroll in our Summer RE Program are required to participate in *four* Adult Faith Formation opportunities offered through the parish prior to registering for summer. These are not service opportunities for stewardship (i.e., help with athletics, serving lunch at the Stephen Center, mowing, festival, etc.) The Faith Formation opportunities are spiritual "learning" and not "service" to others.

Faith Formation opportunities are developed to help individuals to grow deeper in their own faith. Some examples of Faith Formation in our parish would be That Man Is You, Come and See, Spirituality Alive, Bible studies, etc. If you need further clarification about whether an opportunity would be accepted as a Faith Formation opportunity, please do not hesitate to contact the RE Office.

## TUITION

Registration fees will be reviewed and established annually by the Finance Committee. Parents/guardians will be informed about registration fees prior to the beginning of the Religious Formation year.

- A \$20 deposit per student is required at time of registration.
- If the registration fee can not be paid in full at the time of registration. Please see Lori Long, Director of Religious Education or Judie O'Connor, Office Manager for payment arrangement options.
- 100% of the fee is refundable before September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- 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.
- Refunds will be determined based on the date of official notification to the RE Office.
- Prior to January 15<sup>th</sup>, 50% of the remaining amount will be refunded, but after January 15<sup>th</sup>, no refunds will be given.
- A late registration fee of \$25 will be charged for any registrations made between August 14th-August 25th.
- Sacramental fees are not included in registrations fees.

## CLASSROOM SIZE

Our September – May program classes are led by catechist volunteers. Many classes have catechist leaders and aides. Our maximum number of students in each classroom is 15 if there is only a lead. If the classroom has both a lead and aide, the maximum number of students is 18.

The Summer Religious Education classes are taught by certified teachers. The maximum number of students in each classroom will not exceed 20.

# CURRICULUM AND CLASS EXPECTATIONS

## CURRICULUM

We are constantly looking at the most up-to-date curriculum that meets the objectives of the Archdiocese of Omaha's standards for Catechism of the Catholic Church. The texts may be updated from year to year.

Our curriculum....

- ✚ Helps to meet the needs of the students and families as they grow in the knowledge of their faith and live as disciples of Jesus.
- ✚ Is an innovative religion curriculum that empowers students and their families to answer the call to discipleship.
- ✚ Teaches Scripture, Doctrine, and Liturgical celebration through its spiral structure.
- ✚ Challenges children to integrate faith and life through activities and faith choices.

## ATTENDANCE

To assure quality Religious Education for your child(ren), attendance is expected. If a child cannot attend class, a phone call to the RE office 402-339-0990 or email [joconnor@saintcolumbkille.org](mailto:joconnor@saintcolumbkille.org) from the parent, prior to the absence is expected before class begins. If we have no prior notice, we assume that the child should be in class. We will call to determine the child's safe whereabouts. This policy is for the safety and welfare of the child(ren).

Students must be in their classrooms when class begins. Any student who is late (not in their classroom when the bell rings) will need to report to the RE Office for a tardy slip. No student may leave the parish premises during class time or during a parish activity without a parent being present in the office. Students will not be dismissed early with notes—a parent must come to the office and pick up the student.

Since attendance is of utmost importance, the RE Director will notify you when absences reach 3 days during the September – May program. We understand that situations arise and some absences are unavoidable; however, in order for students to receive the instruction for their current grade, they need to be in class. If absences continue to be a concern, the Director may request that students repeat their current grade level. Parents of students who miss more than 3 days will need to personally contact their child's catechist in order to keep up-to-date on the lessons and assignments given in the classroom.

Summer RE students may only miss 1 day during the program. Any students missing more than 1 class day will automatically be removed from the summer program and required to repeat the grade level during the next available program (Sept - May) or the following summer.

## BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

Students in the St. Columbkille Religious Education program are expected to follow these rules:

- Respect yourself, others and things
- Contribute positively to the learning environment
- Follow parish and classroom procedures

Classroom disturbances will not be tolerated. Class time is short and very precious. Catechists will handle matters immediately to help students learn how to use correct behavior and remain in the classroom learning environment.

The catechist will give one verbal reminder to help the student choose appropriate behavior. If the student misbehaves again, the catechist will send the student with a completed Discipline Form to the Director. After a conference with the Director, the catechist will decide if he/she wants the student to rejoin the class. A copy of the form will be mailed home for a parent signature—the form should be returned by the next class.

If the student is sent to the office a second time or this is an ongoing problem from week to week, the student will remain in the RE Director's Office and parents will be contacted and asked to meet for a conference. Students may not be allowed to attend classes without a parent present. Further problems will automatically require a parent to be present for the remainder of the year's classes.

