



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE
8 Atkinson Depot Road, Plaistow, NH 03865
603-382-8324
E-mail: jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net**

**Rev. Albert Tremblay, obl. SB, Pastor
Joyce Szczapa, Religious Education Coordinator**

**SUNDAY EUCHARISTIC LITURGY
Plaistow: Saturday Vigil 4:00 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m.
Newton: Sunday 8:00 a.m.
Holy Day Liturgies are celebrated on the Holy Day
at 8:00 a.m. in Newton and at 6:30 p.m. in Plaistow**

Welcome to St. Luke the Evangelist Parish Religious Education Program!

From the Pastor:

On behalf of all of our Parish Staff, Catechists and Religious Education Volunteers, I want to express my thanks to you as a parent or guardian for your role as the primary religious educator of your child. That role, outlined by the Catholic Church in the Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States, tells us: “family and community are extremely important in the catechetical process...the impact of parents is primary among the human factors which enhance the [catechetical] process. Thus the vital influence of parents on the social and religious development of their children must be more widely recognized.” Your decision to involve your children in a parish-based religious education program is one that will have far-reaching implications for the life and faith of your child.

Our Religious Education Program represents more than religious instruction for children. We believe in extending the classroom experience to the worship life of the community, to the life of the child at school, at home or with friends, and into the larger community. Our community has commitment to adult education and faith formation, designed to present the Church’s rich history and teaching in an adult format. We also offer an extensive program in “scripture study” that involves reflecting on and learning more about God’s Word, revealed in the Bible and shared with the Church through the readings of the Lectionary, the cycle of readings used at Liturgy. The Parish also offer programs derived from the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and the Rite for Christian Initiation for Children. These programs welcome non-Baptized persons and persons wishing to join the Church.

Our entire Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Community gathers around you as a family as you begin this important journey...please know how welcome you are among us.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

- Inspiring students to search for truth as they journey through life.
- Enabling students to believe what they learn and live what they believe through prayer, worship and service.
- Enhancing our Parish faith community in its pursuit of the building of God's Kingdom.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHEDULE

Religious education programs are offered in conjunction with the 10 a.m. Sunday Liturgy at Plaistow. Children are dismissed after the opening Prayer at Mass and go to the Parish Hall for their own age appropriate Liturgy of the Word. They then complete a catechetical lesson linked directly to the Liturgy of the Word for that respective Sunday. The children then return to the Church for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Religious Education for children in pre-school through grade 8 is offered during the 10 a.m. Liturgy on Sunday.

Sacramental preparation programs for Reconciliation and Eucharist are offered as home-based study programs with introductory sessions for parents, retreats and large group meetings.

Enrollment is contingent on a completed Parish and Program Registration Form and payment of the fees for the year. The Parish may choose to adjust or consolidate sessions depending on enrollment and availability of volunteer staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FEES

These fees help support the costs of texts, materials, supplies, and staff associated with the program. **FEES ARE DUE AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION IN ORDER TO ASSIGN A STUDENT TO A PARTICULAR SESSION.**

1 child \$80; 2 children \$120; 3 or more \$150

Confirmation Fee, \$50; First Eucharist/First Reconciliation Fee, \$50

Financial hardship should never keep a student away from Religious Education. Please consult the Coordinator immediately should this be a concern. Instruction fees are waived for children of Catechists and Classroom Aides; however, relevant sacramental fees are the responsibility of the student's family. **Families need to be registered in the Parish and at least one parent attend Sunday Mass at 10 a.m. with their child.**

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

PRE-SCHOOL – GRADE 8

Preschool students through grade 8 are dismissed during the 10 a.m. Liturgy for their own age appropriate Liturgy of the Word, which focuses primarily on the Gospel reading of the day. Students will then participate in a lesson that ties the Gospel of the particular Sunday to a core teaching of the Church. Each student will receive a weekly booklet for use at home. Every family will also receive a resource book *What the Church Believes and Teaches* for home use. In addition, Pflaum, our publisher, offers free on-line resources for all ages at their website, www.pflaum.com.

Why choose a liturgy-based program?

