

The Parish School of Religion (PSR)

*A Catholic Education Program of
St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church
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Parent Handbook

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Parish School of Religion (PSR)
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Introduction

Philosophy

"We hear of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love for all the holy ones (our children). Thus, we never cease giving thanks for you and praying that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and insight to know him clearly. May he enlighten your innermost vision that you may know the great hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glory that is distributed amongst us all, and the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe."

Welcome to a new year of St. Anthony's Parish School of Religion for public school children. The Church has long taught: "Parents are the first and foremost teachers of their children. They teach informally but powerfully by example and instruction. They communicate values and attitudes by showing love for Christ and His Church and for each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its Spirit, and by fostering justice and love in all their relationships.... Parents nurture faith in their children by showing them the richness and beauty of lived faith." Helping you in this calling is the focus of the PSR Program.

We pledge to do this by presenting the truths of our Catholic faith to our children in ways that are faithful to the Tradition of the Church and at the same time are stimulating, challenging and sometimes fun! While working with your children we will make every attempt to keep you informed of what we are doing and to involve you in the process. By working with you in these and other ways, we strive to help us all realize the many gifts that God holds out for all of us.

Goals of the Program

The distinctive purpose of Catholic education is to help all to proclaim the Gospel, build community, and be moved to service of one another. Priests, teachers, parents and students should experience what it means to live a life of personal and community responsibility in Christ. This incorporates prayer and the Gospel values of peace, brotherhood, love, patience and respect for others.

In addition, we have adopted the following goals for St. Anthony's Parish School of Religion Program:

- To assist parents in their primary role as teachers of their children;
- To assist students in developing a personal relationship with God;
- To assist students in recognizing Jesus Christ as the central focus of the Christian message;
- To proclaim Scripture as the Living Word of God and to enable students to read and understand the Scriptures;
- To faithfully teach Roman Catholic doctrine and the varied Traditions of the Catholic Church;
- To develop in the students a love and appreciation for the Sacraments as a vital means for living and experiencing their Catholic faith;
- To foster in each student a positive self-image;
- To foster a respect for other people that leads the students to live Gospel values
- To lead students to an experience of prayer and liturgy that encourages them to incorporate prayer and worship in their own active faith life;
- To provide opportunities for Christian service within family and the community that leads students to incorporate acts of service and charity in their lives;
- To encourage a sense of vocation which moves students to respond to God's call in their lives;
- To form a Catholic conscience which will guide the students regarding moral issues.

Parental Involvement and Support

Parent Commitment Statement

The PSR program is founded on a partnership with parents. This partnership works best when all parties acknowledge their respective roles and responsibilities in the education of children. Accordingly, St. Anthony's PSR Program accepts students whose parents know the value of religious education and desire a special kind of school where Catholic teaching and moral formation are an integral part of the student's experience. As evidence of your understanding of the fundamental principles of the PSR program, and your essential role in its success, we ask all parents to assent to the following Parent Commitment Statement:

"In enrolling my child in St. Anthony's PSR Program I acknowledge and accept my privilege and responsibility to be the primary religious educator of my children. I understand that the PSR Program is a way in which the Church seeks to share with me and assist me in this vocation. However, I know that no matter how clearly and effectively the Program communicates the truths of the faith, unless my children see these truths take flesh in our family there is little hope that the Faith will take root in their hearts. I understand, therefore, my own witness is essential to the religious development and growth of my children.

Aware of the dignity of this call from God and acknowledging the responsibility which is mine, I commit myself to be, in word and deed, the first teacher of my children. In so committing, I pledge: (i) to participate consistently and actively in the Sunday Eucharist, or (if I not be Catholic) to consistently and actively participate in worship experiences appropriate to my faith community; (ii) to speak to my children about God and make prayer an integral and important part of the environment of our home; (iii) to participate and cooperate, as the PSR Program requests, in the religious education and especially the sacramental preparation of my children, and to become more knowledgeable about the Catholic Faith; (iv) to accept my responsibility to support the moral teachings of the Christian Faith in order not to contradict in my home what is proclaimed in the Program; (v) to teach my children to have a love and concern for the needs of others, especially the poor; and (vi) to meet my financial responsibility in supporting the PSR Program ."

