

To Those Who Care for the Children of Holy Spirit,

“Go and make disciples of all nations...”

Holy Spirit Church, a community of faith and the people of God, continues the mission of Jesus, whose teaching comes to us from the apostles and their successors, the Bishops and our Pastors. We, the Religious Education Staff of Holy Spirit Parish are committed to providing a Program of Religious Education to the young people of Holy Spirit Parish that teaches the Catholic Faith based on the words and mission of Jesus Christ and His Church to encourage them to be better Disciples.

We recognize the responsibility and obligation of parents and caregivers as the primary educators of the Faith and are here to support their efforts. Let us work together as a team: family, catechists, staff and students to build God's Kingdom here and forever.

May God Bless our efforts!

Sincerely in Christ,

*The Religious Education Staff
Of Holy Spirit Parish*

General Guidelines

The Religious Education Program blends the needs and concern of the families of Holy Spirit Parish with the learning expectations and sacramental opportunities of the larger Church community.

Within the classroom, the children are offered experiences in prayer, Scripture, doctrine and faith sharing. Inspired by Scripture, they are guided and encouraged in various Stewardship opportunities to serve in the family, parish and community.

Classes are scheduled on various days and various times. A variety is offered to strike a balance between the needs of the family and the educational needs of the children. Please consult your child's calendar for the correct time, day and location. There are separate calendars provided for Preschool & Kindergarten, Religious education grades 1-8, and High School.

We offer an option for families with children in preschool through 6th grade, to work together as a family on Religious Education in a program called “Family Faith Formation.” It is a home-based Religious Education program, which equips parents to pass on the faith to their children in the home setting.

The curriculum of all of our programs is based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* to ensure that the Christian Message is presented in its entirety and richness. The texts selected are in conformity to the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines mandated by the Bishop of the Sioux Falls Diocese.

This Parent handbook outlines policies for all of those Religious Education classes that meet on our Holy Spirit & Harrisburg Campuses.

Students are expected to observe the rules of conduct that enhance the religious learning experience. Parents or Guardians will be contacted in the event that a teacher or staff member deem it necessary. Every attempt will be made to settle any difficulty in a Christian manner.

Children and their families are expected to attend Sunday Mass and receive the Sacraments on a regular basis. It is in this way that the children learn to participate in the liturgy as well as having the experience of the larger parish community.

Catechists

All of our Catechists are volunteers. Without their many hours of love and devotion, this program could not exist. Many of our catechists have students in the program. We are also indebted to those who teach who do not have children in the program, who generously give of their time and talent. All Catechists receive Safe Environment training for working with children and youth. Background checks are also required.

Registration

Registration is required each year. Registration information and forms are all available online. *Tuition is due at the time of registration.* Other arrangements for payment of tuition can be made by contacting the RE parish office at 605-371-1478

Attendance

Regular attendance at religion classes on all grade levels is essential to the continuity and reinforcement of the religious education experience. This implies arriving on time, being attentive during class time, participating and cooperating with teachers.

If a student cannot be present for a session, a parent or guardian must notify the office by phone (371-1478) or e-mail prior to, or on the day of the scheduled class.

Policy for Parental Involvement

The Parish Religious Education programs we offer are meant to support the parents in their responsibility as the first educators of the Faith. Family involvement in and commitment to the life of the parish is critically important for those who participate in Parish Religious Education.

Parents will assist in the faith growth and development of their children by encouraging regular attendance, weekly Mass attendance, and family prayer. Participation in Christian

service activities as a family also reinforce the principles of the Stewardship Way of Life. Parents.

Parents are also encouraged to:

*Participate as a volunteer teacher, substitute or any of the parent involvement activities listed on the Parent Participation form. These involvement activities are required of every family.

Parents of 7th & 8th graders are required to come to class with their student 3-4 times during the year. It is important to have at least 2 adults in each class room. Specific Dates will be assigned. This will be the parent involvement activity for these parents.

*Meet your child's teacher.

*Help your child with assigned homework and class projects.

*Attend gatherings or special events connected with the program.

*If your child will be absent from class, contact the Religious Education Office, 371- 1478 before class time on Wednesdays. Leave a message if no one answers. You can also email: vwhitney@holyspiritsf.org (K-gr. 5) or hsre@holyspiritsf.org (gr.6-12)

Student Expectations

Students are expected to show respect for the grounds, building, classroom, teachers and other students:

- **Fighting, pushing or intimidating behavior will not be allowed.**
- **Language that is disrespectful will not be tolerated.**
- **Walking inside the building will be expected as will use of moderate voices in hallways and classrooms.**
- **Classroom rules established by individual teachers are to be followed.**
- **Respect for the property of others with whom we share classrooms is of the utmost importance. RE students must not handle the property of the students with whom they share desks.**
- **Respectful behavior is expected at all gatherings in the Worship Area or Chapel. This respect includes appropriate participation and no disruptive or distracting behavior.**
- **Students are expected to come to class prepared with the books required and assignments that are due.**

- Students may not use cell phones, I-pods or other electronic devices in class. They must be turned off and put away when they ENTER the building. We are here to build relationships. If a student does not follow this expectation, parents will be asked to pick up the device from the RE office.

