



2022 – 2023

St. Agatha

PSR

Handbook

Welcome to St. Agatha Parish School of Religion!

This handbook is designated to provide you and your family with a brief overview of:

- St. Agatha Parish School of Religion Program
- General procedures used to keep weekly catechetical classes running smoothly and safely, while providing sound Catholic Religious Education.

PHILOSOPHY

Parents are the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith. St. Agatha Religious Education classes are designed to support families in this mission. Our volunteer teachers model by their interactions, example and guidance, appropriate, meaningful classroom experiences. We teach the six content standards of the Catholic faith through: knowledge of the Faith, knowledge of the Liturgy & Sacraments, prayer, moral formation, community life and a missionary spirit.

PRE-SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN

The Parish Preschool Religion classes meet each Sunday throughout the academic year from 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. A child must be 4 years old by September 30th and potty trained to enroll in the Pre-K class. The Preschool and Kindergarten classes are designed to support the child and his/her family in bringing the young child closer to a love and knowledge of God and the Catholic Church. This year the Pre-K class is using *Allelu* by Our Sunday Visitor Publishing. Our Kindergarten class, offered at this same time, will be using *First Faith* by RCL Benzinger Publishing.

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PSR

St. Agatha Parish School of Religion (PSR) classes meet each Sunday throughout the academic year from 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. Grades 1-8. Each grade level curriculum is comprised of age-appropriate, meaningful, formal and experimental learning opportunities. Formal catechetical teaching imparts knowledge of our faith tradition. Celebrating liturgies and sacraments together as well as the use of various other prayer forms, music, communal sharing and witness and service opportunities help to form and deepen our children's relationship to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Those involved in our program are committed to continually honor, prepare for, initiate and strengthen a young person's response to God's unconditional love. In saying "Yes" to God's call our students will become true disciples in the work of building God's Kingdom. The *Alive in Christ Series* by Our Sunday Visitor Publisher is being taught in grades 1-7. *Decision Point* by Dynamic Catholic is used in the 8th grade for Confirmation preparation.

REGISTRATION

Registration is required for students wishing to attend PSR classes at St. Agatha Church. All required forms can be found on the Parish Website.

Tuition Fees: Each student fee is \$200.00 for the school year; \$180 if registered before August 1. Catechist's children are tuition exempt. Fees pay for:

1. Textbook for each student
2. Teacher manual for each catechist
3. Teacher resource books, journals, videos, etc.
4. ALL supplies including paper, pencils, arts & crafts materials, etc.
5. Teacher training, continuing education
6. Maintenance /cleaning following PSR sessions.

ARRIVAL/ DISMISSAL

All students must enter and exit from the **Andover Road parking lot**. Families will be notified prior to the first class which of the 3 doors to use. After arrival, all doors will be locked during the course of our classes for protection of our students and faculty. If a student needs to be picked up early from class, the parent must come to the Parish Hall doors leading into the school to check him/her out.

Parents of student in preschool through 2nd grade must bring their children to the classroom, and pick them up there as well.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at PSR class is expected. Each lesson, just as each year, builds upon the previous one. Therefore, students are expected to attend classes regularly and to miss class only when there is a serious reason. Be aware, that missing 3 PSR classes is equivalent to missing 22 days of school. If a student is absent for any scheduled class a parent or guardian must contact the teacher and advise them of the reason. If a student misses more than 4 classes, the DRE will contact the family. It is our policy that no individual year of class may be skipped.

DISCIPLINE / DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Disrespect toward teachers, aides, other students, property or any inappropriate behavior or language will not be tolerated. Following classroom rules allows everyone to have an enjoyable PSR experience.

Breaking any one of them will result in:

1. A verbal warning
2. Dismissal from the classroom

If needed, a call will be made to the parent/legal guardian, who will then be requested to pick up the child immediately. If incidents persist, parents will be required to attend class with their student.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES / CELL PHONES

Students bringing a cell phone or other electronic equipment with them to class must turn off the device and put it away until class is over. If a student is using one of these devices during class time or other specified activities, that item will be taken and returned to the student only after class is dismissed.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

1. Behave in a Christian manner at all times by showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students.
2. Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
3. Attend class regularly and complete any assignments or homework.
4. Follow directions at all times and obey classroom rules.
5. Avoid language that is rude, offensive or inappropriate.
6. Do not possess or be under the influence of drugs, alcohol or tobacco of any kind
7. Do not leave the building or premises without the permission of an authorized adult

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

1. Ensure that your children attend classes regularly and on time.
2. Ensure that your children attend Mass on a regular basis.
3. Communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect your child within the classroom.
4. Be an active part of your children's learning and be involved in the classroom at the Catechist's request.
5. Download the St. Agatha Parish App (MyParish App) and join the PSR "Group"

EXPECTATIONS OF TEACHERS

1. Participate in the Diocesan Protecting God's Children's Program
2. Must be Fingerprinted
3. Weekly attendance in classroom with a completed lesson plan
4. Attend monthly teacher meetings

EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

1. Participate in the Diocesan Protecting God's Children's Program
2. Must be fingerprinted

PREPAREDNESS AND HOMEWORK

All students are expected to come to class with their books and completed assignments. If homework is assigned, it is in order to review and reinforce the material presented during the brief formal class time.

