



**St. John Bosco, patron saint of youth,
pray for us
St. Peter in Chains,
pray for us.**

**Parents, please share the contents of this Handbook
with your children.**

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK
St. Peter in Chains Church
Parish Religious Education Program
(PREP)
Hamilton, Ohio
2011-2012
www.stpeterinchains.org



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You Are the Church in Your Home

“A family is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world. The early church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a *domestic church* or *church of the home*....

Your domestic church is not complete by itself, of course. It should be united with and supported by parishes and other communities within the larger Church. Christ has called you and joined you to Himself in and through the sacraments. Therefore, you share in one and the same mission that He gives to the whole Church.”

-Follow The Way of Love-
A Pastoral Message of the U.S. Catholic Bishops to Families

Religious Education Staff

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Parish Organizations for Children

Catholic Youth Sports: Parish youth in grades 4-12 are invited to participate in a number of sports activities. Announcements are regularly included in the church bulletin and notices are periodically sent home with registration information. The Athletic Association organizes the youth sport program.

Servers: Boys and girls in grade 6 are recruited and trained to serve Masses as 7th, 8th & 9th graders. Training will be held during the summer months.

Liturgical Ministers: Confirmed students in high school may train to be lectors and/or distributors. Contact the Coordinator of Religious Education for more information.

Service/Mission Opportunities

Parents and students are encouraged to seek out opportunities to serve the community as a way to increase their knowledge of the Catholic Faith. There will also be service opportunities available throughout the year.

Philosophy

The St. Peter in Chains Religious Education Program (PREP) is committed to partnership with parents in the religious education of their children. We strive to support and enrich the efforts of families to share with children their faith in the person and message of Jesus Christ in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Administration

* The ultimate responsibility for all parish education programs lies with the Pastor.

* The Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) directs all religious education programs, acts as resource person to the Parish School of Religion, coordinates the sacramental preparation programs, and supervises the certification of catechists.

* The Education Commission with the approval of the Pastor sets policies: the general plan and content by which the Parish School of Religion is guided. Members of the parish community are encouraged to give input regarding the program or policies to the Pastor, the Education Commission members, the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Curriculum

Curriculum for St. Peter in Chains Religious Education Program is set by the Pastor and Coordinator of Religious Education according to the guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

Registration

Information about registration will be published in the parish bulletin. Registration will take place in August. There is no registration for Nursery or Children's Liturgy of the Word.

Early Childhood Program

Class is held during the 11:00 A.M. Sunday Mass. Class begins in September and ends the last Sunday of April. Usually the parents will be at Mass during the class time. If the parents plan to leave the parish grounds, please notify the Program Coordinator (CRE) beforehand. Children are accepted for the Early Childhood program as follows: If they are 4 or older before September 30th.

4. Removal from class. Parents will be informed in writing of a student's removal. A parent/student/ catechist and CRE conference will be arranged before the student will be allowed back into the classroom. The Pastor will be notified. The student's removal will be noted in the student's record.
5. Removal from program. Should the above steps go unheeded after a suitable probationary period, the CRE will inform the student's parents of the decision to permanently remove the student from the program. The Pastor will be notified and the decision will be attached to the student's file.
6. The Coordinator of Religious Education retains the right to omit one or more of the above steps. The Coordinator of Religious Education retains the right to make exceptions to the disciplinary procedures.

Search and Seizure

Students are not permitted to possess tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, illegal drugs, or weapons of any kind. Staff members are required to investigate even the suspicion that such items are in the student's possession. If such items are found, they will be confiscated immediately. The student will be accompanied to the CRE for disciplinary action.

Discipline

Student Conduct:

Students are expected to cooperate in program guidelines and rules. They are expected by their behavior to make our classes a safe and positive experience. Guidelines are listed below.

1. Show respect to catechists, other students, and program personnel.
2. Treat the property, good name and physical safety of others with respect.
3. Under no circumstances will a student or an adult be permitted to strike another or use abusive language for any reason.
4. Students are to be present only in the areas of the building for which they have permission at a specific time.
5. Treat the property of St. Peter in Chains Church with respect.
6. Use of, or possession of, medications, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, and weapons of any kind is strictly prohibited.

Disciplinary Steps:

1. Verbal correction by the Catechist.
2. Removal from class - child sent to CRE.
3. Follow-up phone call by the Catechist or CRE.

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Nursery

A Nursery is available for children ages 1-3 during the Sunday 11:00 A.M. Mass. We ask parents to volunteer on a rotation basis.

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW)

Children's Liturgy of the Word (CLOW) is available for students in grades 1 to Pre-Communion during the Sunday 11:00 A.M. Mass. Children participate in the Liturgy of the Word at their level. Then process at the Offertory into church and sit with their family for the remainder of Mass.

Elementary Program

Classes are held for students in grades 1-8 on Sunday morning from 10:00 A.M. - 11:15 A.M. Classes begin in October and end in April.

High School Program

Due to low attendance numbers, this year we will be combining the High School PREP program with the High School Youth Ministry. The group will be meeting on Sunday evenings. Activities will be posted in the Bulletin throughout the year.

