

# *St. Damian Religious Education*

## *Family Handbook 2023-2024*



Dear Religious Education Family,

Welcome and thank you for choosing St. Damian Religious Education Program for your children. Each year brings new growth and new enhancements to our program. This allows for us to create a more spirited formation program for your child(ren). We are committed in coming together to help your child(ren) grow in their Catholic faith.

**This handbook contains procedures and policies that will be followed in our program. Please be sure to keep all this information handy and refer to it throughout the year.**

We also encourage everyone to refer to our new Religious Ed for Children section that is located on our website: [stdamianchurch.org](http://stdamianchurch.org). Here you will find all the information that you will need for the 2022-2023 formation.

Our Religious Ed calendar is posted on this website for your convenience. This website will be updated as more dates, events or enhancements are made throughout the year.

We will also provide you with monthly newsletters. These come to you through our school messenger system. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the RE office at 708-687-7778 or email [re@stdamianchurch.org](mailto:re@stdamianchurch.org). Please be aware that our office hours vary Monday – Sunday.

**We are in need of Catechists and volunteers for this coming year. Our program relies on our families to come together and assist with the formation of our faith. Please consider being a part of our program that will benefit all.**

We look forward to a wonderful and exciting year together as we come together as children of God.

God Bless,

Mrs. Cheryl Plesha, CRE and  
St. Damian Sacramental Coordinator

## OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Address: 5300 West 155<sup>th</sup> St. Oak Forest, IL 60452

Phone: 708-687-7778

email: [re@stdamianchurch.org](mailto:re@stdamianchurch.org)

### New Policies for 2023-2024

1. There is a **\$25.00 Late Fee** if you return your registration after Friday, August 11, 2023.
2. Bible fee. This year any child entering our 5<sup>th</sup> level will be charged an additional bible fee. Please pay this with your tuition payment.
3. A fee of \$25.00 will be added for any NSF checks.

### REGISTRATION

**NO registrations are accepted during the first session of RE.**

Registration forms are available on the [stdamianchurch.org](http://stdamianchurch.org) website under the Religious Ed for Children section. Additional copies are located in the Church Narthex by the Religious Education Bulletin Board.

**Registrations are to be returned by August 11, 2023. There will be a Late Fee of \$25.00 of any registration received after August 11, 2023.**

Read the registration packet for important notices of registration dates, fee schedules, and policies. All children are automatically placed in their appropriate level, which normally corresponds to their grade level in school, but not in all cases.

If there are any questions, please call the Office of Religious Education, 708-687-7778. All students transferring from another parish must provide transcripts.

**Room assignments will be emailed to families in early September. The final day to submit registrations, all required paperwork, or copies of certificates, and paid in full fees for the 2023-24 year is August 11, 2023.**

**Sessions begin Monday, September 11, 2023, doors open at 6:30 p.m.**

**Classes begin promptly at 6:45 p.m.**

### SESSIONS

**Monday evenings 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. - September 11, 2022, through May 6, 2024.**

Allow adequate travel time and planning to ensure timely arrival. Please be sure children have had a meal, bring their classroom materials, and have used the restroom before coming to sessions. If you are in a carpool or want to authorize another adult to pick up your child(ren,) please be sure to complete the Authorization for pick-up form in the registration packet.

### CATECHISTS & VOLUNTEERS

The ministry is supported mainly by volunteers. Help is needed and is always appreciated! Please consider volunteering! Contact the RE Office, 708-687-7778, so that we may advise on how to complete the requirements of the Archdiocese before volunteering with children.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TUITION AND FEES

### 2023 - 2024 Tuition, Book, and Supply Fees

One child: \$275  
Two children \$390  
Three or more children: \$490 (4<sup>th</sup> child will be charged an additional \$45.00 book/supply fee)  
Fee for lost Bible or Textbook: \$35.00

### TUITION and FEES (Religion Level book is included in the Tuition Fee)

	Tuition	Fees
1 Child	\$275	
2 Children	\$390	
3 Children or more	\$490	
Bible Fee – 5 <sup>th</sup> Level		\$25
<b>Sacramental Fees</b>		
Communion – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Level		\$50
Confirmation – 8 <sup>th</sup> Level		\$75

5<sup>th</sup> Level receives a Bible. There is an additional fee for the Bibles.

Fee for lost Bible or Textbook: \$35.00

### SACRAMENTAL FEES

Level 2 (First Reconciliation/First Eucharist):

\$50.00 (per child for Level 2)

*A sacramental retreat and additional material for this Sacrament.*

Level 8 (Confirmation): \$75.00 (per child for Level 8)

*A sacramental retreat and additional material for this Sacrament.*

### ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

RCIC – Rite of Christian Initiation of Children \$250 per child.  
RCIC and RE are to be attended concurrently.

