



**St. Mary Parish, Aurora
Religious Formation Program
Parent/Student Handbook
2022/2023**

Revised: 08/09/22

PARISH INFORMATION

Parish Office

432 E. Downer Place, Aurora, IL 60505

Hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 am- 1:00 pm
Phone: 630-892-0480
Email: stmary-aurora@rockforddiocese.org
Website: stmaryaurora.org

Religious Education Staff

Pastor: Rev. Antoni Kretowicz
Deacon: Jose Falcon
Religious Formation Director: Anabel Rivas

Mass Schedule

Weekdays: Monday-Friday 8:00 am
Saturday: 4:00 pm ENG, 7:00 pm SPA
Sunday: 9:00 am ENG, 11:00 am SPA
Holy Days: Please check bulletin

RE Phone Numbers

Anabel Rivas, DRE
E-Mail: arivas@rockforddiocese.org
[630-892-0480](tel:630-892-0480) or [331-308-9132](tel:331-308-9132)

AMENDMENT

Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. During the year, it may become necessary to introduce procedures or program specific rules to address unforeseen behavior or situations. The Director of the Religious Formation Program (DRE) will attempt to keep you informed of all changes as soon as practical. Any changes will be published in future Parent/Student Handbooks.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURE

Arrival

- ❖ Students should arrive no earlier than 5:15 pm on Tuesdays
- ❖ Classes begin promptly at **5:30** pm on Tuesdays
- ❖ Sunday Sessions will begin at 12:15 or 12:20 depending on Mass.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

Dismissal

- ❖ Tuesday 6:30 pm or 6:45 pm
- ❖ Sundays 1:30 pm or 1:45 pm

For security reasons, the outside doors will remain locked at all times. There will be someone at the door to let parents and students in. **Doors should never be propped open.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential in religious formation. Our program maintains attendance records for its students. It is understandable that scheduling conflicts with family, school or sports activities may come up on class days, but we ask that you be as dedicated as possible and make religious formation sessions a priority. If your child is unable to attend, an e-mail or phone call to the DRE is appreciated and expected. It is better to arrive a little late than to miss a session entirely. If it is necessary that your child leave before dismissal we request a letter signed by the parent/guardian be sent the week prior to the early dismissal stating the time they need to be dismissed.

Please text 331-308-9132 if you are running late or will not be present.

SESSION TIMES

Religious Formation sessions are held on Tuesday evening and Sunday afternoon in our Parish Building, unless otherwise noted. Sessions begin promptly at **5:30 pm on Tuesdays** and dismissal is **6:30 pm & 12:15 to 1:30 pm on Sundays**.

Late arrivals can be disruptive, especially during opening prayer, so we ask that you make every effort to be punctual.

- Families should not arrive before 5:15 pm
- If the catechist or an assigned volunteer is not present in the room, students will be directed to another classroom for supervision until the catechist arrives



Students are not allowed in a classroom unsupervised. Students are not allowed outside of their classrooms without the permission of their catechist or classroom aide. No student is allowed outside the building from 5:30pm - 6:30pm or 12:15- 1:30 pm unless accompanied by an adult volunteer from the RF Program, or other adult approved by the DRE.

Per diocesan guidelines outside of the classroom, adult volunteers are not allowed to be alone with a student.



COMMUNICATION

Our Program uses Flocknotes to communicate with parents. Please ensure that you are receiving these notifications.

Open communication is an important component in our program.

Please feel free to contact the director at any time with any questions, comments, or issues.

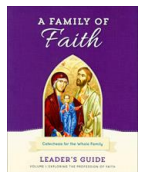
Phone numbers and contact information for our program are listed in the front of this handbook.

CURRICULUM

Curriculum guidelines are established by the United States Council of Catholic Bishops through the "Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series".

Our program uses approved textbooks published by Sophia Institute

A Family of Faith copies of the workbook will be provided to families in English and Spanish.



CUSTODY

If parents are divorced or separated, the Religious Formation Program presumes that both parents have access to the children. If there are any other custody arrangements, the Director of the Religious Formation Program must be notified, and a copy of such agreement must be on file in the parish religious formation office.

If there is any special situation or concern that we should be aware of, please inform the Director.

DISCIPLINE

The religious formation staff is accountable as well as responsible to parents to provide an environment in which the catechetical process can take place. The catechist's presence and the establishment of group guidelines work to assure that the catechists will be better able to share the Good News. Discipline shall be developed in a positive manner. It is imperative that Christian attitudes prevail for effective faith sharing to take place.

If serious behavior problems do occur; a conference may be requested. If the problem is not remedied the Director will intervene, and may suggest alternative programming.

