



***St. Jude The Apostle Parish
Religious Education
Parent/Student Handbook
2009-2010***

***1510 Kingston Avenue
North Tonawanda, N.Y. 14120-2013
www.stjudetheapostle.org***

September, 2009

MISSION STATEMENT

To enable children and youth at St Jude the Apostle Parish to grow, learn and mature through multifaceted activities which encourage their participation in the life and mission of the Catholic Church, and which encourage the healthy development of self esteem, spiritual growth and relationships with peers and adults.

Goals

To foster an environment in which each child can build a unique relationship with God through education and spirituality.

To foster an understanding and a need for the Mass and the Eucharist in their lives which makes us one with Jesus.

To invite our students and their families to connect with God.

To assist parents/guardians, who are the primary educators, with the knowledge, understanding and practices of the Catholic faith.

To recognize the value of the Sacraments and develop an on going relationship with God throughout their life.

To give children faith tools to fall back on in hard times throughout their life.

To increase their knowledge and trust in a loving, living, and merciful God.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The number one priority of St Jude religious education is to create a happy, healthy, holy and safe learning environment for everybody who comes into our program. To this end, the Pastor and director of religious education reserve the right to, at any time, make any rule or regulation necessary to:

- 1) ensure the safety of children and staff (physically, mentally and emotionally)
- 2) ensure that St. Jude's religious education remains a learning environment (free from any distraction)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Catechesis supports and encourages the role of the family in particular the role of the Parent/Guardian in the faith development of their child. The Parent/Guardian is the first and foremost important teacher and role model for handing down the Catholic Christian faith and lifestyle to their child. Formal Religious Education is second to the role and duties of the Parent/Guardian. The staff at St. Jude the Apostle works with the Parent/Guardian in offering the best faith formation possible.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

GRADES K-6

Currently we are using the text series “Blest Our We”. The grade level themes cover the broad expanse of traditional Catholic belief, worship and morality. This curriculum reflects the importance of consistent catechesis throughout the student’s primary years.

- K-1 God’s Love-God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- 2 First Penance Preparation- Baptism & Eucharist
- 3 First Communion Preparation – The Church
- 4 Commandments & Morality
- 5 Seven Sacraments
- 6 Hebrew Scripture

GRADES 7-8

Grade 7 course of study focus is on the Life of Jesus and the experience and study of the many forms of prayer along with the study of the Apostle’s Creed and the Our Father.

Grade 8 course of study will focus on the Scriptures and how to live and relate to the Gospels to become better Catholics/Christians.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Parents/Guardians registering their children in our program must be registered members of St. Jude the Apostle Parish. All families in our parish are eligible to register in the religious education program. Our call as Christians requires love and respect for all people. No one will be turned away based on race, ethnicity, physical disability or financial difficulty. If your child is a member of another parish, we need a letter from the respective Pastor granting permission to participate in the program at St. Jude. Parents need to complete a registration form, emergency form and present a copy of their Baptismal Certificate. Registration and emergency forms will be on line for your convenience at www.stjudetheapostle.org.

Tuition for the 2009-2010 school year is \$25 per student - \$50 per family. There is an additional fee of \$15 for the Sacramental expenses of First Penance and First Communion students. Make checks payable to St. Jude the Apostle Parish. Tuition is to be paid on or before the first day of classes. If you have difficulty paying the tuition, please contact Father Ted or the Director of Religious Education. All information will be kept in the strictest confidence.

EMERGENCY FORM

Parents are asked at the beginning of each year to fill out emergency related information and return it promptly. This information will include persons to be contacted in case of student injury or sudden illness. Under the law, schools may give nothing more than minor first aid treatment. We will also request the name and telephone number of the child's physician. In a case where hospitalization or emergency care is needed we will have the ability to give pertinent information if we cannot reach parents.

