



**ST. MICHAEL CATHOLIC CHURCH
FAITH FORMATION OFFICE**

Faith Center, Floor 3 | 317 West Willow Avenue | Wheaton, IL 60187

2024-2025 Religious Education

FAMILY HANDBOOK



FAITH FORMATION TEAM

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WELCOME TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Thank you for enrolling in St. Michael Religious Education (RE)! We are blessed to be part of your family's faith journey and appreciate your dedication to raising your children in our Catholic Faith.

Program Overview

We are excited to welcome you to in-person classes designed to help you and your children grow in faith, appreciate God's love, and participate in the vibrant parish life of St. Michael Church. There will be 21 student class days between the dates of September 15, 2024 through May 5, 2025. You also are invited to two Family Reconciliation dates during the year.

Mass is the cornerstone of our Catholic faith, and we encourage parents to choose RE times around the Mass that works best for your family. St. Michael Mass times are: Saturday Vigil 5:00 pm, Sunday morning 7:15, 9:00, and 10:45 am.

Student Class Days and Times

PRESCHOOL 3-GRADE 5 (75-MINUTE SESSIONS):

Sundays

Session A | 8:45-10:00 am

Session B | 10:30-11:45 am

Mondays

Session C | 4:30-5:45 pm

GRADES 6-8 (85-MINUTE SESSIONS):

Sundays

Session A | 8:45-10:10 am

Session B | 10:30am-11:55 am

Mondays

Session C | 4:30-5:55 pm

SUNDAY MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICE NIGHTS

September 29 | November 10 | January 26 | March 23 | 6:30-8:00 pm

Middle and high school students will meet on Sunday nights for food, fun, and service. **Join us in the Faith Center from 6:30-8:00 pm for pizza, soda, candy, and group service projects that foster friendships and serve our community.** Additionally, on Saturday in November (date TBD), we will continue our long-standing tradition of our Rake-a-Thon for parishioners in need.

Tuition and Payment

The preferred method of payment for tuition and fees is through FACTS Management. You are encouraged to view your FACTS account to confirm your method of payment (checking account or credit card). Please visit our website or call the RE Office for more information about payment through FACTS.

Families can choose to pay in full on August 15, 2024, or in two installments on August 15, 2024 and October 15, 2024. Payment in full by cash or check is also acceptable.

Families will not be able to register for 2024-2025 until payments are received or arrangements are made for financial assistance. Students will not be placed in an RE class until FACTS payments are made, tuition is paid in full by cash or check on or before August 19, 2024, or tuition assistance form is received and approved in the RE Office by 8/19/24. Please contact the RE Office at (630) 682-3650 if you need more information or would like to apply for financial assistance.

Parent Participation

Our Catholic faith begins and grows at home, then is supplemented in a more formal way with Religious Education classes. It is important for families to support and encourage faith formation.

- **Attend Mass with your child/ren on Sundays and Holy Days** and receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation (Confession).
- Spend a few minutes each week reviewing the material your child covered in RE and checking for homework that needs to be completed and returned.
- Introduce yourself to your child's catechist, and feel free to stay in touch through the school year.
- Review electronic communications shared by the Faith Formation Office. The content includes reminders and conversation-starters for at-home faith-building opportunities.
- Participate with your child/ren in family service opportunities.
- Support our parish family with your prayers, the gift of your time, and financial contributions.
- Become an RE volunteer. We have weekly needs during class times and weekdays: attendance, crossing guards, tech assistance, special projects, and our social event committee.

Reconciliation Opportunities

We will offer two opportunities for Reconciliation. We invite families to join us on **Tuesday, December 10, 2024** at 6:00 pm for Advent Reconciliation and **Tuesday, March 18, 2025** at 6:00 pm for Lenten Reconciliation. After a brief introduction, our priests will be available for individual confessions. St. Michael priests are available for individual confessions on Tuesdays from 4:00-5:45 pm and on Saturday mornings following the 8:00 am Mass.

Communication and Social Media

- **E-mail** is the main way we communicate with parents and families throughout the year.
- **Facebook and Instagram** - Please "Like" and follow our pages: "St. Michael Wheaton Religious Education" (Facebook) and "smrewheaton" (Instagram). These pages include information about Catholicism and the Sacraments to help you share the faith with your family at home as well as meeting and calendar reminders.
- **Emergency Closings** - In case of an emergency including hazardous winter road conditions, extreme cold, or tornados, Religious Education classes may be canceled. A Flocknote email and text will be sent to all families if classes are canceled. It is imperative that we have a correct email and phone number on file for your family.

PARENTS, PLEASE OFFER YOUR SUPPORT IN PRAYER AND AS A VOLUNTEER.

A generous tuition credit for Catechists, Catechist Aides, Attendance Desk Volunteers, Crossing Guards and Traffic Safety Volunteers is offered for parents who have children enrolled in these classes. We offer ongoing training and support. Dads, Moms, Grandparents are all needed!