If a student chooses to put him/herself or others in danger, immediate action will be taken.

1. Physical/psychological danger – fighting, rough play, and/or throwing objects that could harm someone or property; bringing dangerous or illegal items such as weapons, knives, matches, lighters, smoking material (including e-cigarettes), drugs, etc., to any area of the parish property; physical or psychological threats, intimidation, force or injury; leaving the parish grounds without permission; using normal objects in a dangerous way.
2. Abuse in tone, gesture, or word-harassment of any kind; any unwanted behavior that makes others feel unsafe or uncomfortable, intimidation/bullying; disrespect in action, tone, or gesture after repeated correction, profanity, vandalism.
3. Out of control behavior or willful misbehavior toward a catechist, aide, staff member or another student; being unable, incapable or unwilling to listen or follow instructions; repeated violations of classroom rules.

#### CATECHIST LEADERS AND AIDES

Catechists are stewards who willingly share their time and talents to educate our students. Catechists and teachers are provided opportunities to grow in their faith formation and learn new methods of catechesis through faith opportunities offered at St. Columbkille's and through the archdiocese. We strongly encourage all catechists and teachers to participate in Catechist Certifications through the Archdiocese of Omaha. St. Columbkille offers many other faith formation opportunities throughout the year that catechists and parents are invited to attend.

#### SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING (SET)

As required by the Archdiocese of Omaha, and directed by the U.S. Catholic Council of Bishops 'Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People', all clergy, lay ministers, paid staff and volunteers over the age of 19 who have access to children must take Safe Environment training and complete a background check before being allowed to work with children.

Dates and forms to register for Safe Environment Training (SET) are available in the RE, Parish and School offices. Safe Environment certification is good for 5 years. If you are in need of recertification, it can be completed on-line through the Archdiocese of Omaha's Learning and Training Center at <http://lms.archomaha.org/>. Stewards must complete recertification prior to their current certification expiration. There is not a "grace period" for Safe Environment certifications. If certification is allowed to lapse, individuals will not be able to work with children until they are recertified by the archdiocese. For additional information on Safe Environment training and certification, please contact the DRE.

#### CIRCLE OF GRACE

Circle of Grace is a safe environment program developed by the Archdiocese of Omaha in response to the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Its focus is on educating and informing youth about the value of positive relationships with God and others. Circle of Grace is mandated to be taught yearly to all children in archdiocesan schools, religious education programs, and youth ministry in Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Through the Circle of Grace program, adults assist children and youth to recognize that each of us lives within a Circle of Grace that holds our very essence in body, mind, heart, soul, and sexuality. Through the Circle of Grace program, children and youth are taught to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual and sexual boundaries; recognize

when boundary violations are about to occur; and demonstrate how to take action when boundaries are threatened or violated.

## LITURGY OF THE MASS

We expect families to regularly attend Sunday Mass. Students receive instruction on the liturgy of the mass. Throughout the RE year, students will also take part in and attend class liturgies with their catechists and classmates. Families are encouraged to attend these liturgies. If a class night coincides with a Holy Day of Obligation, students will attend mass and families are encouraged to attend as well.

"As members of the Christian community, all are called to participate actively in the liturgical prayer of the Church. Religious Education therefore must involve the student in his/her faith community and in that community's liturgy. Liturgy itself educates, it teaches, it forms community, and it forms the individual. It makes possible worship to God." (*U.S.C.C.B., "Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education"*)

## SUSPENSION

St. Columbkille reserves the right to suspend in-class instruction to a student if there is reason to believe that attendance at class could place the student or others in danger of physical or emotional harm. Suspension will be at the discretion of the Pastor and Director of Religious Education and could be due to events that occur outside of class and/or off the premises. The student and parents will be supported with materials (at the parent's cost) to continue the child's religious education at home until the student is approved to return to class.

## STEWARDSHIP

Through our Baptism, God calls us to be good stewards of the gifts of time, talent and treasure given to us. A Christian steward is "one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends to them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with others and returns them with increase to the Lord."

Students and families are asked and encouraged to share their gifts with our parish and community as often as possible. Each family will have opportunities to participate in parish service during the year. The RE Office will email families about opportunities that arise throughout the year. In addition, the parish bulletin, website and Facebook page will also give information regarding upcoming service and stewardship opportunities. Becoming a steward in our parish is an excellent way to build community and develop faith-centered relationships with others.

