



**School of Religion
(CCD Program)
Policies and Procedures**

St. Agnes Catholic Church
Religious Education Office
3310 Jefferson Hwy
Jefferson, LA 70121
504-833-4118 or 504-833-3366

Fr. Bac-Hai Viet Tran, Pastor
Kelly Wilbert,

Coordinator of Religious Education Welcome to St. Agnes Parish School of Religion/CCD Program

We are pleased to have you join our religious education program. Many people have offered their time and talent to make this program effective and efficient. The School of Religious Education of St. Agnes is to be an aid to the parents. Parents and the home are the primary source of religious formation. The School of Religion Class is not a substitute for parental involvement in the religious life of the student. Where Christ is truly present in the home, the religion class will be adequate formal education.

This handbook is intended to give you, a general understanding of the Parish's religious education program. It is no way an attempt to be a detailed summary of the vast scope of our program. The information found in this handbook will serve as a good reference for you throughout the year. If you or others you may know have specific questions concerning the program, textbooks, sacramental preparation or any other matter involving our Catholic faith, please contact us.

All parents are requested to familiarize their children and themselves with the contents of this handbook, in order to assure a most successful year for the students of St. Agnes School of Religion.

Policies and information are subject to change. You will be notified of any changes.

St. Agnes Parish Mission Statement

St. Agnes Parish strives to be a GOD centered Catholic Community, serving the needs of its people through active love, devotion, and prayer. We strive to bring the kingdom to all in harmony, nurturing and extending Family Values united in Celebrating Christ's Love. By seeking God's will, embody His love, recognizing our individual talents, determining to evangelize and giving good example

Registration

Registration takes place the first weekend in August and continues until the first class in September. Currently enrolled students will have the opportunity to pre-register in April before the end of the CCD year. Registration will close after the month of September unless the family has moved to the Parish and can provide proof of Religious Education. New families and families adding a student for the first time are asked to present a copy of the child's Baptismal, Penance and Communion certificate at the time of registration.

Registration fees are as follows:

1 Child	\$30
2 Children	\$50
3 or more Children	\$75

A Sacramental fee is charged to cover the cost of sacramental books, reception, retreat, Bishop stipends and robes.



Catholic Religious Education is an essential part of the mission of the Church. Jesus founded a community to be proclaimers of the Gospel. A Christian community is a witness to the message of the Kingdom of God as well as its announcer. Religious education becomes a live reality for those who experience the celebration of a vital Christian Community through its worship, witness, and service. At St. Agnes, we provide religious education for young people for three years old through high school. ***Families of these students should be registered parishioners of St. Agnes Parish.***

Grade Placement

The CCD program at St. Agnes follows the Archdiocese of New Orleans' regulation regarding the administration of the Sacraments. As such, the following guidelines will be used to determine the grade in which each child is placed.

Grade placement in CCD will normally match grade placement in the child's secular school. There are some exceptions to this rule and each will be determined on a case-by-case basis. In determining the placement of Kindergarten students, we follow the guidelines set by St. Agnes School. Presently, to begin CCD, Kindergarten children must be 5 years old by September 30 and pre-school age children must be 3 years old by September 30, as well as being potty trained.

- Students planning to receive the Sacrament of First Communion must complete two consecutive years of religious education and be at least in the second grade in secular school.
- Students who have previously dropped without completing the course of study will be required to take a test to determine their placement.
- New students must present proof of past enrollment in a religious education program.
- Students who enroll after the 6th class must either present proof of past enrollment in religious education classes for the current year, or take a placement test to determine grade level.

Learning Disabilities

Children who are Learning Disabled will be handled by the CCD Coordinator on an individual basis and will be put into classes as their progress warrants.

RCIC (Rite of Christian Initiation for Children)

Any child registering for CCD, who has not been baptized or has not received First Eucharist (students older than second grade) should make an appointment with the Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) to discuss the circumstances. Proper religious education classes will be discussed and provided at that time.

Curriculum

St. Agnes follows the Archdiocesan guidelines for classroom materials. The National Council of Catholic Bishops has found the doctrinal content of the religious textbook series to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Our program follows the curriculum guidelines set by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Office of Religious Education.

