

St. Mary Catholic Community

St. Francis Xavier Parish

**Religious Formation
Handbook**



The Religious Formation Department of St. Francis/ St. Mary provides a quality education program within the curriculum guidelines of the Green Bay Diocese. To facilitate this, we have joined grades, in some instances, of the two parishes and use the resources available from each. Our staff and our volunteer teachers work hard to bring God's word to your children. Each has received a Diocesan background check, has attended VIRTUS training and has made a commitment of time and talent to our program. Each provides a positive Catholic Christian role model to your child.

Parents are the first and primary faith educators of their children. They have the truly Spirit-filled task of introducing God into their children's lives. Our Religious Formation program exists to work with parents towards the goal of educating their child into the Faith. Many times we ask parents to help with their child's learning by providing time and opportunities for studying at home. These times would be for the learning of prayers, homework assignments or special projects. Parents can also help by ensuring that their children attend classes regularly and on time. Please communicate to staff any special needs, allergies or circumstances that may affect your child in the classroom. **Parents are asked to sign up to aide teachers in the classroom and in order to provide another adult's presence in the classroom to instill discipline.**

Parents are occasionally asked to help with field trips, retreats and special events. We are required by the diocesan *Protecting God's Children* that such parents attend a VIRTUS training session and undergo a background check. Please indicate on the volunteer form if you would attend this 3-hour VIRTUS training session and submit needed information in order to help with these events during the coming year.

Students are to positively and actively participate in classroom activities and discussions. They are to adhere to the policies and procedures of this handbook and the ones established by the teacher in individual classrooms. Students are to behave in a Christian manner at all times, showing respect to and being cooperative with adults and other students.

Procedures and Policies

Parents Participation Policy: Because of the important role of parents/guardians in the religious education of their children, St Francis and St. Mary require that they support either parish with their time, talent, and treasure. A parent or guardian who is not a member of either parish, or any other Catholic parish, must join in order to enroll his/her children into our Religious Formation program. A Parish Census Card will be sent to the registering family in order to become a member of St. Mary/St. Francis if their name does not appear on our membership records. In joining either parish a family must support the parish financially. Any family which does not will pay double tuition fees.

As an alternative to tuition fees, a parent who volunteers to teach Religious Formation during the year pays no tuition for his/her family. Please call Mike Lotto or Sister Charlene to discuss this option.

Families who belong to another parish and want to attend St. Mary or St. Francis will pay double tuition fees. They also need permission from their Pastor of DRF to attend St. Mary/St. Francis Religious Formation Program.

Attendance: Regular attendance at class is expected of our RF students. Our calendar indicates the dates and times of classes at St. Mary and St. Francis. In addition to regular scheduled classes, we have provided Total Parish Education Nights and Family Nights during the school year. **7th – 10th grade students plus Confirmation students are required to attend these nights. All students are required to attend Family Nights.** You, as parents are encouraged to attend these special nights with your children, as these include educational presentations aimed at both student and parent.

Please call the Religious Formation Department of your child's absence or tardiness:

Sr. Charlene-----337-2330 X.17
Pre-S-Gr. 2 St. Mary
Gr. 3-4 St. Mary/St. Francis

Mike Lotto-----337-2330 X.16
Pre-S-Gr. 2 St. Francis
Gr. 5-11 St. Mary/St. Francis

Regular tardiness and absences will result in a call to parents.

Communication: We are here to serve the religious formation needs of our students. If you have any questions or comments please feel free to call Sister Charlene or Mike Lotto as above.

Calendars may be found on line at our websites, www.stmarydepere.org and www.stfrancisdepere.org. There will also be regular communication in the parishes' bulletins. Please check the Religious Formation section weekly for updates and reminders.

Discipline: All students are expected to participate in the faith learning experiences of the parishes' religious formation process. If a student's behavior disrupts the learning process, the following steps will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue:

1. At the first incident, the student will be reprimanded by the teacher in the classroom.
2. At the second incident, the student will be sent to the office of the Religious Formation Department to be reprimanded by the Coordinator or the Director of Religious Education.
3. After the third incident, the student will be sent to the office and the student's parent will be contacted about the removal of their child from our program.

Code of Conduct: At all times, Students will:

- Respect others and their property
- Not bring nor use tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs
- Not bring nor use weapons including pocket knives
- Dress Appropriately. (If you cannot wear it to school, you cannot wear it to religion class). This includes hats or caps of any kind and clothing with inappropriate messages or advertising.
- Cell-phones, pagers, I-pods and devices of this nature are to be turned off or silenced and placed in classroom totebox on entry into classroom and returned at the end of the class period.
- Obey the rules imposed by the teacher in the classroom, which at a minimum include no swearing or vulgar language spoken, no food or gum, including social pizza. Only clear bottles of water will be allowed into classroom. No treats are to be served by teachers in classrooms.

Health Concerns and Medication: Parents should communicate special needs or circumstances of their child to the Religious Formation Department and/or the catechist/teacher. These needs will remain confidential and only the adults that need to know will be informed. No medication can be administered to students. Please time medication to be taken at home. If there is a special circumstance, please communicate that to the Religious Formation Department.

Confidentiality: Communications between teacher and parents or the Religious Formation Department and parents will be kept in the strictest confidence unless agreed upon by both parties. The only situations that cannot be kept confidential are those involving neglect or abuse. If an adult suspects child abuse, neglect, suicidal thoughts or attempts, or sexual abuse, these **must** be reported to the appropriate authorities (teacher to RF, RF to the authorities. The pastor will be informed that this action has been taken. We are required by Wisconsin law and Green Bay Diocese policy to report suspected abuse.

Curriculum: The curriculum follows diocesan guidelines. These guidelines provide our program with established goals and objectives that we follow at St. Francis/St. Mary, so that in the course of the religious formation of your children, each is exposed to the entire body of Catholic doctrine. Texts are available to view upon request.

Emergency Class Cancellation: If weather conditions require the cancellation of schools on any Wednesday of classes, RF classes will likewise be cancelled. Parents, however, are the best judges of whether their children should attend on questionable days.