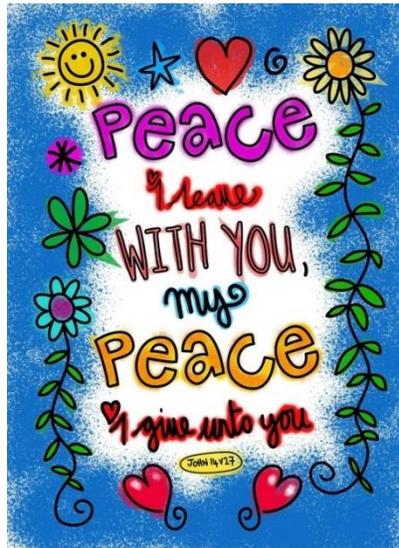


Religious Education and Youth Ministry Handbook

Blessed Trinity and
St. John Evangelist Parishes
2017-2018



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Prepared by the Joint Religious Education Committee and Joint Youth Ministry Committee of
Blessed Trinity and St. John Evangelist Parishes in cooperation with the rules and guidelines of the
Archdiocese of Milwaukee

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SAFE ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

“As a faith-filled people, we respect and value each and every individual, as we are created in the image and likeness of God. This is why the *Safeguarding All of God’s Family* program has been established. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is committed to creating a safe environment where all of God’s family – children, their parents and relatives, parish and school personnel, volunteers, clergy and archdiocesan central office personnel – will be able to work, live, and play in an environment where healthy and responsible relationships prevail.” –Archdiocese of Milwaukee

All adults (18 years of age and older) who work closely with children, must complete Safe Environment Education training. This 3 hour course is offered throughout the year. The dates and location can be found on the Archdiocese website: <http://www.archmil.org/offices/safeguarding/Safeguarding-Events.htm>. Additionally, students enrolled in the Religious Education and Youth Ministry programs will learn about a topic relating to making safe and healthy choices in one of their classes annually (generally, April for National Child Abuse Prevention Month).

VOLUNTEERS

We invite you to prayerfully consider volunteering in the Religious Education or Youth Ministry Programs. There are a great variety of ways to get involved, such as (grades you would be working with in parentheses): Catechist (k-8); small group leader (9-11); substitute catechist/small group leader (all grades); hall monitor (1-8); Lodge supervisor (5-8); high school dinner preparer (9-11); and more. If you have a high school aged child wanting to get involved, we welcome and appreciate catechist assistants in the younger grades. If you are unsure to the extent you would like to be involved in the program, contact the Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry, and we would be happy to help you find a role that is a great fit for you!

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

We use the following curricula for grades k-8. All are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and help build a comprehensive understanding of our Catholic faith. In addition, catechists supplement with crafts, service projects, and media to enhance learning.

Kindergarten: RCL Benziger, Stories of God's Love: This weekly leaflet focuses on Bible stories, Liturgical Seasons, Holy days, and Feast days to build a foundation in understanding our Catholic faith for our youngest students.

Grades 1-6: Loyola Press, Finding God: This series is a spiral curriculum, meaning that each year children develop a deeper understanding of recurring themes. These themes (organized into 5 units) are: God; Jesus; the Sacraments; the Church; and Morality. Each grade takes a different take on the theme and has a focus which is listed below.

Grade 1: God is Our Creator

Grade 2: Reconciliation and Eucharist

Grade 3: Community

Grade 4: Moral Life

Grade 5: Sacraments of Initiation

Grade 6: History and Salvation

Grades 7 & 8: Pflaum Publishing Group, Pflaum Gospel Weeklies: This series is leaflet style and dated so that each week is linked to that Sunday's Gospels as well as current events. In addition to the leaflet, each lesson has students locate a part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to connect to what our Church specifically teaches.

HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The high school curriculum makes use of a variety of resources to create a comprehensive and thorough curriculum, most notably drawing on *Chosen* from Ascension Press, *Confirmed in a Faithful Community* from St. Mary's Press, and *Youth Ministry Access* from Center for Ministry Development. With an emphasis on small groups, classes engage the students in topics focused on exploring their place in the church and in the world while preparing them for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Grade 9: focuses on the saints and what it means to be a holy person.

Grade 10: focuses on exploring holiness in the students' personal lives and daily experience as they go through year one of Confirmation Prep.

Grade 11: focuses on the Sacrament of Confirmation, what it means and how it affects us throughout our lives in year two of the sacramental prep.

CLASS TIMES & LOCATIONS

Kindergarten: Sundays at St. John Evangelist during the 9 am Mass.

Elementary (grades 1-6): Offered at two different times/locations:

Wednesday afternoons: 4:00-5:00 pm at St. John Evangelist or

Wednesday evenings: 5:45-6:45 pm at Blessed Trinity.