## TUITION

Registration April 1, 2023 to August 11, 2023

**No registrations are accepted during the first session of RE.**

We accept cash, money orders and checks; Visa, Mastercard, Discover and American Express via [www.faithdirect.net](http://www.faithdirect.net) – choose RE Tuition as the recipient of your donation. If you choose electronic payment, please attach a printed receipt to your registration paperwork. Proof of payment is required.

**If you need to make tuition payments - for any reason - they are to be made during the spring, over the summer, and completed, in full, by August 11, 2023.**

Students will not be assigned into a classroom or assigned their book/classroom materials unless registrations, medical form, program understanding, student conduct and pickup authorizations are submitted, and all fees are paid in full. Additionally, birth and baptismal certificates are required of all new students, as well as transcripts of previous grades completed for all grade levels except those entering level 1.

## RECORDS

Children enrolled in the Religious Education Program *MUST SUBMIT a Birth and Baptismal Certificate BEFORE REGISTRATION WILL BE COMPLETED.* The recording of accurate permanent records of your child's sacramental life is important and will ensure a minimal search later as these records are required.

The Saint Damian Religious Education Program abides by the provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act with respect to the right of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, the Religious Education Program will provide the non-custodial parent with access to the academic records and other program related information regarding the child. *If there is a court order specifying that there is no information to be given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the Religious Education Office with an official copy of the court order.* Non-custodial parents who wish access to their child's records or mailing must request such through the Religious Education Office.

## SPECIAL SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS AND REQUIREMENTS

Archdiocesan policy states that sacramental catechesis is a 2-year process. For example, children are expected to attend 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes to experience First Reconciliation and First Eucharist in Grade 2. The Confirmation program is based upon all that has been presented in Grades 1<sup>st</sup> -7<sup>th</sup>.

## RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST

Religious Education children will make their First Reconciliation and receive First Eucharist in second grade if they have been enrolled in a religious education program during the first grade. Children entering the program for the first time will receive the sacraments after they have been enrolled in Religious Education for two consecutive years. This is to ensure that they are properly prepared for the sacraments they are receiving.

## CONFIRMATION

Candidate must have completed all yearly catechetical sessions prior to entering this 2-year process. If a student has not attended consecutive years (3 through 6), the student must take assessment testing and successfully complete an additional supplemental Home Study Program.

\* There is a cost for this supplemental program.\*

## COMMUNICATION BY EMAIL

**Email is our primary method of communication with RE families.** Our email messaging list is created from the phone numbers and email addresses you supply at registration. If your contact information changes, please advise. If you opt out of the messaging, then you have chosen to not receive notices of cancellation, or reminders of parent or sacramental related events, test review sheets, or classroom related materials.

## ATTENDANCE

4. Drop off begins at 6:30 p.m. for our program. Please plan accordingly. **Classes will begin promptly at 6:45 p.m.** This will give the children time to get settled so that our classes are not interrupted after 6:45 p.m.
5. Drop off policy has also been changed. We need to follow the rules of Protecting God's Children. This requires that parents/guardians will no longer be able to walk your child into the classroom. **These changes have been put in place for the safety of our students and families.**

Prompt, regular attendance is required. Habitual tardiness and early releases are not allowed.

Tardiness is disruptive to an academic atmosphere and unfair to both children and catechists.

Archdiocesan guidelines advise that **a maximum of 3 absences per year are allowed.**

Excessive absenteeism without a professional medical document may result in the child repeating the grade at the discretion of the CRE.

**ABSENCE:** If your child will be absent due to illness or an emergency, you must notify the Office of Religious Education at 708-687-7778.

**TARDINESS:** All parents and children arriving late must report to the Office of Religious Education before going to their classroom.

**EARLY DISMISSAL:** Any children who must leave class early for whatever reason **MUST** bring a written explanation and **MUST** be picked up by an adult, 18 years of age or older. The adult must first come to the Office of Religious Education with the written notice **BEFORE** the child will be released from the class. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**Be advised that participation in sports is not an acceptable excuse for RE non-attendance, late arrival, or early dismissal.** Advise coaches and team parents of your commitment to the education of your student and advise of the date/times sessions are held.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Refer to the calendar for scheduled sessions, required parent meetings, and required sacramental year events. To gain full benefit of the program, the following policy is mandatory.

- Two years of regular attendance in this program (or another Religious Education Program) is required prior to reception of a sacrament. Transcripts will be required.
- Parental attendance at Parent Sacrament Meetings is required for any child who is participating in a sacramental preparation program.
- Children are expected to be enrolled in a Religious Education program until the completion of eighth grade. Those who choose to drop out and re-enter, must first meet with the Director to develop a schedule for work missed or they will not be enrolled in the program. Additional fees and testing will apply. All makeup work will need to be completed before a student reenters the regular program.