CLASS TIMES

Classes for Grades Pre-K- 8 are held on **Sunday from 10:30- 11:30 A.M.**

Monday	Grades 1-5 from	6:00-7:00 P.M.
	Grades 6-8 from	7:15 P.M.- 8:30 P.M.
Wednesday	Grade 9 from	6:00 – 7:15 P.M.
	Grade 10 from	7:30 - 8:30 P.M.

ATTENDANCE

Students are urged to attend all scheduled classes. If a student is absent he/she will be required to make up class work to the teacher's satisfaction. Penance and Communion classes are allowed only 2 absences. More than 2 absences will require a meeting with the parent, Fr. Ted and the Director of Religious Education.

Make-up work will be made available upon request in the event of illness or long term absence, simply contact the Director of Religious Education.

Religious Education (CCD) class time is very precious. Attendance, discipline, participation in class, as well as homework, is important to your child's understanding of their Catholic Faith. We ask for your help in instilling the importance of regular attendance.

Schedule of classes will be posted on the Parish website as of September 15, 2009. We urge you to use the Parish website for other important information, including the CCD Monthly Newsletter.

***Please note there may be changes to the calendar periodically. When in doubt check it out.**

TARDINESS

Please drop your children off no more than 10 minutes before class begins. Our students begin their prayers as a school community, promptly at the beginning of class. In the first 10 minutes of class, a teacher is setting the mood and introducing the lesson. We count on students being present on time, especially since the amount of time we have with your child limited.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a meaningful activity which supplements and reinforces work covered in the classroom. Homework **includes Sunday Mass attendance**, daily prayer, living the Beatitudes, obeying the Ten Commandments, going to Confession and receiving Holy Communion.

We encourage each parent to be involved in the faith formation of your child. Available to Grades K-8 is a Prayer Sheet which parents can help and encourage their children to memorize. Throughout the year, teachers will be sending home additional materials and assignments to reinforce what had been discussed in the classroom. Share your own faith story, experiences and values with your son/daughter. Questions do not necessarily mean there is a lack of faith but a desire to more fully understand.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

St. Jude the Apostle is responsible for your child's safety while on the church grounds. Students will arrive through the Melody Lane entrance and depart through the parking lot. As you are aware there are concerns with vehicles pulling in and out of parking spaces at the time of dismissal. Additionally, it is dark at dismissal time and we do not want anyone to get hurt. We are requiring an adult to pick up their children in Kruezer Hall at dismissal time. Grades Pre-K through three will remain in their classrooms until picked up by a parent/guardian. This will help ensure organization and the safety of your children while going to and from cars in the parking lot. Religious Education staff will be assisting in the dismissal process. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

LEAVING EARLY & WRITTEN EXCUSES

Written excuses are required for any early dismissals and absences. The religious education office requires excuses for any absences and that a parent/guardian signs out any child leaving early from class at the time they are picked up. In this packet, you will find an excuse form that can be completed on the occasion of an absence.

FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST EUCHARIST

First Reconciliation takes place in Grade 2 and First Eucharist in Grade 3. Students are encouraged to attend all Sacramental Preparation classes including a Retreat for First Eucharist and First Reconciliation. In the event of an absence, the Parent/Guardian is asked to contact the teacher and arrange for make up work. Mass attendance is an important aspect of Sacramental Preparation as well as the child's faith formation. Proof of Baptism is required before entering the preparation process. To aide you in preparing your child for the Sacraments, there will be parent meetings for your participation.

SACRAMENTAL UPDATE CLASS

If your child has not received their grade level sacraments, please notify the Director when you register and the necessary classes will be scheduled.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Please notify the Director if your child requires special needs for any kind of disability. We will work with you as best we can to provide your child with spiritual and educational support.

CUSTODY OF CHILD

Concerns regarding parental custody of a child in the religious education program must be communicated in writing to the Director of Religious Education.