Each lesson in the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Faith Formation Program flows from the words of Jesus Christ in the Sunday Gospels. Children learn their faith – including instructions in doctrine, sacraments, commandments, and prayer – within the rhythms and seasons of the liturgical year, encouraging a growing participation in the life of the parish community.

**Free family resources are
available at
www.pflaum.com**

What grades does the program cover?

The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies Faith Formation program is available in five age-appropriate editions for preschool through eighth grade.

What are the components of the program?

The program consists of a faith formation handbook – *What the Church Believes and Teaches* – for each child, plus 32 weekly Gospel-based lessons. Together they provide a unique alternative to the traditional textbook. The handbook is also available in a bilingual edition, *Me fe católica*.

How do the handbook and weekly lessons work together?

The handbook leads children to understand the basics of the Catholic faith; the weekly lessons inspire them to seek out ways to practice their faith in their daily lives. A special section in the weekly guides integrates each lesson with doctrine in the handbook.

How does the program involve parents?

The take-home booklet format provides the most effective communication tool between the Parish, the student and the student's family. Every session reinforces the need for parents and children to actively participate in the Sunday Mass and the life of the Church. Free on-line resources are available for family use at www.pflaum.com.

All the materials associated with the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies including the resource book *What the Church Believes and Teaches* have been found in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and certified for use in catechetical instruction by the US Bishops.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREPARATION: First Reconciliation preparation typically takes place in Grade 2, with the sacrament celebrated on the day of the retreat. Weekly attendance at the Sunday Liturgy, together with the completion of the home-based program engages children's hearts and minds through multiple prayer opportunities and unique interactive elements. Emphasis is on the beauty of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and engages both children and families in this important time of preparation. A Sunday retreat experience for the entire family culminates with the celebration of the Sacrament.

FIRST EUCHARIST PREPARATION: First Eucharist preparation typically takes place in Grade 2 (the Canon Law of the Church states that the minimum age for reception of the Eucharist is 7), with the reception of Eucharist for the first time celebrated in late spring. Weekly attendance and completion of the sacramental curriculum, and attending a Sunday retreat with at least one parent is required. First Eucharist readies children to come to the Lord's Table with joy and reverence. The home-based curriculum explores the sacraments of initiation, liturgical seasons, and Eucharist-related Biblical stories.



CONFIRMATION & RESTORED ORDER: Our Diocese is restoring the order in which the Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated. Restored Order means returning the three sacraments of Christian initiation to the logical order in which they were designed to be celebrated: first Baptism, then Confirmation, then Eucharist. By placing Confirmation prior to the reception of First Eucharist it makes it easier to view the Eucharist as the summit of Christian initiation.

As of 2021, the standard age of Confirmation will be students in the third grade, and Confirmation will be celebrated at the same liturgy as First Eucharist. As a result, the preparation and reception of the sacraments of initiation will occur with Baptism in infancy, Confirmation and Eucharist in third grade. Although not a sacrament of initiation, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be received in the second grade.

The Sacrament schedule for our Parish for the year 2017/2018 will be as follows:

Visit www.catholicnh.org/parishes/formation/lifelong for more information on Restored Order of Confirmation & Eucharist

Grade 2 will receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in January, 2018 and First Eucharist in May, 2018.

Grades 8, 9, and 10 will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in April, 2018. There will be Confirmation sessions after the 10 a.m. Mass with a retreat as noted on the calendar.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR CHILDREN: In the course of life, circumstances can result in a disruption of the “typical” calendar of catechetical instruction or sacramental preparation. In some cases, Catholic families face the reality that a child has not celebrated Reconciliation or Eucharist (or even Baptism in some cases). Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish reaches out to students in special circumstances, desiring that they join our community as completely as they are able. The adaptation of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults for children of catechetical age (7 or above) allows for many adaptations so that full sacramental preparation and celebration can occur. A student who is “late” in receiving sacraments will enroll in the Religious Education program equivalent to their grade in school. In addition, a special **Rite of Christian Initiation for Children** group will be formed with the express purpose of preparing children to celebrate the sacraments of initiation and Reconciliation. Parental participation in such a program is critical, and commitments as to time and schedule will be discussed with the student, parent, Religious Education Staff, and Pastor.

POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish is responsible for Religious Education and instruction, as well as Sacramental preparation of the families who have chosen Catholic education at a Catholic school. The Parish is also responsible for maintaining the well-being of students during their presence at Religious Education classes and activities, and supporting and assisting catechists in their ministry to our youth through on-going formation and development.

The Classroom Catechist is responsible for a well-prepared class session, effective classroom management, and maintains the Parish's expectations to ensure a safe, productive environment for all students. The Catechist should be a positive witness of the faith to their students by being a good role model, and fostering their own faith development through catechist training, videos, books, workshops, and/or classes.

Parents or Guardians are responsible for setting a proper example by attending Mass weekly with their children as mandated by the First and Third Commandments and precepted by the Church. Parents should see that their child attends the weekly Religious Education session, and notify the Catechist or Religious Education Coordinator in case of absence from class. It is expected that parents will encourage and guide their children through any home assignments.

Students are responsible for weekly attendance at Liturgy and Religious Education sessions, being attentive to lessons as well as thoughtfully and thoroughly completing all class work and homework. Students need to show proper Christian respect to Catechists, Staff and fellow students through words, actions and deeds. There is to be no gum chewing, wearing hats or inappropriate clothing/t-shirt messages to class sessions.

DISCIPLINE POLICY: The spiritual development of a child begins with the experience and modeling found in the home, and is enriched with formal education in the faith. The time for formal instruction is limited. Disruption by one or more students is detrimental to the process of education. Misbehavior, disrespect, or non-participation will not be tolerated. Our discipline policy is as follows:

Students not responding to a Catechist's directions will be sent to the Coordinator. Further disruptions will result in a meeting between student, parents, Catechist, and Coordinator.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our Religious Education curriculum follows the church calendar, so weekly mass attendance is an integral part of the program, and is expected of each child. Families are expected to be present at Liturgy each Sunday.

When choosing to enroll your child in the Parish Religious Education Program you are committing to be a part of a community on a journey. Each member has an important part to share with the entire group.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE

Our Parish program depends on volunteers who give of themselves and so witness by deeds of service to the Way of the Lord Jesus. Please consider assisting the Religious Education Program as a Catechist, Aide or Substitute:

CATECHIST (Pre-K – 8; Confirmation)

Qualifications: A love for and practice of the Catholic Faith, and a desire to share the faith with our young people; patience and understanding; willingness to grow in faith and knowledge.

Responsibilities: Pray for the children, their families, and each other; arrive a few minutes before class time to greet and settle children; prepare and lead lessons according to the Parish Religious Education mission, goals, and vision, using curriculum text and supplementary materials provided or approved by Coordinator; attend Catechist Meetings and resource sessions; keep attendance records, maintain appropriate environment in the classroom; notify Coordinator in advance (if possible) of need for substitute; notify coordinator in advance of materials, copies, equipment, etc., needed; report extraordinary circumstances to Coordinator.

CLASSROOM AIDE

Qualifications: Patience and understanding; willingness to grow in faith and knowledge.

Responsibilities: Pray for the children, families, and each other; attend class on scheduled day; assist Catechist or Substitute with lesson, classroom environment; accompany youngsters to rest rooms; help with craft activities, etc.

SUBSTITUTE

Qualifications: A love for the practice of the Catholic Faith; patience and understanding; willingness to grow in faith and knowledge.

Responsibilities: Pray for the children, families, and each other; arrive a few minutes before class time to greet and settle children; take attendance, lead the class for regular Catechist in his or her absence; follow lesson plan as outlined by catechist or as advised by Coordinator; report extraordinary circumstances to Coordinator.

It is the policy of the Diocese of Manchester that ALL Catechists, Aides, and Substitutes must complete an application form and undergo a criminal background check with the State of NH before they are allowed to participate in the Religious Education Program. Additionally, all Parish Volunteers must attend a Diocesan sponsored “Protecting God’s Children” seminar or complete “Shield the Vulnerable” on line. Please see the Religious Education Coordinator with any questions.