SACRAMENTAL PARENT MEETINGS

Parents of children are required to attend sacramental parent meetings when scheduled. The dates of these parent meetings can be found in the calendar. First Eucharist and Reconciliation are celebrated in the 2nd grade. Confirmation is celebrated in 8th grade.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

First Communion Preparation takes place in the 2nd grade, and Confirmation Preparation takes place in the 8th grade. A child has to be enrolled and participating in a PSR Program for a minimum of the two (2) years preceding reception of a sacrament. For instance, in order for your child to receive his or her First Holy Communion at the normal time at the end of the 2nd grade, the child must have been in both the 1st and 2nd grade PSR classes. Likewise, in order for your child to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at the normal time toward the end of the 8th grade, your son or daughter must have been in both the 7th and 8th grade PSR classes.

SAINT AGATHA APP

Please download the St. Agatha App (MyParish App). This will be used for emergency updates, such as, cancelation of classes due to weather etc...

SPECIAL NEEDS

At St. Agatha we strive to offer appropriate catechesis for all children and youth regardless of their abilities or needs. The U.S. Catholic Bishops stated in 1995, "By reason of their Baptism, all Catholics are equal in dignity in the sight of God and have the same divine calling." We work with families to best place their special needs child. Please indicate this on your student's registration.

VOLUNTEERS

There may be opportunities throughout the year for parents to volunteer, such as the 2nd grade retreat, plays, or various classroom activities. All volunteers must complete the Diocesan program of "Protecting God's Children" and have a background check/fingerprinted. St. Agatha will offer this class in September. Watch the bulletin and social media for further details. Preregistration for this class is required.

HARASSMENT POLICY FOR THE COLUMBUS DIOCESE

1. Harassment can take many forms. Harassment can occur at any parish activity, and/or take place in classrooms, halls, cafeterias, gymnasiums, or even at programs sponsored by the parish at other locations. It does NOT include compliments of a socially acceptable nature. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that embarrasses, denigrates, or shows hostility toward a person because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sex, national origin, age or disability or other protected characteristics.
2. It is the policy of the Diocese of Columbus to maintain a spirituality enriching environment in all programs and activities, free of all forms of harassment and intimidation. No participant, volunteer adult leader, or parish staff member-male or female-should be subject to unlawful harassment in any form, and specifically not to unsolicited and/or unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical.
3. Conduct constituting sexual harassment is prohibited. Sexual harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to, the follow:
 - a) Offensive sexual flirtations, advances, propositions
 - b) Continued or repeated verbal abuse of a sexual or gender based nature
 - c) Explicit or degrading sexual or gender-based comments about another individual or his or her appearance
 - d) The display or circulation of sexually explicit or suggestive writing, pictures or objects
 - e) Any offensive or physical conduct which shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of gender or sex
 - f) Graffiti of sexual nature
 - g) Fondling oneself sexually or talking about one's sexual activity in front of others
 - h) Spreading rumors about or categorizing others as to sexual activity

Sex harassment is not limited to conduct that is sexual in nature - it also includes harassment that is based on gender. Gender based harassment, which is also prohibited, is conduct that would not occur except for the sex of the person involved. An example would be referring to a woman by or as a female body part, or a demeaning sex-based term, or treating people differently because of their gender. The same prohibitions apply with regard to inflammatory or offensive comments or behaviors which are based upon race, color, age, religion, disability, or national origin. In short, working relationships between individuals must be based on mutual respect.

Sexual harassment also includes the taking of, or refusal to take, any personnel or other action on the basis of a person's submission to or refusal of sexual overtures. No person should so much as imply that an individual's "cooperation" or submission

to unwelcome sexual activity will have any *effect* on the individual's employment, assignment, compensation, advancement, development, program evaluation, participation in parish programs or activities, or any other condition of employment or achievement. Not all physical conduct is necessarily considered sexual in nature. (For example, a coach hugging a student after an accomplishment, a youth minister consoling an adolescent with an injury or physical conduct during athletic events would not be considered sexual conduct.) However, peer-based sexual harassment is a form of prohibited conduct where the harassing conduct creates a hostile environment.

4. A sexually hostile environment can be created by a parish employee, volunteer, youth participant, or visitor to the parish activity.
5. Any person who believes that he/she is subjected to unlawful harassment or intimidation must contact the (a) program administrator
(b) pastor, or (c) diocesan director of religious education. A complaint must be filed in writing. In the event that an individual alleges harassment by a director of religious education, or a pastor, the individual may file the complaint with the diocesan religious education. All complaints will be promptly investigated, and the person initiating the complaint will be advised of the outcome of the investigation.
6. Where it is determined that harassment has occurred, the appropriate authority will take immediate disciplinary action against any program administrator, volunteer, or staff engaging in harassment. The response shall take into account the individuals and circumstances. Such action may include, depending on the circumstances, disciplinary measures up to and including termination of services.
7. No retaliation against anyone who reports harassment will be tolerated. The Diocese prohibits such retaliation and will take appropriate responsive action if retaliation occurs.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETRUN THIS PAGE TO THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE BY SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2022

Our family has read the PSR Handbook. We are aware of and understand the contents of this Handbook. By signing and returning this sheet, we have agreed to accept the policies, rules, and regulations of St. Agatha PSR.

Student Name _____ **Date** _____

Student Name _____ **Date** _____

Student Name _____ **Date** _____

Student Name _____ **Date** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

PERMISSION FOR USE OF PHOTOS

I GIVE St. Agatha PSR permission to take my child's picture.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

Print Family Name _____