

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Church
Religious Education Department
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Blessed Sacrament Church Religious Education Department Handbook

This handbook has been compiled to assist both students and parents. It contains programs, guidelines and general information regarding the Blessed Sacrament Religious Education program.

Please keep this handbook as a reference.

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The Religious Education Office is located in the Parish Center, 1020 S. First Ave. Morton. The office hours are Tuesday through Friday from 8:30am to 3:30pm. The phone number is 309-266-9721.

Blessed Sacrament Parish also has a website: **www.bscmorton.org** where you can access schedules, registration forms, and junior high service hour forms.

Questions and comments are always welcome, and will be handled on an individual basis.

Philosophy of Religious Education

Catechesis — otherwise known as religious education — is derived from an ancient Greek word meaning, “to resound the Good News”. It aims at “putting people...in communion...with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition.) As Christians, we are called to preach the life and message of Jesus, to build community and to serve the needs of our brothers and sisters in the world in which we live.

This catechetical mission is carried out by all members of the parish community, particularly parents and other family members who are the most influential catechists. Parents teach values, attitudes and knowledge by their lived experience in parish and community activities.

The Religious Education office at Blessed Sacrament Church aides in carrying out the catechetical mission of the Catholic Church. Our religious education efforts center on initiating a person into the faith community, beginning at birth and lasting until death. Our efforts will address the individual faith needs of our members, initiate individuals into the faith community through the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation, and aid all who enter the faith life of the community.

Objectives

At Blessed Sacrament, there are programs for all ages—ranging from child to adult faith formation. These classes strive to:

First and foremost—introduce and cultivate within each person a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Build a Community of Faith *Teach Catholic Christian Doctrine *Inspire Christian Service *Prepare individuals for the Sacraments *Encourage Prayer and Liturgy

Course of Study

Blessed Sacrament Parish uses a religious education curriculum for grade school students recommended and approved by the Diocese of Peoria. The Diocese reviews materials from many different publishers, and makes its recommendations to the parishes. Blessed Sacrament Parish is in compliance with Diocesan guidelines.

Reconciliation

Students will be encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation with their families. Reconciliation will be offered to students in 3rd-6th grade each semester. Each grade will be assigned a date and will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament during class. We strongly encourage families to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation when it is offered to The parish during the week. It is recommended that practicing Catholics receive the sacrament once a month.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is essential for the success of a Religious Education program. Parents are the first and foremost religious educators of their children. We urge our Catholic parents to live and teach Christian values in their homes, and to attend Mass with their children on a weekly basis. We urge you to give your children the opportunity to participate in our Religious Education classes regularly, and be supportive and cooperative toward the work of their teachers. We also encourage parents to grow in their own faith by attending adult education classes or participating in service projects at Blessed Sacrament. Parents are urged to serve as catechists or helpers in our program. All of our catechists are volunteers, and without them, the program cannot continue. All parents should try to assist in some way during their child's participation in the program.

Sacramental Preparation

Baptism:

If your child is not baptized and needs to be baptized, you can call Judith in the Parish Office, 309-266-9721. If your child has been baptized elsewhere, we will need a copy of that Baptismal certificate for our records before they receive any further sacraments.

Reconciliation and First Communion:

This is a 2 year process beginning when the child enters 1st grade. The foundation will be built, upon which the child's faith and relationship with Jesus will be cultivated and nourished, enabling the child to fully enter into the sacraments in their 2nd grade year.

Mandatory retreats for all students in second-grade and their parents and other students in preparation for these sacraments is held prior to reception of the sacraments, and at least one parent must attend. The Reconciliation retreat will be held the Sunday before the sacrament is received. The 1st Communion Retreat, held on a Sunday, will conclude with the Blessing Cup Celebration.

Confirmation:

Preparation for the reception of the sacrament is a **two-year process**, beginning in the ninth grade. Exceptions are made only for 9th grade students at Peoria Notre Dame. Tenth grade PND students are required to attend high school classes if they wish to be confirmed at Blessed Sacrament. An informational parent meeting is held prior to the beginning of scheduled class sessions for both parents and students. At least one parent is expected to attend.