Student Guidelines

We strive to instill strong moral values and high standards of excellence in our students. We address these values and standards in a number of ways. We also strive to keep all students safe while attending classes and other events.

To help with this, we ask all our students to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Once students are dropped off at class, they should go directly into the building. Students should never leave the property until they are picked up again after dismissal.
- If their catechist has not arrived, students should wait quietly in the hallway outside the classroom until an adult arrives.
- Anyone needing to use the restroom should try to do so before class begins or at dismissal.
- Students in grades Preschool through 3rd grade should wait in the classroom until picked up by a parent or older sibling.

Students with Disabilities or Special Classroom Considerations

All God's children are welcome in the St. Michael RE Family. We encourage parents to share any insights about your child/ren that might help us offer the best possible experience for all our young people. Call the Religious Education Office any time. We are happy to discuss ways to fit our program to a child's needs. You can provide this information through the registration website or the RE Office so that we can provide insight to your child's catechist and best support your child & family.

Medications

We cannot store or dispense medications to any child.

Absences

Before the class, parents may report an absence by **emailing and calling your catechist**.

If class has begun, please report the absence by **calling the Religious Education Office** (630-682-3650). Please leave your name, your child's name, grade, and catechist's name. *(If you are calling, please also spell your last name.)*

If no call or email is received for your **middle school student** who is absent, our Attendance Volunteers may contact a parent to verify the absence. It is the responsibility of the student or parents to find out what was missed during an absence and to make arrangements to make up the work whenever possible.

Tardiness/Early Dismissal

Classes begin promptly at their listed time. Students are expected to be on time. A student can only be dismissed early to the parent, or if the student has a written/email notice from a parent or guardian, given to the catechist and attendance volunteer before leaving the building. Students will be signed out at the Attendance Desk before leaving early.

Discipline Issues

Our catechists and aides are volunteers, and many are not teachers by profession. All students, catechists, and volunteers deserve respect and courtesy. Behavior consistent with the Christian ideals of our parish is expected at all times. Problems in the classroom will first be handled by the catechist or aide. If the behavior problem persists, the coordinator, parents, and child (when appropriate) will be asked to discuss ways to correct the situation.

Safety & Security Procedures

- All volunteers wear a name badge while in the building for security and safety reasons. All classroom visitors must report to the attendance desk prior to any class visitation. All students should carry the folder given to them at the beginning of the school year to each class. The label on the folder serves as their Religious Education Student ID. If you lose your name badge or folder, we ask that you request a new one from the Religious Education Office.
- **Access to St. Michael School** - In order to continue to provide a secure environment for the students, all doors will be locked at all times. Classes will be accessible only through Door 1 by a keypad code given to students at the first class. The code is only good during RE class times.
- **Access to the Faith Center** - The front door and doors leading to each floor of the building will be locked at all times and accessible by a keypad code given to the students at the first class. The code is only good during RE class times.
- Attendance Volunteers are stationed in the school building and in the Faith Center during every class. They are responsible for picking up and recording the attendance at the beginning of each class and monitoring access to the classrooms during class time.
- Students should respect all personal items, projects, books, posters, and any other equipment or supplies that are either on display or left in the classrooms or in the hallways. Students should sit only in the classroom chairs.
- Please walk in the hallways and throughout the buildings and use quiet voices.
- The elevators are reserved for students in wheelchairs or those with a medical need.

Fire Alarm / Severe Weather Warnings

- Everyone must exit the building when the fire alarm sounds. Students should stay together with their class. If a student is not with the class when the alarm sounds, they should exit immediately and go to the school parking lot to find their class.
- In case of a severe weather alarm, when instructed, everyone should go into the hallways outside the classroom and be seated along the walls. All should remain until instructed otherwise.

Building Security/A.L.I.C.E. Training

The Religious Education Staff and volunteer catechists participate in yearly A.L.I.C.E. (**A**lert, **L**ockdown, **I**nform, **C**ounter, **E**vacuate) training with the Wheaton Police Department. Staff and volunteers are trained to use the school intercom and walkie-talkies in the Faith Center to inform of an emergency, use classroom materials to blockade classroom doors, and evacuate classroom/ areas when possible. Students are provided training within their public schools.