Parent Aides

Our faculty delivers a well-prepared weekly curriculum to the students. To best meet the needs of a diverse group of students, however, often requires additional classroom personnel. Parents willing to help out in the classes are needed to fill this need. Those interested may sign up the first night of class or see the coordinator any time through the school year.

St. Anthony of Padua PSR Program Faculty

Pastor	Fr. Sebastian Mundackal (677-4868)
Director	Mr. Frank Kohn (677-3326)
1st Grade	Mrs. Karen Skidmore
2nd Grade	Mrs. Valerie Rynders
3rd Grade	Mrs. Rachel Schoenberger
4th Grade	Mrs. Kellie Wilson
5th Grade	Mrs. Mary Ellen Stolte
6th Grade	Mrs. Angie Fisher
Confirmation 1	Mr. Kurtis Bochantin
Confirmation 2	Mr. Larry Giovanni

Class Logistics

Admission

St. Anthony's Parish School of Religion Program is open to students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, who attend public school and whose parents subscribe to the philosophy and goals of the Program (as witnessed by their acceptance of the "Parental Commitment Statement").

We reserve the prerogative to evaluate the religious knowledge of students who did not attend the PSR Program in the preceding year. We will use this evaluation to determine the class to which the student will be admitted.

Students who are not baptized in the Catholic faith and whose parents wish them to be baptized and students older than second grade age who have not received their First Communion and whose parents wish them to receive it will be admitted to the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (R.C.I.C.). After a suitable period of preparation and the reception of the Sacraments, the student will be integrated into a regular PSR class.

Registration

No student will be admitted to class until she or he has been registered. Registrations for the Program are typically completed during the first regular class session of the year. Registrations are accepted during the year for new and transfer students.

Attendance

Regular attendance is crucial to your child's education. Accordingly, no more than 6 absences per year are allowed. A notice is sent to the parents upon the third absence in a semester. If, following an absenteeism letter being sent, another absence occurs during the semester, the student will be suspended from the program pending a conference between the coordinators, teacher, and parent.

If your child is unable to attend class due to illness or family emergency, please call the school office at 677-3585 (x118). Please give the student's name, grade, teacher's name and reason for the absence. The teacher will be advised.

Tardiness Procedure

It is very important to be in class on time. Tardy arrivals disrupt classes and rob students of valuable class time. Thus, tardiness must be held to a minimum. If a student arrives late (anytime after 6:30 p.m. is late), the student must report to the office prior to going to class. She/he will be removed from the absentee list and may then proceed to class. Tardiness in excess of twice per semester will be cause for a conference with the student's parents.

Dismissal Procedure: Normal

Students are dismissed from class no earlier than 8:00 p.m. and will be held in their respective classrooms until a parent, guardian, or other appointed person arrives at the classroom to escort the student out of the building. **IT IS CRITICAL THAT PARENTS/GUARDIANS UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PRACTICE IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ALL CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM.**

Dismissal Procedure: Early

If, for any reason, a student must leave class early, the parent must first go to the school office. The coordinator will then accompany the parent to the classroom. This will minimize classroom disruption.

Cancellation of Classes

Should inclement weather or other causes necessitate cancellation of classes; a message will be announced from the PSR voice mailbox in the Rectory at 677-3585 (x118) and announced on Channel 5 KSDK TV.

Fee Structure & Payment Policy

St. Anthony's PSR Program is designed to be self-sufficient from an operating expense standpoint, but relies on the financial support of St. Anthony's Parish for all its capital needs. Hence, it is very important that all tuition payments be made in a timely fashion and that PSR Program families do their fair share in supporting the parish with their time, talents and financial gifts.

The tuition for the Program is \$130.00 per student per year (1 child=130.00, 2 children=240.00, 3 or more=300.00). Tuition is due at registration, the first night of class. For those families with more than one child in the program, half of the total amount due may be paid at registration, with the balance due by the end of the first semester. If tuition payments are or become a hardship, please contact the Director or the Pastor, Fr. Mahoney. We will make any reasonable attempt to create a fair solution.