## **DISCIPLINE**

To provide a safe and effective learning environment, it is essential to inform the Religious Education Office if your child(ren) have any behavioral or learning issues, and a list of all current medications and possible side effects.

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. The child should be guided in choosing one form of behavior over another and in accepting the consequences of his/her behavior. Inevitable thoughtlessness on the part of children will arise, and catechists will deal with these situations accordingly. However, certain offenses are of a more serious nature.

These children will be referred to the Religious Education Office where all available means of help and correction will be used. In severe cases, a parent conference may be required, and a child may be asked to withdraw from the program.

Children are expected to have an attitude of respect for their catechist, for each other, and parish property. Discipline problems will be handled immediately. If a problem develops, this is the procedure that will be followed:

1. The catechist will speak to the child(ren) and identify the unacceptable behavior. A discipline notice may be issued to parents at the end of session. The CRE will speak with the parents.
2. If the child does not change their behavior and does not respond to what has been requested, then the child(ren) will be sent to the CRE, who will notify the parents and discuss appropriate changes. Each case will be handled on an individual basis.

## **PARENTS AUTHORIZATION**

**Included in our registration are the following items that are required for parent authorization.**

During the year your child may participate in activities that may will require photos or videos to be taken. Your permission is needed for your child's image to appear as part of our RE program.

During the year your child may receive information on the Lure Child Protection Program. The program is to educate your child on safety prevention in the areas of sexual exploitation, abduction, internet crime, drugs, and school violence.

I have read the Religious Education Handbook and agree to follow all policies that are required to be a part of St. Damian's RE program.

## **DRESS CODE**

Dress and grooming influence the attitude and behavior of the children. We expect the children to dress in a fashion that reflects good taste. We need cooperation of the parents to accomplish this goal. Please note the following guidelines:

- No sleepwear such as pajama pants, slippers.
- No exposed undergarments.
- No spandex/bike shorts.
- No low-cut neck lines.
- No tank tops, backless or strapless tops.
- No holes in pants.
- Dresses, skirts, and shorts must be mid-thigh length or longer.
- No hats and hoods are not to be worn during Religious Education classes.
- Shirts must be free from any objectionable saying or logo.
- Cropped shirts that allow midriffs to be visible are not allowed.
- No Beachwear.

If child is dress inappropriately the parents will be notified to bring a change of clothes.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF RE FAMILIES**

It is the responsibility of the parent(s) of the child(ren) who attend Saint Damian Religious Education Program to help their child(ren) succeed. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- Respect the authority of the Catechist and Religious Education staff.
- Respect you classmates. Treat others as you would want to be treated.
- Attend Mass with your child(ren) every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Have children attend all RE sessions. Bring textbook, folder, and materials to each class.
- Work together on prayers and their homework.
- Support the Religious Education Fundraisers.
- Volunteer for our Fundraising events.
- Proper Christian behavior always.

## **PHOTOS or VIDEOS**

During our year there may be class pictures or videos that will be taken of your child. There is an authorization form that must be signed and returned to the RE office.

## **DROP OFF AND PICK UP PARKING POLICY**

Drop off and pick up is designated according to your child's level.

1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> will enter through Door A this is the Main Entrance of the school.

4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> will enter through Door B located west of the main entrance.

7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> will enter through Door C located east of the main entrance.

Parents are responsible for escorting their child(ren) to the door. This is for both drop off and pick up.

**No child is allowed to walk through our parking lot alone. This policy is required by all to keep everyone safe.**

## **NON - DISCRIMINATORY ADMISSIONS POLICY**

Saint Damian Religious Education Program is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. It is policy of the Saint Damian Religious Education Program to provide equal opportunity to all children seeking admission. Saint Damian Parish does not discriminate based on sex, race, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its policies, supplementary programs, or any parish function.

## **ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Tablets, computers, phones, etc. are not to be brought to class. Cell phones are to be powered off and put away during sessions. Texting, videoing, taking pictures and internet use are not allowed in the classroom environment. Parents are not to participate in texting students while they attend sessions. If a catechist deems it necessary to confiscate an electronic device during session, a parent may pick up the confiscated item from the Religious Education Office. St. Damian Religious Education takes no responsibility for items lost or damaged on parish property.

## **EMERGENCY CLOSING**

If inclement weather or any other major problem should force us to cancel religious classes, you will be informed through a phone and/or email blast announcement. If you are not informed of the cancellation, classes are going ahead as scheduled. If your neighborhood roads are hazardous, this will determine whether you will venture to send your child for classes that evening. If personal circumstances related to the weather make it impossible for your child(ren) to attend their session, you are asked to call in their absence. Please do not call the Office to inquire if classes are being held, such calls tie up the lines. Our phone/email blast list is created from the phone numbers you supply at registration. If your contact information changes, please advise. If you opt out of the messaging, then you have chosen to not be made aware of information.