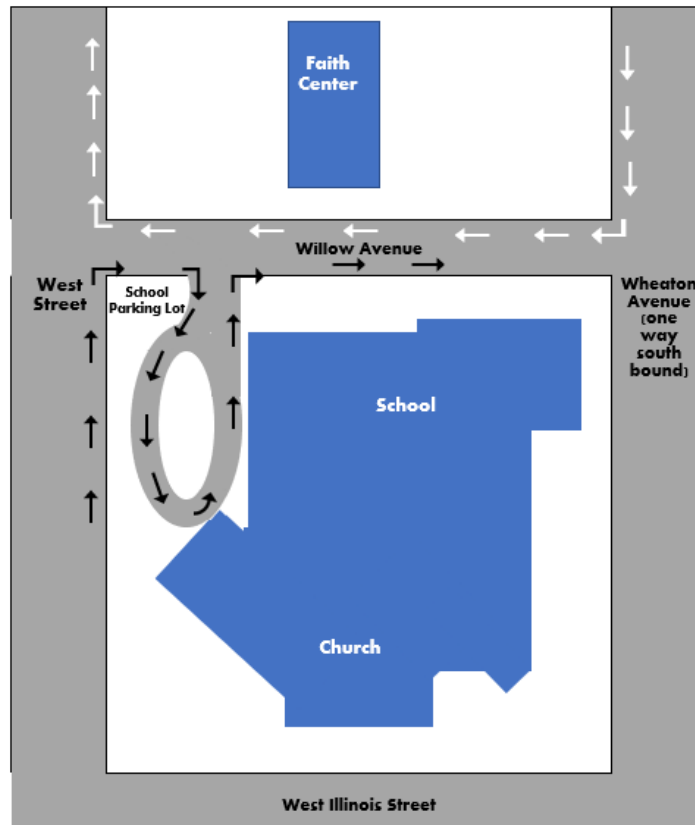
Traffic Safety Guidelines

The safety of our children is an important concern for all who participate in the Religious Education Program at St. Michael. For the convenience of families, SUNDAY CLASSES are scheduled so families can go to Mass before or after class. Since parking is limited and traffic from the church is heavy, we recommend leaving enough time so you can park and walk your children to class, or drop your older child off a safe distance from the Willow St /Wheaton Avenue intersection. PLEASE DO NOT stop anywhere on Willow Ave and leave your car unattended to drop off a child. This poses a significant hazard.

Drivers should use extreme caution when in the vicinity of our buildings, especially before and after class, and follow the flow of traffic.

- Students whose class meets in the Faith Center should be dropped off/picked up along Willow Avenue with cars approaching the Faith Center from the east. Students should exit/enter the vehicle only on the sidewalk side and not into the street. Vehicles may NOT make a left turn into the school parking lot.
- Students whose class meets in the School should be dropped off/picked up in the school parking lot. Vehicles should approach the lot from the west, make a right-hand turn into the parking lot, and drive around to the front door of the school. The student must only exit/enter from the sidewalk. Drivers then exit the parking lot by making a right turn only onto Willow Avenue going east. Vehicles should turn right and should NOT make a left turn upon exiting the school parking lot.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up Routes



→ = Drop-Off/Pick-Up Route for RE Students in school building

→ = Drop-Off/Pick-Up Route for RE Students in Faith Center

VIRTUS Requirements for All Volunteers

The Diocese of Joliet Office of Child and Youth Protection requires that all volunteers (adults and high school students) establish and maintain an active VIRTUS account. This account assures the safety and protection of all of our children in the school and the Religious Education Program. Adult volunteers are required to complete a name based background check; the Protecting God's Children Online Workshop, the online Mandated Reporter Training, an Adult Volunteer Application and the DCFS/CANTS22 form. High school volunteers are required to complete the online Healthy Relationships training and the Application Form for Minors Serving as Volunteers. Please contact the Director of Faith Formation if you have any questions about these requirements.

Compliance with the Diocese of Joliet

Because our parish is in compliance with the Diocese of Joliet and the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, we ask families to refer to the following documents:

- **Revised Diocese of Joliet Pastoral Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse of Minors**
https://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/siteimages/chancerytribunal/OYCP/DOJ_Policy_Regarding_Sexual_Abuse_of_Minors_and_Vulnerable_Adults_7-15-2021.pdf
- **Diocese of Joliet Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors**
https://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/siteimages/chancerytribunal/OYCP/DOJ_Standards_of_Behavior_7-15-2021.pdf
- **Parent Guide to Understanding and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse Brochure** - https://dioceseofjoliet.org/siteimages/reo/Safe_Environment/Parent_Guide_to_Preventing_Child_Sexual_Abuse_final_7-23-19.pdf
- **Internet Safety for Teens** https://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/siteimages/reo/Safe_Environment/Internet_Safety_Brochurer_rev_July_2014.pdf

General Parish Information

PARISH MASS SCHEDULE

Monday-Friday 6:30 AM and 8:00 AM
Saturday 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM (5:00 PM fulfills Sunday obligation)
Sunday 7:15 AM, 9:00 AM, 10:45 AM

PARISH CONFESSION TIMES

Tuesday 4:45 PM-Last entry 5:45 PM
Saturday 8:30-9:30 AM
See the current listing at www.stmichaelcommunity.org

ADORATION CHAPEL TIMES (Door 10)

Monday-Friday 4:00 AM-10:00 PM
Saturday-Sunday 6:00 AM-10:00 PM
See current info at www.stmichaelcommunity.org or call the Parish Office to register or obtain a key fob for entrance (630) 665-2250.

Please note, some of the details in this Handbook may change throughout the year.