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Christian behavior is expected of all students attending classes. **Disruptive behavior, disrespect toward teachers and or other students, adults or church property will not be tolerated. Parents/Guardians will be called if necessary.**

Deliberate unacceptable behavior will lead to the following:

1. Teacher reprimand.
2. Student will meet with Director of Religious Education and the teacher.
3. Parent/guardian will be advised of behavior. The student will not be admitted back to class without a conference.
4. A second ejection from the classroom will result in either:
 - a. Have the student continue attending Religious Education with a Parent/Guardian present at each session for a time to be determined with mutual agreement with parent.
 - b. Have the student leave the program, for the remainder of the year.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC GAMES

The use of cell phones/games during class times is prohibited. All cell phones must be shut off when students enter the building for class. After a warning, the cell phone will be taken away and returned to their parent upon request.

STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS

Each student will be evaluated twice during the year by their teacher. These reports are not to categorize or “grade” your child, but instead to help promote a working partnership between home and church.

CLOSINGS

If classes are to be canceled due to weather conditions, please listen to WBEN radio station 930; or watch WGRZ Channel 2; WIVB Channel 4; or WKBW Channel 7. Due to bad weather, if the North Tonawanda schools are closed the day of religious education, our classes are also cancelled.

FIELD TRIPS

A signed Permission Slip from the Parent/Guardian must be given in order for a student to participate in a field trip. **A phone call allowing oral permission is not accepted.**

FAMILY MINISTRY

We would like to continue to have activities which our parents coordinate for your children. Some of these special events include Christmas and Easter celebrations, potluck dinners, fundraisers, community days and picnics. Please let us know if you would like to help.

DRESS CODE

Students are to dress neatly for class. Clothing with inappropriate messages or logos may not be worn. Please be sure to remove caps/hats when entering the building. **For the safety of your child, shoes with wheels inserted in the heel are forbidden.**

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

In accordance with diocesan policy, all volunteers that have contact with children in our program must complete the volunteer form and permission slip for a background check to the director of the program. In addition, all volunteers 18 years and older must attend the diocesan safe environment workshop which is offered in the diocese monthly.

CHILDREN & YOUTH MASSES

“People who believe in God are drawn to worship, that is, to give praise, thanks, ask forgiveness, and to bring their petitions to God. Believers can worship God alone, but the Christian community values communal worship because Jesus said, “For where two or three meet in my name, I am there among them.” Mt 18:20

We encourage our parishioners to stress the importance of attending weekly mass with their families. Your child is required to sign the attendance book located in the church during Mass each week. If your family attends mass at another parish, students are required to bring in a bulletin from the church attended. Be sure to put their name and grade on the top and hand it to their teacher. The Religious Education classes prepare students for Sunday worship. **It does not replace Sunday Mass attendance.** Please continue your families faith journey and join in the Eucharistic Celebration.

Teen Masses are held on the First Sunday of each month.

Children’s Mass is held on the last Sunday of each month.

Children’s Mass Schedule @ 12 Noon Mass

September 27, 2009 - Grade 8 and Grade 5
October 25, 2009- Grade 7 and Grade 4
November 29, 2009- Grade 6 and Grade 3
December 24, 2009- 4:00 P.M. Family Mass (Pageant)
January 31, 2009- Grade 5 and Grade 2
February 28, 2009- Grade 4 and Grade 1
April 25, 2009- Grade 8 and Grade 5
May 23, 2009- All grades

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM

TIMES

Both the 9th and 10th grade classes are held this year on Wednesday evenings. 9th graders begin at 6:00 and conclude at 7:15. The 10th grade classes are from 7:30 to 8:45. Due to the tight time frame classes must begin and end on time. I will be in the building one hour prior to class beginning and until 9:30 after class, if there is something you need to see me about.

CURRICULUM

For our 2009-2010 school year, our high school program will be experiencing the beginning of some curriculum changes. Our goal is to establish a two year program of 9th and 10th graders with the sacrament of Confirmation to be held in the beginning of the 11th year. It is an exciting program, filled with Bible instruction, the Creed, liturgy and worship, prayer, morality issues, community service and today's news and of course...more.