Curriculum and Study Program

Curriculum

The Parish School of Religion Program uses widely acclaimed curriculum materials which provide a solid and orthodox foundation in religious education. Grades 1 through 6 are approached as a continuous series of learning experiences, one building toward the next, to provide a solid foundation in our faith. The Loyola Press study curriculum has been selected to achieve this goal. Each year focuses on particular aspects of our faith experience as follows:

- Grade 1 - Stories of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Grade 2 - Basic Church teachings, sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.
- Grade 3 - The Church and the kind of community the Church is called to be.
- Grade 4 - Holiness, conscience and morality in the 10 Commandments and Beatitudes.
- Grade 5 - The many ways God works in our lives, especially through the Sacraments.
- Grade 6 - Scripture with an emphasis on our roots in the Old Testament.

The final two years of the Program (typically 7th and 8th grade) are dedicated to direct preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Both years of preparation are required to be confirmed. During these two years students are led to:

- reflect on their own experience of life;
- review doctrines of the Church and how they impact their daily lives;
- discover how those experiences are recorded in sacred scripture;
- see how our experiences form us into a community and a church;
- celebrate those experiences in prayer and worship.

Homework Policy

Homework assignments will usually be made by your child's teacher. Parents are expected to keep abreast of their child's weekly assignments and to assist their children in arriving at class with homework and other class preparation completed. Assignments may include reading or other written work from the student text, family interaction, prayer experiences, taking notes regarding the Scripture readings or homily from Sunday Mass, etc.

Homework may also include (especially for the older students) Christian service projects such as visiting a home or center for the elderly, helping with food distribution to needy families, and the like. Such service involvement may cause the student to set aside a brief period of time on a Saturday or Sunday to complete the assignment and may necessitate parental assistance (for transportation and guidance). Your support at these times is very important and we thank you for it in advance.

Report Cards

Report cards will be issued two times, at the conclusion of each semester.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (R.C.I.C.)

The R.C.I.C. is designed to prepare students in grades 3-8 for reception of the sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation and First Communion. Students who are not baptized in the Catholic faith (and whose parents wish them to be baptized) and students older than second grade age who have not received their First Communion (and whose parents wish them to receive it) will be admitted to the R.C.I.C. class. Parents must work closely with the teacher in preparing their children for the sacraments. Celebration of the Sacraments may be scheduled on an individual basis and will be scheduled by the Director in consultation with the pastor.

After a suitable period of preparation and the reception of the Sacraments, the student will be integrated into a regular PSR Program class.

Sacramental Programs

St. Anthony's PSR Program leads second grade students to the reception of First Reconciliation and First Communion and leads eighth grade aged students to the reception of Confirmation. Our Sacramental programs are designed with a focus on family participation and celebration.

Preparation for Reconciliation and Communion actually begins in first grade; preparation for Confirmation is ongoing from that time. It is, therefore, very important for students to be active in the Parish School of Religion Program each and every year. **IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT STUDENTS PREPARING FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS ATTEND CLASS REGULARLY, COMPLETE ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE PROCESS.**

In addition to classroom instruction, parent meetings are conducted to assist the family in preparing for the sacraments. Attendance by at least one parent at these meetings is mandatory, and both parents are highly encouraged to attend. Parents will be notified the date and time of these meetings.

Attendance at all practices for First Reconciliation and First Communion is also required if students are to participate in celebration of the sacraments with their classmates.

Special note regarding Confirmation: Students must attend no less than two consecutive years of Confirmation preparation to be considered candidates for Confirmation. Hence we no longer refer to the last two years of the program as "7th and 8th" grade. Rather, they are Confirmation I and II. During this time a special emphasis is placed on demonstrating a willingness to live the Christian life and on integrating

Christian values in the student's everyday life. Any student requesting admission in the Confirmation preparation program who has not completed Confirmation I will be placed in the Confirmation I class regardless of their "grade" in the public school system.

Permanent Records

The Parish Rectory maintains permanent records for all students with particular regard to the reception of the sacraments. This information is provided by the PSR program director. Please note that:

- In order to receive baptism, we must have a copy of the child's birth certificate.
- In order to receive First Communion and Confirmation, we must have a copy of the child's baptismal certificate.

