

Dear Parents,

We would like to thank you for enrolling your children in our religious education program. The Catechism of the Catholic Church as well as our Diocese of Savannah provide the framework for our catechesis. The basics of our religious education program are as follows:

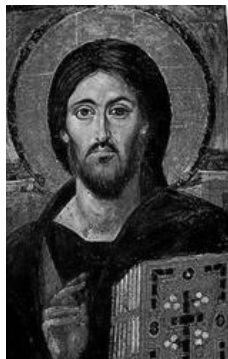
- Supporting parents in their primary role as educators of the faith to their children
- Providing a formal program of religious education to *all* parish children
- Educating our students in scripture, authentic teachings, and traditions of the Catholic Church
- Encouraging and developing a prayer life of our children
- Building a strong Catholic identity in each child by teaching beautiful devotions and incorporating the Liturgical calendar
- Preparing children to take part in the liturgical and sacramental fullness of the Catholic Faith
- Encouraging our children to live a life of stewardship

We ask all parents to support our efforts by insuring their children consistently attend religious education classes and Holy Mass. When students attend Mass with their family, the connection between Liturgy and class are understood more fully. This also helps them see the seriousness of the Third Commandment - "Keeping holy the Sabbath day." We also ask parents to please teach the basics of the Faith and practice basic prayers at home. If you would like some suggestions for these materials, please contact the Religious Education office.

In Christ,

Helen Almeter

Director of Religious Education
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Registration: Registration opens during the month of August. You can register either after the weekend Masses in August or stop by the office to fill out a form. Registration closes at the end of Sept.

Class Schedule: Classes begin in September and end mid-May this year. **Pre-K through 8** meet weekly on **Sundays from 9a.m.-10:15a.m.** Preferred year for First Communion is 2nd grade and Confirmation is 8th grade. We take into consideration the Bulloch County school calendar *but not all dates coincide. Please use the Religious Ed. Calendar on the parish website under Religious Education to check for dates.* www.saintmatthewsparish.com

Curriculum: St. Matthew follows the Diocese of Savannah Curriculum Guide and textbooks approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The religious education program at St. Matthew Catholic Church is developmental – each year builds upon previous years. Attending each year is an essential component of our program.

Attendance: Children who are enrolled in religious education are expected to attend each class session. **It is the responsibility of parent(s)** to contact the religious education office in advance, or on Sunday morning if your child cannot attend class. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. Records of attendance are kept throughout the year. **Deficiency in attendance may result in repeating the year or delay a student in receiving a Sacrament of the Church.**

Protecting God's Children:

For the safety of our children the diocese requires that we teach a "Touching Safety Program created by VIRTUS. This class is usually scheduled for the first Sunday of November. Parents may opt out if they choose. Contact the Religious Ed Office if you would like to opt out.

Life Teen Youth Ministry for 8th - High School:

Life Teen is for 8th – High School students. Life Teen gathers on Sundays and the time will be determined soon. Students will enjoy social activities, guest speakers, small group discussions, and be challenged to live out the faith as a disciple of Christ. Students are welcome join the Life Teen any time.

Sacraments

Preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion takes place in Grades 1 and 2 and then celebrated in Grade 2. Confirmation preparation takes place in grades 7-8. The Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated in Grade 8 each year. **Class attendance, parent/student meetings, workshops, and/or events such as retreats, are Mandatory for all candidates.** When you are faced with a conflict, we ask that you do everything you can get your child to his/her regular class or Sacrament workshop because preparing for the Sacraments and learning about Jesus should be a priority. We understand that extracurricular activities are commitments too but if your child needs to miss a practice or a club meeting in order to attend a Sacramental class we would be happy to write a note of excuse from the Religious Ed. Office

Catechists

Our catechists generously volunteer their experience, time, and talents by teaching here at St. Matthew Catholic Church. All catechists and catechist aides are required to have a background check and attend the VIRTUS Program "Protecting God's Children."

Nursery

The Nursery is available during the 8am and 10:30am Mass on Sunday. Children 3yrs. and under can attend.

Arrival and Dismissal

Safety for our students is a major priority! Classes are held in the Fr. Robert Girardeau Parish Center. Students enter through the main doors of the building. **Parents must escort and pick up children in grades Pre-K – 3rd. Older siblings may not pick up younger ones. Catechists will only release students to a parent. Parents are asked to notify the teacher if someone else is designated to pick up their child.** If you are late picking up your son/daughter they will be wait for you in the Nursery room.

St. Matthew Catholic Church Religious Education Program Parent and Student Information



"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Matthew 28:19-20