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High School Youth Ministry

The High School Youth Ministry program offers a variety of social, spiritual and service events throughout the school year. These opportunities are listed in the parish bulletin. All parishioners in grades 9 through 12 are invited to participate.

Sacramental Preparation

Students in Grade 2 will prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. Students in Grades 7 and 8 will prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation every other year. Parent information meetings are held throughout the year to enable parents to assist in their child's preparation. The CRE and pastor will work on an individual basis with the following children to best serve his or her needs.

- * Children who have not been Baptized and who are age 7 and older.
- * Children beyond Grade 2 who have not received the catechesis for First Communion.
- * Children Baptized into another Christian Community, but have not been received into the Catholic Church.

Visitors

All Visitors, including parents/guardians, must report to the School Office or to program personnel during program hours to drop off or pick up a child, other than normal arrival/dismissal time. A visitor is not permitted to go to any classroom without permission from the Coordinator of Religious Education.

Arrival and Dismissal

Students should not arrive for class sooner than ten minutes before the scheduled starting time (10:50 A.M. for Early Childhood, and 9:50 A.M. for Elementary and High School). They should be picked up within ten minutes of class dismissal (12:10 P.M. for Early Childhood and 11:25 A.M. for Elementary and High School).

Students in the elementary program should enter and exit through the front door of the gym located on Ridgelawn Avenue. Parents/guardians should accompany students in the parking lot. Parents/guardians are to accompany children in the Early Childhood Program to and from class using the school cafeteria entrance or the back entrance of the school.

Child Abuse:

St. Peter in Chains follows the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati regarding child abuse. Program administrators are required by the Ohio Revised Code and the *Archdiocesan Decree on Child Protection* to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities.

Policy Changes:

Parents will be notified in writing when policies are to be added or amended.

Safety and Emergency Procedures

Illness/Injury:

All students registered in the Early childhood Program, PREP Program and the Youth Group must have a completed Medical Release form on file (available upon registration). In the event of a serious medical situation, local emergency medical personnel will be contacted and every attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian.

Fire/Severe Weather:

Students are verbally instructed at the beginning of the year as to emergency procedures for fire and threatening weather.

Admission Policies

Admission:

Registered members of St. Peter in Chains Parish may participate in the Parish Religious Education Programs.

Non-discrimination Policy:

St. Peter in Chains Parish Religious Education Program admits students of any sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to program participants. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national origin in the administration of its programs or the recruitment of its teachers.

Parent/Guardian Consent:

A child's custodial parent(s)/guardian must give written consent to register a child in the Parish Religious Education Program. The custodial parent/guardian's signature will also signify that the signer has read, understands, and supports the policies contained in this Parent/Student Handbook. Parents are asked to review the handbook contents with their children.

Dress Code

We ask that the students are respectful in their choice of clothing. Miniskirts, spaghetti strap tank tops, clothing with inappropriate language will not be permitted.

Non-Custodial Parent's Rights:

The custodial parent needs to inform the catechist and the Coordinator of Religious Education in writing of the rights of the non-custodial parent especially in regards to the dissemination of information and release of the student.

Special Needs Students:

Children/students with special learning needs are welcome and included in our programs. Parents are asked to indicate their children's special needs at registration time.

General Policies

Fees:

Registration fees are \$50 for one child, \$65 for two children, and \$80 for three or more children. There is no fee for Nursery or CLOW. Fees are payable at the time of registration or the first Sunday of class and checks should be made payable to "St. Peter in Chains Church". Families who withdraw from PREP before the scheduled start date, will be entitled to a full refund upon notifying the Religious Education Office at 863-3344. Fee for Sacrament preparation for Grade 2 children is \$25 per child; Confirmation fee will be announced at time of preparation.

Mass Attendance:

Please make sure you are scheduling a time for your family to meet the Sunday Mass obligation.

Cancellation of Class:

In the event of severe weather, you will receive a phone call notifying you that the class has been canceled.

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Attendance:

Good attendance is anticipated and necessary for continuity in the Elementary classes. If illness occurs, an explanatory note should accompany the child to the next class. A parent will be contacted by phone or mail if no note is received after three consecutive absences. Please keep in mind that there are only a few classes each year, please plan vacations and sporting events around PREP classes. Attendance is mandatory for students preparing to receive a sacrament. If more than three classes are missed the student will not be permitted to receive the sacrament with his or her class.

Progress Reports:

To encourage student accomplishment and accountability for learning, a student's achievement of basic learning objectives required for his/her grade level will be monitored throughout the year. A mid-term progress report will be sent to each Elementary student's parent/guardian.

Classwork and Homework Assignments:

Catechists in the Elementary Program do assign class work and homework as needed. Elementary students are expected to complete all classwork and homework assignments. Make up work is at the discretion of each individual catechist.

Field Trips:

Any activity involving transport off parish grounds requires advance parent notification and written permission from a parent/guardian **before** any student may participate in such an activity. A permission form will be sent home prior to such

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