## DRESS CODE

A student's choice of personal appearance and hygiene should be left to the good judgment of the student and his/her parents or guardians, but the administration of the RE program has the responsibility to help develop values which contribute to a positive learning environment. The development of good taste in personal appearance should be a cooperative effort between the home and program.

The following dress guideline will be followed:

1. Student appearance should be a 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. Dress which either causes or has the potential to cause either a substantial disruption or material interference with the educational process is prohibited.
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/her personal preference in appearance and attire.
4. Shoes will be worn at all times.



5. Dress which contains vulgar or offensive words or language, or is sexually explicit, indecent or lewd is prohibited.
6. Dress that advertises or promotes the use of drugs, liquor or tobacco products is not allowed.
7. Coats, jackets and hats/caps of any type are not to be worn in the school building.
8. Shorts/skirts must be appropriate in length. Shorts and skirts are to be modest in length—slightly above the knee is acceptable. When a student kneels down (keeping her back straight) the hem should touch the back of the calf. Please check this length regularly as many students grow sporadically during the year.
9. Oversized baggy pants or other pants pulled down below the waistline will not be allowed.
10. Please use discretion and keep in mind that modesty is the expectation at our Catholic School. Halter tops, see-through clothing, tank tops, and mid-drift tops are not allowed. Tops with spaghetti straps, basketball shirts, etc., may be worn in combination with either a t-shirt or capped-sleeve shirt.

Violation of the dress code will result in students being sent home to change. Repeated violations may result in a conference with parents and/or suspension.

## DISMISSAL

Students in K-2 must be picked up by a parent or older sibling after class. These students will remain in their classrooms until someone comes to pick them up.

Students in grades 3-8 may exit the building at one of three locations. Students may exit through the South Doors (the same doors used for entering), the North Doors that face Cornhusker or the main Education Center Doors located by the flagpole. Please be sure to show your child(ren) which doors they will be picked up at so they know where to dismiss.

## EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

### DISMISSALS FOR INCLEMENT WEATHER

Should icy or snowy weather occur, the RE program observes the school closing policies of the Papillion/La Vista or Omaha Public/Catholic Schools. If any of these schools cancel classes for the day or close during the day due to bad weather, we will not hold RE classes that evening. Occasionally, because of deteriorating weather during the day, we may cancel RE classes late in the afternoon or early evening—even if the schools held classes that day. Any announcements to close evening classes will be made on the three local television stations before 3:30pm, sent by email and posted on the Religious Formation Facebook group page.

Parents should use their discretion as to whether it is safe for their children to attend class.

### FIRE/SEVERE WEATHER HAZARDS, ALARMS, DRILLS

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

Catechists are provided with instructions on how to lead the children in emergency situations. During emergency situations, silence and order will be maintained at all times. In the case of a tornado or weather related emergency, all students, catechists and others present will be held in designated safe areas of the building until the all clear is given.

In the event of an emergency, parents will need to check with the RE Office before any child can be released. Students cannot be released directly by the catechist without first verifying departure with the office.

- Directives are posted in each classroom for exiting the building or finding safe shelter in the event of a fire or tornado.
- All catechists are versed in the proper procedures for emergencies.
- In the case of a tornado warning, all students and staff will go to designated areas and take cover until the warning is lifted.

- No personnel will remain in the office to answer telephones or buzz in visitors. The RE Office answering machine will record any incoming messages. No one will be in the office to open doors.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to take shelter for their own safety. We encourage parents/guardians to allow students to remain with the shelter at St. Columbkille Education Center while the warning is in effect.
- 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.

#### NO NUT POLICY

It is the policy of St. Columbkille Education Center to eliminate or minimize the risk of exposure to nuts for our students and to have a plan in place to respond to an emergency. This policy is both a safeguard to our 5 day school students and our RE students.

To help minimize the risk of exposure to nuts for our students, we will:

- Not allow foods of any kind to be consumed in the classroom. If catechists would like to have a treat with their students, they must reserve the lounge area within the school or share a snack outside (if the weather permits).
- Catechists will know that they are not to offer any foods that contain nuts.
- Parents are discouraged from bringing in treats that contain nuts or were packaged where nut products are prepared.

Parents are encouraged to have any allergies noted on the registration form on file so the RE personnel can communicate with the classroom catechists.

#### SICKNESS OR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS DURING CLASS TIME

Emergency information is on file in the Religious Education Office. The information must be kept current at all times. If there is a change in your child's health information (allergies, medications, etc.) or contact information, please let the RE Office know immediately.