The School of Religion is one dimension of a faith formation, religious educational program for Catholic students in Grades 1 through 12, who do not attend Catholic schools. The program teaches Catholic history and doctrine, fosters community, and prepares students for Christian service.

Volunteer catechists teach the classes. Many of these catechists are certified to teach religious education or are working toward certification with the Archdiocese's Office of Religious Education.

Pre K through 8th Grade Program

St. Agnes School of Religion Pre K through 8th grade program uses the *Christ Our Life* series from Loyola Press.

Our Pre K Program uses focuses on Creation and God's love for it. *God Loves Us* is a Kindergarten program that integrates Scripture and Church doctrine into each lesson to help children and teachers relate Catholic beliefs, sacred Tradition, and, most importantly, faith to their lives.

The 1st through 8th grade classes uses the *Christ Our Life* series. The *Christ Our Life* features a "spiral curriculum" in which each grade level

builds upon the previous level's content, increasing in scope and depth. The goal is consistent progress and development. There are five areas of focus:

- *Scripture* - God's Words of Love
- *Commandments* - God's Laws of Love
- *Sacraments* - God's Signs of Love
- *Liturgy and Prayer* - Our Response of Love
- *Creed* - Our Proclamation of Love

Each grade level places the major emphasis on one of these five areas, with supporting content in the other areas. Loyola Press provides free web resources that will benefit the children, parents and families. We suggest visiting the website <http://godlovesus.loyolapress.com> and www.ChristOurlife.org.

High School Program

Our 9th through 12th grade uses the William H. Sadlier *Faith and Witness Series*. The *Faith and Witness* parish program gives students a clear understanding of the Catholic faith as they deepen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. The text and guides are in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism.

Homework, Books and Grading Policy & Promotions

Home assignments may be given each class. Parents are asked to discuss class-covered material and help reinforce what took place during class.

We expect our students to be responsible for their personal belongings. Books are paid for by the student and are theirs to keep. If a book is lost or destroyed, an additional book fee of \$25 will have to be paid before another book is issued.

Testing will be done twice a year at mid-year and at the end of the year. Testing is not done for failing a student. Rather it will indicate what the student is learning and what areas need to be reviewed and reinforced by the parents. Study guides or reviews may be sent home

prior to each test so that parents can review the material with their students. These reports will outline the student's attitude, conduct, participation in class and understanding of the class material.

Students will not automatically be promoted to the next grade level. Promotion will be based on participation, attendance, and knowledge of material.



Attendance

The Archdiocese of New Orleans requires each parish to offer a minimum of thirty (30) hours of religious instruction.

Regular class attendance and promptness are signs that parents and students recognize the importance of religious education. Children are required to attend all classes in their entirety. Excessive tardiness and absenteeism clearly reflects an “I DON’T CARE” attitude that should be avoided.

Our experience has been that if your child does not attend on a regular basis they will find it difficult to understand the subject matter and to keep up with the class. We encourage you to bring your child to class every week. *If your child must miss a class, please obtain the makeup work from the teacher the following week.* The child will be marked excused when the class work is turned in completed. ***No child will be allowed to miss more than 3 classes and be promoted to the next grade, unless all paperwork has been satisfactorily completed and passing of test to be administered by teacher. This does not pertain to Sacramental Preparation.***

Pre K-7th Grade

Students should meet in the cafeteria by 9:15am. **This will be deemed the beginning of class.** Attendance will be taken at that time. After class, the students will proceed to the Church, to attend the 11:00 a.m. Mass. Classes will be dismissed after Mass. Parents are asked to pick up their children on Claiborne Court, the street between the Marquette Activity Center (MAC) and the Church. Teachers or staff members will be waiting with the children. Parents are encouraged to attend Mass with their students and sit in the reserved pews.

Attending CCD class and not attending Mass will not be permitted. Failure to attend Mass will result in an unexcused absence. It is of extreme importance that students attend Mass on Sunday and participate in the Eucharistic celebration.

The signature of the priest or deacon must be provided for those students who need to attend an earlier weekend Mass in our parish or attend Mass at another parish.

