



# *Saint Damian Parish*

*5300 West 155<sup>th</sup> Street*

*Oak Forest, IL 60452*

*708-687-7778*

*re@stdamianchurch.org*

*Religious Education*

*Family*

*Handbook*

*2018-19*



Dear Families,

Welcome to the Saint Damian Religious Education Program. It is an honor and a pleasure to work with you and your child(ren.) All of us are committed to help you and your child(ren) with their faith formation this year and to help nurture your relationship with Jesus, Our Lord.

This handbook contains procedures and policies that will be followed in our program. Near the last page of the handbook you will find a copy of the Student Conduct Form that is contained in the registration packet. This copy is meant for you to keep so that you know what is expected of your child(ren) during the year. As a family, please read and review the handbook. Please be sure to keep all of this information handy and refer to it throughout the year.

Thank you for your commitment as we partner with you in your child(ren)'s faith development. You are always welcome here, feel free to stop in the office to say hello. We will keep your family in our prayers always.

God's Blessings,

Mary Jo Landuyt

RE Office Staff & Volunteers

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The St. Damian Religious Education Program is a Christian education community of the Catholic Church of the Archdiocese of Chicago in Oak Forest, IL. As such, it is an entity of St. Damian Parish, and it operates according to the policies established by the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry.

The St. Damian Religious Education Program is committed to forming and nurturing spiritual growth, and enriching the sacramental life of its youth and their families. Through the study of Catholic Christian doctrines, principles and values inherent in these principles, we seek to guide and promote conscience formation to foster living and witness the gospel message of faith, hope, reconciliation, and love.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

“The Church continues the mission of Jesus, whose teachings have come down to us through the apostles. The ministry of catechesis serves the church in that mission. Great importance has always been attached to catechesis,” but the primary source of religious training and education is the home. Through a formalized religious education program, parents delegate some of the responsibility to the Catechists. The program at St. Damian seeks to meet the child on his/her particular level and to build the children’s knowledge of the truths of our faith. Religious studies instruction not only seeks to help children become more familiar with Catholic principles and doctrine, but also seeks to guide children in the application of these same principles.

In keeping with our professed belief that Catholicism and the sacraments do not consist in a moment of time, but in the knowing and living of a Catholic way of life, we hold the religious education of children as shared responsibility of the adult community. Recognizing parents as the primary educators of their children, we are happy to share the responsibility with them. We believe the family unit to be at the heart and sustaining force of faith in every child’s faith life. The programs at Saint Damian are family orientated; we encourage family participation at every level, especially sacramental preparation.

## **OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF**

Director of Religious Education (DRE), Mary Jo Landuyt

Administrative Assistant, Teri Wagner

## **2017/18 Religious Education Board**

Sue Sommerfield    Maureen Keating    Carol Konieczny    Cathy Rankovich    Meg Hults  
Teri Wagner    Mary Jo Landuyt    Terri Sosnowski    Beth Runcio    Anna Buss    Morgan Shive

## **VOLUNTEERS**

The ministry is supported mainly by volunteers. Help 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.

## **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 3-7.

## **BAPTISM**

First grade and up entering the Religious Education Program are eligible to be baptized after successful completing the first year program.

## **RECONCILIATION AND EUCHARIST**

Religious Education children will make their First Reconciliation and receive First Eucharist in second grade; provided that 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.

## **REGISTRATION**

Registration forms were sent home with students in April and are available on the St. Damian website, in the RE Office, and in the Narthex. Registrations are to be returned as soon as possible over the summer. 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. 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, and paid in full fees for the 2018-19 year is August 30, 2018. Sessions begin Monday, September 10, 2018 at 6:45pm.***

## 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.

## SESSIONS

Mondays evenings, 6:45 – 8:00 PM - September 10, 2018 through May 6, 2019.