This year will be the beginning of our transition. Both the 9th and 10th will be participating in a new Bible study program known as T-3 Timeline through Ascension Press. I invite and encourage parents to attend these large group activities. The Bible study session is DVD driven with class discussions and activities to follow. Parents, likewise, are encouraged to join us to watch the DVD and while the students break into their own classes, parents will be able to share what they have experienced among themselves. What a wonderful way to grow in our own knowledge and faith while being able to share with teens!

Following the Bible study our 9th graders will continue their study of scripture with "The Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth" from St Mary's Press, a text which has many answers that teens inquire regarding our religion which will hopefully assist them into a stronger relationship with Christ and His Church. Once the Bible study is completed, the 10th graders will participate in a Confirmation program which will assist them in their preparation for the Sacrament which will take place later in Spring 2010.

ATTENDANCE

MASS ATTENDANCE is a must!! If you are a "semi-going to church" family..... NOW is the time to begin a new habit! All children must be exposed to and experience the center of our faith, which is the Eucharist! There are sign in sheets at the break in the church. All students must sign in each week. If they attend another church, they must bring in a bulletin from the visited church to their next class.

CLASS ATTENDANCE is so important. If your child is going to miss a class we ask that you call prior to that class start time. If we do not hear from you prior to class beginning we will call your home. Missed classes must be made up. If there is a conflict please call so that something can be worked out in advance. If a DVD class is missed, arrangements can be made to view the (missed) DVD before the next session. If there are more than three absences then you will need to speak to the Confirmation Coordinator regarding your child's participation in the program. Please call if there is a concern as communication is very important.

BEHAVIOR

Respect is a key factor in our Religious Ed classes. Our teachers spend many hours volunteering their time and talents in assisting our teens on their faith journey. Knowing that our youth have a full schedule, they need to make a commitment to the program.

I have a 1,2,3,4 belief in discipline. Once the teacher has informed me of a situation, I will:

1. Mediate the conflict.
2. Give written notice to be sent home.
3. If the infraction persists, the parent will sit in the students class.
4. The student will be expelled from the remainder of that years classes.

Disrespect of teachers and students will not be tolerated. We are all here on a journey in faith.

CELL PHONES / ELECTRONIC GAMES

All cell phones must be turned off once inside the building and are not to be turned on until dismissed from class. If games or phone are on during class, they will be taken away and returned only to the parents. Again, due to the very short time designated for class we need as little distraction as possible.

DRESS CODE

As young Christian men and women we need to be aware of how we dress and present ourselves. Be cautious of writings on clothing and apparel. If what your child wears is “out of line” for a Christian setting you will be called to bring them something more appropriate. We also ask that caps are removed upon entering the building. It is a courtesy especially neglected by young men that we would like all to respect.

DISMISSAL

The ramp door will be used as an entrance at the beginning of class. All students will be dismissed out the parking lot door. The ramp will only be used for dismissal in an emergency. If a teen arrives late or needs to leave their class early, they must bring an excuse from their parent. All parental excuses will be verified. If a child has been ill, they must be free from fever for 24 hours before attending class. We also do not have the ability to administer any medication, please do not allow your child to bring any into class.

TEEN MASSES

Teen masses are held the first Sunday of every month at noon from October through May. Your child's classes will be assigned to organize and participate in specific masses on the first night of class. There will be a teen mass meeting after the noon mass on the second Sunday. The teens only need to attend the meeting if... they wish too... or when their class is organizing the liturgy. Every Catholic should participate in mass and this is an excellent way for the teens to get involved by preparing the liturgy for the rest of the parish.

Please sign and return the form to your child's teacher by the week of September 20th, 2009.

I have read the information contained in the Religious Education Parent/Student handbook and I agree to abide by its contents.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____