Students are expected to inform their parents and teachers if they feel they are not ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Should this situation occur, a meeting will be requested involving the student, parent(s), teacher, the Coordinator of High School Faith Formation and the Pastor. These meetings will only take place after a student has arrived at their decision in the most informed way possible. We would expect no student to make a decision either way until a minimum of three semesters of preparation has passed.

Kindergarten: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd will be offered this year to kindergarten aged children. It will meet on Sunday mornings in the CGS Atrium, in the School. Sessions will be held from 10:30am until 11:25am. It is usually the first and third Sundays of the month.

Grades 1-6: Classes are held on Sunday mornings from 10:15am - 11:25am in the school.

Junior High Grades 7 & 8 and High School Grades 9&10: Classes are held from 6:00pm - 7:15pm Sunday evening. Students will meet in the parish hall.

Registration and Fees

Registration materials and bills for fees are sent in August. New students can be accepted anytime. A baptismal certificate is required for all new students. New students in grades 3-10 will be asked to provide Reconciliation and First Communion information. Registration is open to all students currently enrolled in public school, grades 1-10, and whose families are registered members of Blessed Sacrament Parish.

The registration fees for the program help to cover the cost of textbooks, supplies and other activities of the program. We need and appreciate the financial support of our parents. **The fees are not intended to be a financial burden on anyone.** However, unless there is contact with the Religious Education office, the office is unable to address any special circumstances. No child or family desiring religious education for their child will ever be turned away for inability to pay. Arrangements for payment schedules can and will be made on an individual basis. **ALL FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.** Our current fees are:

Kindergarten	\$50.00	Grade 2	\$125.00
Grades 1, 3-9	\$100.00	Grade 10	\$125.00

Arrival/Dismissal Policy

Students in grades K-6 will meet in the long hallway by the parish hall. If attending the 9:30am Sunday Mass, Father will bless and dismiss those students attending Religious Education to the long hallway. All other students may be dropped off at the front doors of the parish center. Dismissal from class for these students will be at the school entrance. 7th through 10th grades will meet promptly at 6:00p in the parish hall.

Children who need to leave early for any reason must bring a note for ~~the classroom coordinator~~. A parent or other authorized adult must come into the building to pick up their student.

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Attendance

All students who register in the Religious Education program are urged to attend all scheduled classes. Regular attendance enables children to complete the course of study for that year. If your student must be absent, contact should be made with the Religious Education office before that week's class. If no contact is made, the absence will be considered unexcused. A death in the family is always considered an excused absence. The Religious Education office will contact families with irregular attendance.

Classroom Discipline

The following is expected discipline of all Religious Education students:

- Students should arrive on time for all classes. Students are to remain in their seats during class unless given permission otherwise.
- Students are to keep their hands and property to themselves while in class showing respect for the materials of their desk mate. This serves as a reminder that the Religious Education classes share the classrooms with the Blessed Sacrament School children. Any destruction of property will not be tolerated.
- Students will respect each others right to speak and be heard while in class.
- Students will help create a positive environment for learning by respecting others comments, raising hands to speak (unless the teacher is encouraging free discussion) and contributing when material is covered.
- Students are expected to come to class ready to learn. Please have your student use the bathroom prior to class.
- Appropriate attire is expected. If your child is enrolled in a sport, uniforms are allowed but football and soccer cleats are not allowed in the school. The wearing of hats and caps during class time is not allowed.

The rules outlined are meant to accomplish only one thing — the establishment of an atmosphere of learning in the classroom. Learning cannot occur when students display little self-respect or respect for others in words, attitudes or actions. Behavior in class should reflect the reason for being there — to grow in the image and likeness of God, to experience Christian community, to learn about the Catholic faith and to prepare for the reception of the sacraments.

If the previous rules are not followed, the steps below will be taken:

- The first incident will result in a warning being issued in class by the teacher and/or coordinator.
- A second incident will result in the student being asked to leave the room. The rest of the class will be spent with the coordinator. A written warning will be sent home explaining the reason for removing the student from class. Parents are asked to read the warning and return it the next class session.
- A third incident will result in dismissal from the classroom, at which time the student's parents will be called to pick up their child. The student will not be allowed to return unless accompanied by a parent or authorized adult.
- In the unlikely event of a fourth incident, the student will be removed from the classroom and be required to meet with the Pastor before being allowed to continue.