8th Grade, High School/Confirmation Class

Students should meet in the cafeteria by 6:30pm. **This will be deemed the beginning of class.** Attendance will be taken at this time. Students are expected to attend Mass. All students will receive a Mass card and have it signed by the priest or deacon to show proof of Mass attendance.

The High School/Confirmation program at St. Agnes follows the guidelines set by the Archdiocese of New Orleans for Confirmation requirements. The students are required to participate in Parish activities, World Youth Day, a Retreat and Service Hours. Specific requirements will be given out at the Parent/Student meeting held in August each year.

Parents are asked to seriously consider the importance of the faith formation of their child(ren) when scheduling extra-curricular activities. What message is the child receiving when Religion class can be dismissed for dance class, sporting events, parades, music, a shopping trip, etc. and Mass can be missed so you can sleep late, visit Grandma or attend a social event? Faith formation and religious experiences **must** be

given the same if not greater priority in the development of the total child. Attendance at weekly Mass as a family, attendance at their monthly Religion class and discussion about what was presented at the class are vital to assuring a well-rounded faith experience.

Arrival

The students can be dropped off at the covered walkway. Parents are asked to drop off their students at the turn-around on Carrollton Way, the street behind the school. There will be a staff member at the gate to assist in the process. Car line procedures have been established for the safety of all students. Please abide by them.

If you choose, to not use the car line, please park your car and walk your student to the cafeteria. Due to the heavy traffic in the parking lot having a lot from early Mass, parents are asked not to pull up and try to drop off in the middle of the lot.

Dismissal

All students will be dismissed after Mass on the Claiborne Drive side of the church (between the gym and church). Students will not be allowed to walk back to the school cafeteria after Mass. The school building will be locked once the children proceed to Mass. Please arrive promptly if you are not attending Mass.

Dress Code

We ask that students dress appropriately for class and refrain from wearing anything that draws unusual attention to them or may affect their participation in class. The way a person dresses reflects, to a large extent, the value that a person places on an event or place. Church and Schools of Religion should especially be held in high esteem as institutions of our God. As such, it is expected that students dress appropriately for Mass and CCD classes. No one may wear short shorts, midriffs, tank tops or inappropriate sayings on clothing. If a student is judged by the CCD Coordinator or the Pastor as being inappropriately dressed, the parents will be contacted to correct this problem immediately.



Personal Possessions

Items such as radios, CD players, electronic games, cell phones, etc. are not allowed at CCD. If your child must have a cell phone, it is to be turned off until you pick them up after class. Phones are available in the office if they need to call home for any reason.

No other calls should be made. Students should not bring money or valuables with them to class. The parish is not responsible for lost money or valuables. We will take cell phones and other items and keep them in the office for the parents to pick up if child uses it during class time.

Emergency Information

In the Religious Education office, files are maintained on all students in case of emergency. Please keep your child's file up to date with emergency phone numbers, your home and cell phone number as well as your current address. If your child is diagnosed with something that should be noted in their file, be sure to make the office aware in writing.

Discipline

As our young people grow and mature they develop in many different ways. Their faith development is an integral part of their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral development. We feel it is important to see the faith development of our students as co-partners in this relationship with their parents. Parents are the primary educators

of their children. We are here to assist you in your child's education. It is therefore essential that we work together in developing in your child, good behavior habits and positive attitudes toward religious education.

We offer the following suggestions for the home:

- Remind your child of the proper way to act, and that certain situations call for our best behavior; such as classrooms, church, car line, etc.
- Recognize that the teacher has the special privilege of representing you during class time and should be treated with respect. Affirm that with your child.
- Try to project a positive attitude about attending Religious Education classes. Just by the presence of your child, we know you consider their participation in the program important to you.
- We hope to instill in your child a pride and respect for themselves as Catholics and Christians in today's society and as part of the St. Agnes family.
- Help your child recognize rules as necessary to protect and to respect all people, which includes respecting public and private property.
- It is important for your child to follow the rules for the safety of all children in our parish. This means we also respect the property of others. ***Please remind your children that the parish and school are sharing space. Remind them to refrain from using, damaging or taking anything in a desk that belongs to someone else.***

Specific Classroom rules:

- Allow everyone to have an opportunity to speak.
- Raise your hand and wait to be called on.