Members of either parish may choose either time.

Middle school classes (grades 7-8): Wednesday nights 7:00-8:00 pm at Blessed Trinity

Grades 9 & 10: Wednesday nights 7:15-8:30 pm at St. John Evangelist.

Grade 11: Students join the other high school students the first Wednesday of each month at St. John Evangelist from 7:15-8:30 pm and meet separately on Sunday nights twice a month from 7:15-8:30 pm at the Lodge at Blessed Trinity to continue their Confirmation preparation.

SACRAMENTS

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (Communion)

Sacramental preparation begins in second grade. Special information about meetings and events will be sent to the families involved. A First Eucharist retreat will occur in spring. Archdiocesan policy expects children to be in religious education classes at least one year prior to the year of preparing for the Sacrament.

Confirmation

Confirmation preparation occurs over two years, beginning in tenth grade and completing in eleventh grade. There is a Confirmation retreat in the spring of the second year of preparation. Preparation is completed in eleventh grade but the Sacrament is received in the fall of grade 12.

DISCIPLINE & EXPECTATIONS

Our desire to share faith in a positive community environment. The basic expectations we have for students are responsibility, respect, and regard for safety. These expectations are shared with students at the beginning of the year, however, we greatly appreciate parents support. Calls will be made home regarding behavior when necessary.

POLICIES

The Faith Formation Program at our parishes is structured on the policies of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Below are the more pertinent policies:

Absentees: Attendance is expected at all sessions of our Religious Education (RE) program. If your child/children will be absent from class, we ask that you call the RE office to notify us. If we do not hear from you, a call will be made to your home to verify that your child is absent. High school students who miss more than two classes in a year will be given make up assignments for additional missed classes to make sure they are still on track with their sacramental preparation.

Arrival/Departure: Generally, we ask students not to be dropped off more than 5 minutes before class. If weather is bad, students will be allowed into the entrance area to wait until class time. No student is allowed in the classroom unless the catechist or another adult is present.

- The Lodge is available for grades 5-8 of both parishes on class days from 4:45-6:45 pm. This offers a supervised location for middle school students to play games, watch movies, or do homework. Pizza and beverages are available at a small cost. Themed meals are offered on occasion by the generous contributions of volunteers. Students are walked over to class when the Lodge closes. There is a separate permission slip for the Lodge.

Cancellation: If the public schools are closed due to bad weather, there will be no RE classes. If bad weather develops after school, RE and YM staff will determine if classes are to be held that evening. Closings will be communicated through e-mail, local news channels' school/program delays and cancellations, and the parish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/btsje>

Communication: Grades 1-6 will use take home folders for announcements and class work. Please check the folder weekly and encourage your child to take responsibility by bringing the take home folder to class. Be sure to check the weekly e-mails for all grades for class updates. E-mail is the primary form of communication and where pertinent information can be expected. Parents can also find additional information from the programs on the parish Facebook page, bulletin inserts, notes home, and other parish communication.

Communication Devices: Cell phones, i-pods, toys and other such items are not allowed to be used in the classroom as they can be disruptive. Please have your child silence and put away his/her phone at the beginning of class.

Parking Lot Safety: Please follow traffic patterns designated by the parish for the safety of all children. Encourage your child/children to be alert for moving vehicles while walking through the parking lots. Parents are welcome to escort their child/children across the parking areas.

Permission Slips: Some activities provided by the parish require special permission slips for that specific event. Below is a guide to when you can expect a permission slip to be required, and when it will not be. This policy is set by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. If you have questions, please feel free to ask the Director of Religious Education or the Director of Youth Ministry.

Permission slips must be obtained for the following events and activities: events occurring off parish property, overnight activities, and youth activities outside of the scope of class and/or Mass where parents are not present.

Permission slips are not required for the following events and activities: activities on parish property within the scope of class and/or Mass; activities when parents are present on parish property; and programs engaging the community but not inviting people into the parish buildings. Though permission slips are not required in these situations, all reasonable efforts will be made to inform parents of the events/activities in advance.

Snacks: This year we were asked not to have snacks in the classroom (other than medical needs), per the pastor. If students bring a snack prior to class, they may eat it in the St. John Evangelist Lounge or the Lodge at Blessed Trinity.

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

A well-rounded religious education and youth ministry program invites students and families to connect with the parish community beyond the classes. Opportunities for fellowship emphasize the importance of the greater parish community and allow learning and growing in the faith to continue at all times. Please look for information throughout the year. Just a few of our offerings are:

- Youth Ministry Nights at the Lodge
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)
- High School Dinners
- Family Fall Program
- Summer Programming:
 - Vacation Bible School
 - At Home Mission Week
 - Mission Trip