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. A parent or adult is to accompany each student to their classroom. They are to wait outside their classroom until the Catechist arrives. Do not drop off kids in the parking lot. After each session, parents are to pick up their children at their classrooms. Please be alert and cautious at all times in the parking lot as it is dark at the end of 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. Habitual tardies are not allowed. Habitual early releases are not allowed. Contact the director if you have questions.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TUITION AND FEES

2018/2019

### Tuition/Book/Supply Fees

One child	\$295
Two children	\$490
Three children	\$660

**SACRAMENTAL FEE** \$100 additional: level 2 and level 8, per student  
*Applies to each First Eucharist and Confirmation student - a sacramental retreat, a photo of the sacrament being received, and a DVD of the ceremony are all included, as well as the use of a gown for Confirmation.*

**RCIC – Rite of Christian Initiation of Children** \$250 per child  
*All Families are expected to attend weekly Mass.*

## CLASS SIZE

We limit each class size to meet the individual child's religious educational needs.

## TUITION

Earlybird registrations before July 19, 2018 will be accepted with ½ down payment, and make-your-own-payments until the balance is paid in full on/before August 30, 2018 at 2:00 PM.

Registrations July 20, 2018 to August 30, 2018 will be only be accepted with payment in full. The first session is Monday, September 10, 2018.

We accept cash, money orders and checks; Visa, Mastercard, Discover and American Express via [www.givecentral.org](http://www.givecentral.org). We can process your charge card payments in the RE Office. If you choose to do so using the link from the parish website, you must 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 30, 2018.***

*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 level 1.*

## SCOPE OF LEVEL CURRICULUM

Grade 1	Blest Are We	God's family/Baptism
Grade 2	Blest Are We	Reconciliation/Holy Eucharist
Grade 3	Blest Are We	We are the Church – <i>One, Holy, Apostolic</i>
Grade 4	Blest Are We	We celebrate the Sacraments.
Grade 5	Intro to the Holy Scriptures	Bible Reading, Hebrew Scripture
Grade 6	Scripture	The fulfillment of God's promise. The story of Jesus.
Grade 7	Confirmation Prep Year 1	The story of Jesus and the Early Church.
Grade 8	Confirmation Prep Year 2	Discipleship and my role in the Church.

## ATTENDANCE

Prompt, regular attendance is required. Tardiness is disruptive to an academic atmosphere and unfair to both children and catechists. The lessons are planned so that each successive session builds upon the previous lesson. Archdiocesan guidelines advise that due to the condensed nature of the curriculum, 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 Director.

**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. Please call as soon as possible. Excessive absences may result in repeating of a grade level.

**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** picking up the child at the classroom. 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.

Refer to the calendar for scheduled sessions, required parent meetings, and required sacramental year events.

Saint Damian Religious Education Program offers first through eighth grade classes. In order 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.
- 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.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS**

It is assumed that parents promote and model the mission and philosophy outlined in this handbook. 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:

- Attend Mass with your child(ren) every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Have your child(ren) attend all Religious Education sessions.
- Work on the child(ren)'s prayers and homework with them.
- Support the Parish financially.
- Volunteer for one of the many ministries in the parish. Religious Education is one of those ministries. Please consider volunteering during sessions. Please contact the RE Office at 708-687-7778 to learn of the compliance requirements necessary.
- Model Christian behavior at all times. Keep in mind that it is your choice to enroll your children in this program. The use of inappropriate language, gestures, expressions, actions is not tolerated. Please discuss with your children on a regular basis why it is important to you that you have chosen to enroll your child(ren) in the Religious Education program and why your faith is important to you.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN**

- Attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation.
- Respect the authority of the Catechist and Religious Education staff.
- Attend all classes on time.
- Bring textbook and folder and materials to each class.
- Actively take part in classroom discussions and activities as well as required service projects.
- Complete all assigned homework and required projects.
- Respect the thoughts and feelings of other children in the program. The use of inappropriate language, gestures, expressions, actions, or the exclusion or bullying of others is not Christian like and is not tolerated in the Religious Education program.
- 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 receive notices of cancellation, or reminders of parent or sacramental related events, or classroom related materials.

## **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 on the basis of 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. Take time before sessions to discuss any drop off or pick up plans. 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.

### **PARKING POLICY**

The dropping off and picking up procedure should be followed at all times. Parents are to park their vehicles and escort students to their classrooms at the beginning and end of every session, do not drop off students in the parking lot! All students are to be escorted to and from classes by a parent or designated adult. All children should be picked up on time.

Remember the safety of our children comes first!