If a student does not follow expectations:

- Teacher talks to student privately about misbehavior.
Repeat of misbehavior will result in dismissal from the classroom, with the textbook, to the Religious Education Office. RE Director will contact parent.
- If the problem is not corrected and the director contacts parents a second time, parents will be asked to instruct the student at home to keep up with lessons.
- Parent can obtain permission from Director of Religious education to have student return to class.

Special Religious Education Classes

***Holy Spirit Religious Education provides special classes for those children who are entering Religious Education for the first time in a grade other than 1st grade. These "Catch Up" classes are individual and help a child enter the regular RE class at their grade level when they are ready. Also, we offer help for those children/youth who need to receive first sacraments of Reconciliation & Holy Communion. PLEASE INFORM US if your child/ren need these special classes by calling our office or emailing us!

***We also offer special accommodations for children/youth with special needs and learning challenges. Please inform us of these special needs, so we can provide Religious Education for your child in the best possible way.

Evaluation

Evaluations will be sent home at the end of each semester in Kindergarten and grades one through eight. They will provide a record of classroom attendance and behavior. Reviews of semester content may accompany these records. Parents are asked to look over this material with their children. In this way both parent and child understand the expectations of the religious education program.

Should a child enter our program in any grade other than Grade One, materials will be provided by request of the parent to cover the missing information. Help will be provided by the staff as needed.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the Teacher or Director about their child's progress or with any question they may have regarding the Religious Education Program.

RE CLASS CANCELLATION POLICY

If school is called off or dismisses early in Sioux Falls or Harrisburg because of weather conditions on a Wednesday, there will be NO Religious Education classes that evening. If as the day goes on and weather is worsening, cancellations will be made by 3:00 PM and the

announcement posted on KELO TV's Closeline and emails sent. If we are having class and you feel uncomfortable with the weather, use your own discretion in bringing or sending your child/ren to classes.

You can also call the RE Office for information at 371-1478.

Sacramental Preparation

Sacraments, especially first sacraments, are times of joy and celebration for the entire faith community. They are graced moments in which the parish family participates and remembers its own Christian journey.

Children are prepared to receive First Reconciliation and First Communion in the second grade. First Reconciliation is received in late November/early December. First Communion is received after Easter in the Spring. Confirmation preparation takes place in the tenth grade and is received in January.

Baptismal certificates are requested and must be kept on file for sacramental verification. Attendance at special meetings and retreats is expected for parents and students. Notification of meetings is sent prior to these meetings.

******If a child enters our program in grades 3-8 who has not received First Communion or Reconciliation, please notify our office and we will arrange for preparation and reception of these sacraments.***

******Please note: It is required that a child be enrolled in a 1st grade Religious Education program to be ready for 1st Sacraments Preparation in the 2nd grade. If a child is entering 2nd grade with no previous Religious Education, the child is required to have special "catch up" classes to help them to be ready for 1st Sacraments Preparation. Please call the RE Office at 371-1478 to receive more information and to arrange for these special classes.***

SAFETY FIRST!

For the safety of the children, we ask that parents follow the traffic patterns for drop-off and pick up at Holy Spirit School that one indicated by signs at each entrance/exit of the church parking lot: Enter only from the south driveway & exit from the north. These patterns are designed for our children's safety!

Because many of our groups are now involved in off-campus Stewardship activities during Religious Education classes, we require all Parents and Guardians to fill out a Parental/Guardian Consent & Liability Waiver Form.

Family Faith Formation:

Equipping parents to pass on their Catholic Faith to their Children

Family Faith Formation is a home-based religious education program for families with children in Preschool & Kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade, offering a variety of opportunities for parents to get involved with and pass on the Catholic Faith to their children. It is open to ALL Holy Spirit Parish families, as an alternative to our Wednesday programs. It is also helpful for families that have scheduling conflicts with our class times.

FAMILY FORMATION takes place in the HOME

At the heart of Family Formation is the home: the domestic church as Saint Pope John Paul II calls it. Weekly home lessons provide the backbone for your children's spiritual formation and cover all the major tenets of our Catholic Faith. Saint Pope John Paul II said, "Families, become who you are." By devoting approximately one hour per week to the lessons throughout the school year, faith within your family will soon become a way of life.

Lessons include hand-on activities for the whole family, memory verses, audio CDs, stories, games and seasonal booklets to aid you in developing family liturgical traditions.

Here is how Family Faith Formation will work:

Families receive a packet for each month, ready during the last week of the previous month. Typically there are 3 lessons in the packet to be done throughout the month.

Home Lessons: Families choose what day and time they will gather for a weekly home lesson. The lessons are very easy to use—they were written by parents for parents to use in this very unique setting. Parents and children learn together!

The time spent together is an amazing blessing to a family—times that you will never regret! Children see how important the Faith is to parents and respond in a way that builds family and faith at the same time.