- Remain quiet while the teacher or someone else is speaking.
- Always remain seated unless a teacher tells you otherwise.
- Walk in the halls and cafeteria without yelling, jumping or making noises that are disturbing to others.
- Respect one another.

Teachers will handle minor discipline offenses in the classroom. If a child's behavior continuously disrupts the class or learning process of others, the child will be sent to the office. At the first incident, the child will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences. After the second incident, the child will be sent to the office where a discussion with the DRE and a determination made if it is necessary to call the parents. If a child is sent to the office a third time, the parents will be called to pick the child up and have a conference. If the behavior continues, it may be necessary for the parent to attend class with the child or the child to be removed from the classroom.

It is not our intention to deny a religious education to any child. However, it is not fair to allow the actions of one child to keep others in the class from having a positive experience. All of our catechists are volunteers who share their faith with the youth of our Church and they deserve the support and respect of all the students and parents.

Policy of Abuse and Neglect

The parish teachers and staff have a responsibility to report incidents of apparent child abuse or neglect and to cooperate with authorities in relation to these matters. Such reporting is required by law. Those who serve as catechists and staff members have an obligation to follow the policy concerning abuse and neglect of minors in the Archdiocese of New Orleans.

Safe Environment Program

As you may know, the Archdiocese of New Orleans implemented a mandatory policy on the teaching of Child Protection and Safe Environment to all teachers, volunteers and students. Each year there will be an “age appropriate” lesson taught to all the students focusing on creating a safe environment and child protection catechesis. This lesson plan was developed by the Archdiocese for use in all parish Religious Education programs in an effort to instill in our children their uniqueness in being created in the image of God and their right to grow up in a healthy non-abusive environment.

We do this teaching with your child during the month of October each year, which is Respect for Life month. If for any reason, you prefer to do this teaching, please come by the office and pick up a lesson plan. Lessons are also available in the office for you to preview.

Parental Involvement

Parents are expected to take a more active role in their child’s religious education. Parents are the primary teachers of their children in the matter of faith, while the Parish and Church Community support and reinforce the parents and students in their journey of faith.

At least one parent must attend the general information parent meeting that is held on the first day of classes. In addition, parents are required to attend all the meetings associated with sacramental preparations.

Parents are invited and encouraged to visit their child’s class any time during the year. Please send a note to the teacher the week before any visit. Resource materials such as books, videos, flash cards, curriculum guidelines are available to parents to check out for use at home.

Teachers

All messages for teachers or aides should be left with the CCD office. Our teachers are volunteers; we train them as often as possible and follow up with them weekly concerning teaching strategies, concerns, etc.

Sacramental Preparation



First Reconciliation/First Eucharist

Second grade is the Archdiocesan recommended grade for reception of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The child must have received two consecutive years of Religious Education prior to receiving the Sacrament. In order for the child to receive these Sacraments at St. Agnes, the parents must attend the Parent Meeting held for each Sacrament. They last approximately one hour. A Sacrament fee is charged to cover the cost of the Sacrament books, reception and retreat day held for the children along with the rehearsal. Interviews with parents and students will be held. All other information will be given out at the parent meetings.



Confirmation

Eleventh grade is the mandated grade for reception of Confirmation in our Archdiocese. The candidates for Confirmation must have at least three academic years of consecutive instruction in the Catholic Faith immediately prior to receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

All candidates along with at least one parent must attend a meeting at the beginning of the school year. This meeting will give a full understanding of the program and requirements. Interviews with parents and students will be held. A Sacramental fee includes robe rental, material, retreat and the reception.

The readiness of each candidate for the Sacraments is subject to the approval of the pastor.



**Religious Education
helps to build a
strong foundation**

Fr. Bac Hai Viet Tran

Pastor

Kelly Wilbert

Coordinator

It is the hope and prayer of Fr. Bac Hai, our Pastor, the DRE and the Faculty of Catechist and aides that this year will be a very positive learning experience in which our young people can come to know Our Lord and enter into a faithful relationship with Him. Please let us know how we can assist you attaining this goal.

Our dedicated staff is able and willing to be of any assistance to you. Feel free to contact any one of us, if the need arises. On Sunday mornings, please use 952-4343, as this is the only number answered during School of Religion hours.