### **DRESS CODE**

Dress and grooming influences 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:

- Beachwear is not appropriate.
- Hats, hoods and bandannas 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.
- Dresses, skirts and shorts must be mid-thigh length or longer.

Violations of the above dress code will be handled on an individual basis.

### **DISCIPLINE**

In order 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.

In guiding the child's growth in Christian attitudes, we believe it is better to emphasize the positive rather than negative. 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.
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 Director, who will notify the parents and discuss appropriate changes. Each case will be handled on an individual basis.
3. Student conduct is specifically outlined in a signed document kept on file.

Please visit [www.stdamianchurch.org](http://www.stdamianchurch.org) regularly for information in regard to upcoming parish events and service hour opportunities.

Check the hallway outside the RE Office for posted information and flyers of year-round service hour opportunities.

Please consider becoming an RE volunteer – we need classroom aides, substitute catechists, hallway monitors, office volunteers, etc. Please contact Mrs. Landuyt immediately if you are considering volunteering as you'll need to complete the compliance requirements.

Thank you for being a part of the Religious Education Ministry!

# Student Conduct

Students are expected to make the time dedicated to Religious Education classes, activities, prayer and projects a positive experience for themselves and others.

We ask all students to:

- Attend Mass on a regular basis with my family.
- Be punctual and prepared for class.
- Follow arrival and dismissal procedures given by the catechist.
- Show respect for themselves, catechists, other students and program personnel.
- Avoid bringing illegal substances to class or anything that could be considered a weapon or cause someone harm.
- Avoid bringing gadgets (i.e. cell phones, iPads, tablets, etc.), food, drink or gum.
- Be courteous and considerate of others.
- Use language and actions expressive of Christian behavior.
- Obey safety rules at all times.
- Be present only in areas of the building for which they have permission at a specific time.
- Be cooperative and participate in all sessions and activities to the best of their ability.
- Treat parish/school property and that of fellow students with respect.
- Help clean up their work area upon request.
- Complete homework as assigned.

In case of unsatisfactory conduct, the catechist will speak with the student. If misconduct continues, the matter will be submitted to the DRE who shall contact the student's parents or guardian. If the misconduct is serious, it may be the basis for removal from the program.

I have read and thought about the above statements of conduct. I will abide by these rules and cooperate with them for my own benefit and the welfare of others.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **2018/2019 SACRAMENTAL DATES**

### **Preparation and Reception**

**Level 2/First Eucharist/Reconciliation Parent Meetings:** *At least 1 parent is to attend all events:*

Monday, November 1, 2018, 6:45pm in the Church.

Monday, January 28, 2019, 6:45pm in the Church.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Monday, March 4, 2019. 6:45pm in the Church.

**Eucharist Family Retreat:** Saturday, February 9, 2019. 2:30pm through 5:00 Mass.

**First Eucharist Rehearsal:** Wednesday, May 1, 2019. 5 – 6pm in the Church.

**Sacrament of Eucharist:** Saturday, May 4, 2019. 12:00 Noon Mass.

**Confirmation Candidate/Parent Meeting:** Monday, September 17, 2018, 6:45 – 8pm in the Church.

**Confirmation Candidate/Sponsor Meeting:** Monday November 12, 2018, 6:45 – 8pm in the Church.

**Confirmation Retreat:** MLK Monday, January 21, 2019. 9am – 3 pm in the Grimmel Center.

**Confirmation Rehearsal - Candidate/Sponsor Meeting:** Monday, April 22, 2019. 6:45pm in Church.

**Sacrament of Confirmation:** Saturday, April 27, 2019. 11:00am Mass.

## **2018/2019 IMPORTANT NON-SACRAMENTAL MEETING DATES**

**Cheers to New Year! Beer Tasting:** Monday, September 10, 2018. 6:50 pm – 7:50 pm.

**Level 7 Parent-Only Meeting:** Monday, February 11, 2019. 6:45pm – 8pm in Shaw Hall. Students attend their regular session, while at least 1 parent attends Level 7 Parent Meeting led by Fr. Joe.

### **2018/19 Registration Deadline**

**St. Damian Religious Education Registration Ends/Payment Deadline: August 30, 2018 at 2:00pm.**