Personal Conduct

- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and Christian manner
- Students are expected to treat catechists, aides, other adults and students with respect
- Shirts containing references to sex, alcohol, drugs, or profanity are not acceptable attire
- Students are NOT ALLOWED to bring headphones, I Pads, iPods, tablets, MP3 players, hand held games, or other such items with them to RF sessions.
- If a cell phone is necessary it must remain off and out of site while in the classroom (unless prior arrangements are made between parent and DRE)
- Students are expected to participate in classroom activities and discussion
- Any activity or conduct considered by the catechist or DRE to be disruptive or disrespectful will not be tolerated and will be addressed

Students may be removed from the program for gross misconduct or disobedience.

DISCIPLINE

Respect

Our program meets in the parish school building. We share the classroom facilities with the Citizenship program. Please do not write on tables or leave garbage on the floor.

Gum

The chewing of gum is a distraction, and may lead to maintenance problems. No gum will be allowed in the upstairs classrooms.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATIONS

In case of inclement weather or any situation that would require cancellation of any session, the Director of the Religious Formation Program will notify parents via text. It is extremely important that we **have contact phone numbers**.

It is best to use common sense in extreme weather, especially depending on the distance and the roads that you are traveling.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is imperative that we have up to date emergency contact information for each family. Each family should have an up to date emergency contact telephone number in our file. We get this information from your completed registration form. If this information changes at any time during the year, please let us know of the new number and/or contact as soon as possible.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Please inform the Director if your child has any special needs or problems. This would include: allergies, physical challenges, learning disabilities, attention deficit (ADD), a recent death or separation, or medical issues.

The Religious Formation staff is not allowed to dispense any medication.

This includes over the counter drugs such as aspirin, Tylenol, or antacids.

REGISTRATION/FEEES

Families of the children enrolled in our Religious Formation Program must be registered members of St. Mary Parish. (You receive weekly envelopes)

Fees

Payment of fees is expected at the time of registration. Please make checks payable to "St. Mary Parish". No student will be denied admission due to a family's financial hardship. Please contact the Director about a deferred payment plan or financial assistance. We accept credit/debit card payments also.

\$70 per family

\$90 per family after August 8th

\$130 non registered families (if space is available)

RELIGIOUS FORMATION STAFF

Our volunteer RF staff is made up of active Catholic members of our faith community. We are blessed with catechists who come from a wide variety of backgrounds.

The members of the RF staff devote a great deal of time preparing their lessons, their classrooms, and their hearts in order to make each class a special, faith filled experience. Catechists have committed additional time to catechist training classes, retreats, seminars, workshops and program meetings in order to become the most competent leaders possible.

All volunteers in our program have state background checks on file and have completed the "Protecting God's Children" class. We comply with all pertinent policies and regulations of the Diocese of Rockford.

The Director of Religious Formation, Anabel Rivas is a certified Catechetical Leader and Director of Religious Formation in the Diocese of Rockford.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES AS ACTIVE MEMBERS

Families will be expected to help with the cleaning & hospitality of the Church. I schedule will be given to parents. As members of St. Mary, we will work together to make our church beautiful and welcoming to all.



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

At St. Mary, children are invited to receive First Reconciliation (Confession) and First Communion in the second grade. Youth in grade eight are invited to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

Receiving the sacraments, as well as preparing for them, is a special time of grace for children and families. A child's sacramental preparation is part of a lifelong faith formation journey. Reception of a sacrament is not an **end** but a **beginning**.

Therefore, we do not offer a class for "First Communion" and "Confirmation". Rather, preparation for these sacraments is part of their ongoing religious education and faith formation.

Children wishing to receive a sacrament must have been involved in a Religious Formation Program, either here at St. Mary or in another parish at least one year prior to receiving a sacrament.

Children who make First Reconciliation/Communion are expected to stay involved in our program and in parish life. Youth who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation are expected to remain active in their faith and the faith community of St. Mary Parish, Aurora.

Our Church tells us that **parents** are the **primary** religious educators of their children. This role is especially important during a child's sacramental preparation. In order to assist parents and to foster family catechesis, there are mandatory parent meetings for Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation. Parents will be notified well in advance concerning the dates and times of these meetings.



PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK SIGN OFF FORM

St. Mary Parish, Aurora Religious Formation

I have received the Parent/Student Handbook for the Religious Formation Program. I understand the issues presented within it and will do my best to follow the guidelines. In addition, I will discuss the importance of the guidelines with my child (ren) attending the program. I will explain what is expected of them while they attend the religious formation sessions.

Student Names (if different last name please include)

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

NOTE:

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN UPON RECEIPT OF THIS BOOKLET.

Thank you.