The RE 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. *The Director of Religious Formation must authorize exceptions to this policy.*

In case of illness or injury, parents will be contacted by phone and are responsible for arranging the child's transportation home. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency phone numbers will be called in order to obtain necessary help for the child. Children will not be allowed to walk home if sick or injured.

In the event of an emergency which requires immediate medical attention, the parent will be notified and the child will be transported by ambulance to the hospital, if necessary, at the parent's expense.

#### SAFETY/SECURITY PLAN

St. Columbkille wants every student to be safe and accounted for when under our supervision. All students who attend our RE program will enter the Education Center on the South side of the building. The bright yellow doors are located between the Sacred Heart Preschool and our playground. Doors open fifteen minutes before class time and will be supervised by RE personnel. For the safety of everyone in our building, the doors are closed and locked promptly at the time classes begin. If your student is not in the building for the start of class, he/she must come to the main office doors—they face south and the entrance is located by the flagpole.

All visitors must check in with the RE Office, entering through the main Education Center doors. No adults or students are allowed to enter classrooms until the catechist is present. Students who are not registered with the RE program are prohibited from attending classes.

In the event there is information regarding a dangerous visitor, the RE classrooms will be locked-down and authorities will be called. All doors to the Education Center remain locked while classes are in session.

## OUR POLICIES

### ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

State laws and St. Columbkille policy strictly prohibits student's possession or use of alcoholic beverages on parish property or at any parish sponsored function. Students who violate this policy will be suspended, referred to legal authorities and/or required to participate in counseling programs at the expense of the parents/guardians. Repeated violations of this policy may result in expulsion from St. Columbkille's RE program.

### CARE OF PARISH EDUCATION CENTER

Students are expected to respect the education center, classroom and desk. Students who damage or destroy parish and education facilities will be required to make complete restitution. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for all situations.

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Students with a condition which may be passed onto others in the classroom must be excluded from attending RE classes until no longer contagious. These conditions include, but are not limited to:

1. Chickenpox – students may return after pox has scabbed.
2. Fever – students should remain home until 24 hours after a fever breaks.
3. Infections – students should be kept home for a minimum of 24 hours after starting antibiotics.
4. Vomiting – students should remain home until 24 hours after an episode.
5. Diarrhea – students should remain home until 24 hours after an episode.

Some conditions may require a doctor's attention and note before returning to RE classes.

### ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students are allowed to bring cell phones to RE classes, but use during the class period is not allowed. Phones are to remain silent and put away during instruction. St. Columbkille's parish and RE program are not responsible for any electronic equipment brought to RE classes or events.

### EXPLOSIVES, FIREARMS, WEAPONS

Students are never to bring or possess weapons (fire-crackers, smoke bombs, lighters, matches, homemade bombs, etc.) on school property regardless of whether or not they are intended to be used. The same is true for firearms (including BB, airsoft, 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. 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 of 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/OTHER DISTURBANCES

When a fight occurs, the possibility of injury or damage to other persons or property exists. For the protection of our students, catechists and staff, as well as the parish property, such activities will not be tolerated at St. Columbkille's Education Center.

Throwing snowballs, rocks or other objects also creates the possibility of injury and such activities are prohibited.

If a student chooses to violate this policy, they may be suspended. Repeated violation of this rule may result in meeting with the Director and the Pastor, with the possibility of not returning to the program.

## HARASSMENT

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.

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 St. Columbkille's 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.

## PARENTAL CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES

A parent who has a question or concern regarding a situation involving a student is urged to follow these 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 catechist to discuss the situation and work with the catechist to arrive at possible solutions.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the catechist, the parent should then request a conference with the Director of Religious Formation. 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 or reconciliation have not been achieved after discussion with the catechist and Director of Religious Formation, and the parent still feels the issue has not been addressed accordingly, the Pastor will be asked to assist in resolving the situation and achieving reconciliation.

## SMOKING

State laws and parish policy prohibit students from carrying and/or using tobacco products on school property or at parish sponsored activities. This includes e-cigarettes. Students who violate this policy are subject to suspension from the program. Repeated violations of this rule may result in expulsion. Parents using like products will be asked to leave the school and/or parish grounds.

## SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

When any person has reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or observes a child being subjected to conditions or circumstances which would result in abuse or neglect, he or she has the authority and duty to report the situation to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services at 1-800-652-1999. The person making the report should inform the Pastor and Director of Religious Formation of the alleged misconduct. The parish and RE Office cooperates fully in the investigation of these cases.

# SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Students receive special, intense preparation for Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. This is done in cooperation with the parent/guardian. Students will receive the sacraments only if they are adequately prepared. Families in both the Parish School and Religious Education Program celebrate reception of the sacraments jointly.

Preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist is a 2-year program, beginning in first grade. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are received for the first time in second grade.

Confirmation preparation is also a 2-year program, beginning in seventh grade. Candidates in both seventh and eighth grade are required to participate in retreats, special events and complete Stewardship hours. The sacrament of Confirmation is received in the eighth grade.

Meetings are scheduled during the year so that parents may review the content of preparation, deepen their own understanding of the sacrament being received, and help prepare their children for receiving these sacraments. Sacramental preparation will involve the family and include activities done outside of class.

All candidates for sacraments (Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation) must provide a copy of their baptism certificate to the Religious Education Office by October 31<sup>st</sup>. Baptismal certificates can be faxed directly to our office at 402-339-3977 by the parish where your child was baptized.

Children in the third grade or above who were baptized but have not received Reconciliation or First Holy Communion can prepare for the sacraments by attending our RCIC-Communion classes. Please contact the RE Office for more information, as this class is offered only on Monday evenings.

For children (age 7 and above) and teens, who have not been baptized can prepare for the sacraments by attending our RCIC classes. Please contact the RE Office for more information, this class is offered only on Wednesday evenings.

## FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

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

## FIRST RECONCILIATION

### Student Requirements:

- Students must be baptized
- Students must have completed first grade religious education

### Parent Requirements:

- Parents will provide a copy of their child's baptismal certificate by October 31<sup>st</sup>
- There are two MANDATORY Reconciliation *Parent Only* Meetings that will be held on Sunday afternoons at 2:00pm in the Church. One meeting will be in October and one in November.
- There is an evening for all second graders and their parents that will consist of Reconciliation Centers. This evening is in place of the normal RE class time for students in the RE Program.

Monday OR Wednesday

Between 3:30-6:30pm

Steinhausen Center

You may attend either of the above evenings. The centers will take approximately one hour to complete. *(Dates will be determined and posted on the website)*

Students will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a Saturday in January/February at 10am or 12:30pm in the Church. Students will be divided into two groups and families will be notified as to which group time their son/daughter will be making Reconciliation. Family members are encouraged to receive Reconciliation along with their second graders.

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

## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

### Student Requirements:

- Students must be baptized
- Students must have completed first grade religious education
- Students must have made their First Reconciliation
- Students must attend the Saturday First Holy Communion Practice

### Parent Requirements:

- Parents will complete a First Holy Communion information sheet
- Parents will provide a copy of their child's baptismal certificate by October 31<sup>st</sup>
- Parents will pay the sacramental fee
- A parent will attend the Saturday First Holy Communion practice
- There are two MANDATORY First Holy Communion Meetings that will be held on Sunday afternoons at 2:00pm in the Church. One meeting, parents only, will be held in March and one in April for parents/student.

Students will be divided into two groups to accommodate the large number of students receiving the sacrament. The Sacrament of First Holy Communion will be held on a Sunday in April in the Church.

The mandatory practices will be scheduled the day before in the Church.

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

Seating, dress, pictures and weekend mass options for First Holy Communion are explained in the Parent Sacramental Handbook.

## CONFIRMATION

The two-year program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students aims to develop and deepen the students' relationship with Jesus by making them more familiar with His ministry and 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 gifts of the Holy Spirit.

### Student Requirements:

- The student must be part of the period of candidacy – 2 years (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade)
- The student must complete (2) service projects, a saint report and formation classes in preparation for Confirmation
- The student will attend a retreat during their preparation for the Sacrament in 8<sup>th</sup> grade – St. Columbkille plans a retreat for the students and their sponsors, but it is the parent/student responsibility to attend our retreat or find another to attend at a neighboring parish

### Timeline for Requirements:

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade – Year One of Preparation

- Candidates must complete 2 ongoing service projects in the areas of Parish and Community
- Students will be required to compile a one page reflection paper on each of the service projects – projects will be turned into the RE Office upon completion
- Students will complete a saint report

#### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade – Year Two of Preparation

- Candidates must be registered in the School, Religious Ed or Youth Ministry Programs
- Candidates must attend the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Day of Reflection Retreat at St. Columbkille or a retreat at a neighboring parish (*Arrangements to attend a retreat at another parish will be set up by the parents*)
- Candidate and Parent/Sponsor must attend MANDATORY Confirmation classes with the Pastor. The classes are held separately from the school and RE classes. These meetings are generally held on Sunday afternoons at 2:00pm in the Church.

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