Discipline

Policy

St. Anthony's PSR Program endorses the assertive method of discipline. Each teacher will clearly communicate her/his expectations regarding general school rules and specific classroom rules and what the consequences of various student behaviors will be. School and classroom rules will be clear, concise, and enforced!

Attention is given to the student who follows the rules rather than the one who breaks the rules. If a student violates school or classroom rules we will follow this process:

1st offense - name written on chalkboard.

2nd offense - student is sent to the office. Parent will be called to pick up the child.

A reasonable attempt will be made in the classroom to encourage a student to follow the rules prior to sending the student to the office. However, our time is limited and we cannot allow an unruly student to disrupt a classroom for a lengthy period of time. In this method, the teacher does not use time or excess attention to deal with an offending student. Rather, the teacher continues teaching and reinforcing positive behavior. Also, within this method we will make every attempt to uphold the self-esteem of the student which includes not raising our voices unless absolutely necessary.

Should it be necessary to remove a student from the classroom and to call home more than twice in a semester, the student will be temporarily suspended from class. The suspension will remain in effect until a conference can be arranged between the teacher, parent student and program director. Further participation in the PSR Program will be at the discretion of the program director. In all cases, parents are free to appeal any disciplinary action to the pastor.

General School Rules

The following rules will be observed by all students:

- We will uphold the dignity of all persons by treating fellow students, teachers, administrators and others with Christian respect.
- We will be good stewards of God's physical gifts by arriving at school with all necessary class materials (textbook, etc.).
- We will care for and preserve textbooks, school supplies, the contents of the desks we use and the school building and grounds.
- We will create an environment which is conducive to learning, prayer and worship by not running, yelling or engaging in other disruptive behaviors in the school building; not eating or drinking (including gum) in the school building.

- We will demonstrate a belief in our own dignity by dressing in an appropriate manner, which includes not wearing hats in the school building; not wearing short shorts, short skirts or other revealing or provocative clothing; not wearing T-shirts with beer/alcoholic beverage, cigarette, drug, hard rock, obscene, anti-Christian or other inappropriate messages and displays. Tennis shoes with wheels are not permitted, due to safety concerns.
- We will conduct ourselves according to sound Christian moral principles at all times.
- We will fully participate in the educational, prayer and liturgical programs.

Tobacco, Drugs, Alcohol and Weapons

Any student found to be in possession of tobacco, drugs, alcohol or any controlled substance will be immediately suspended from the program. Any student found to be bearing a weapon of any kind will be immediately suspended from the program.

Depending on the nature of the offense, the police or other public authorities may be immediately notified by the program coordinator.

Class Rules

Each teacher will adopt specific classroom rules which must be adhered to with the same attention given the school rules.

Other Operating Procedures and Policies

Health and Safety

We take the health and safety of all our students very seriously. As a result we observe the following:

- No student may leave the school building unless he/she is being escorted by a parent, teacher or other authorized adult.
- Emergency forms must be completed and kept up to date.
- Fire, tornado and other safety drills will be conducted at periodic intervals.

We must have an emergency contact and authorization form on file in the office should an accident ever occur. In case of accident, we will make every attempt to contact the parent, guardian or emergency contact immediately. If none can be reached and/or immediate action is necessary, paramedics or other appropriate medical / safety people will be called.

IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT THE INFORMATION WE HAVE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE BE COMPLETE AND ACCURATE AT ALL TIMES. If you experience a change of address, phone number, or emergency contact information, please notify us immediately.

Medications

PSR Program personnel will not dispense medication of any kind (including non-prescription medication such as aspirin, Tylenol, etc.) to any student unless acting under a direct order, signed and properly filed, of a licensed physician, and with the written permission of the parent or legal guardian to dispense the medication. If it is necessary for the student to carry medications to school, the medications must be brought to the office where they will be kept in a secure place under the supervision of office personnel.

Visitors

Visitors are not allowed in the classrooms without prior permission from the teacher. We are very open to sharing our program and all that we do with parents and other interested parties and visitors, but we cannot allow classes to be disturbed by last minute guests. Teachers will send unexpected visitors to the office.