



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

8 Atkinson Depot Road

Plaistow, NH 03865

603-382-8324 E-mail: jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net

Rev. A. J. Tremblay, Jr., Obl. SB, Pastor

Joyce Szczapa, Religious Education Coordinator

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. Finally, we 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

We are concerned that we offer your child the best and most productive learning environment possible. We also remain committed to the ideal that faith development occurs within a supportive community setting.

SUNDAY

Grades 1-5	9:45 AM to 10:45 AM
Confirmation	6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

MONDAY

Grades 1-5	4:00 PM to 5:15 PM
Grades 6-8	6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

Enrollment is contingent on a completed Registration Form and payment of the fees for the year. Class sizes are limited—and rosters will be determined on a first-registered, first-listed basis. Early registration is recommended to insure your family can plan adequately for the Fall! The Parish may choose to adjust or consolidate sessions depending on enrollment and availability of volunteer staff.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

GRADES 1-8

First grade through grade eight use the “Finding God” series, published by *Loyola Press*. This series is innovative, imaginative, and a practical approach to lifelong faith formation. The program incorporates a four-step catechetical process—*Engage, Explore, Reflect, and Respond* in every chapter. Seven seasonal chapters highlight seasons and feasts of the liturgical year. Activities allow students to actively participate in faith formation. Prayers and practices of our faith include age-appropriate reference to Catholic prayers, traditions, and beliefs.

FIRST RECONCILIATION PREPARATION:

First Reconciliation preparation typically takes place in Grade 2, with the sacrament celebrated during the Advent season. Weekly attendance and completion of the sacramental curriculum. “God’s Gift: Reconciliation” 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.

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, “God’s Gift: Eucharist,” and attending the RETREAT with at least one parent is required. First Eucharist readies children to come to the Lord’s table with joy and reverence. The curriculum explores the sacraments of initiation, liturgical seasons, and Eucharist-related Biblical stories.





ATTENDANCE POLICY

AS THE CURRICULUM FOLLOWS THE CHURCH CALENDAR, WEEKLY MASS ATTENDANCE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROGRAM, AND IS EXPECTED OF EACH CHILD. Students are expected to be present at all classes. Five absences from class will result in a parent meeting with the Religious Education Coordinator and/or the Pastor.

At any grade level, in the case of any absence, it is expected that the student and parent take the responsibility to make arrangements to pick up and complete any missed work.

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. All attempts are made to work around school schedules, and Religious Education Activities are set well in advance of other programs so families can put them into their busy calendars, so to avoid conflicts. A full calendar for the Program is published in the Fall.



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 maintain 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. Parents need to be sure the student arrives **before** the class starting time and is picked up promptly when class is over; instilling a positive attitude towards Religious Education, as well as an attitude of respect for catechists and staff members. It is expected that parents will encourage and guide their children through any home assignments.

Students are responsible for weekly attendance at 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:

1. Students not responding to teacher's reprimands will be sent to the Coordinator.
2. Student's parents may be called and child will be sent home for that session.
3. Further disruptions will result in a meeting between student, parents, Catechist, Coordinator, and Pastor for discussion/resolution before the student may return to class.

WHAT ABOUT HOME SCHOOLING...?

Parents who make a choice to “home-school” their child in conformity with various state and local laws take on a mammoth task which requires dedication and energy. Those who support this kind of education readily witness to the value and work ethic which appropriate home school methodology engenders in students.

St. Luke the Evangelist Parish supports the Church’s teaching that “parents are the primary religious educators of their children.” This time-honored dictum allows parents to form their children in the ways of the faith. No authority can exempt parents from this serious moral obligation.

The Parish also recognizes that the teaching of the faith is specially reserved to the Bishop in the Diocese, and to the College of Bishops in union with the Holy Father as Bishop of Rome. In this special sense, the revealed faith of the Catholic Church as a “deposit of salvation” is appropriately defined, taught, and described by the Magisterium of the Church under the guidance of the Spirit. No other authority can replace the teaching authority of the Church in this vocation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, written originally for Bishops in their role as teachers, clearly illustrates the importance of clarity in Catholic doctrine.

Practically speaking, there have been concerns on the part of all involved with “home-school” catechetics. In our own community, parents have not always had access to adequate or appropriate resources for this task, and lack of follow-up from families involved in “home-school” catechetics has resulted in less than satisfactory progress.

To give parents the maximum resources available, families who wish to avail themselves of home schooling opportunities will first consult with the Parish Religious Education Coordinator. ***Approval of a home schooling program is the sole judgment of the Pastor.*** In the rare instance of approval, students will utilize the Parish Religious Education material (see Program descriptions) as the primary source for the catechetical work. Parents involved with an approved home schooling program will meet with the Parish Staff for consultation and Adult Catechesis. Home-schooling is never approved for any sacramental preparation program [Reconciliation, Eucharist or Confirmation].

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION FOR CHILDREN

In the course of the life of any individual family, 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 First 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. A full schedule for the RCIC is published in the Fall.



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.**

<u>Parish Participants*</u>		<u>Parish Non-Participants**</u>	
One Child	\$80	Each Child	\$125
Second Child	\$120		
Third Child	\$150 (maximum \$150)		
First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Fee	\$50	First Reconciliation/First Eucharist Fee	\$75
Confirmation I Retreat	\$35	Confirmation I Retreat	\$50
Confirmation II Retreat	\$35	Confirmation II Retreat	\$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 AND RETREAT FEES** are the responsibility of the student's family.

*Parish Participants: Families who are registered in the parish, attend Sunday Mass, and have been a contributor of record for at least one year.

**Parish Non-Participants: Families who are registered in the parish, but do not attend Sunday Mass, or are not a contributor of record.

(The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability.)

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 (1-5, 6-8, 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 (ONE PER CLASS)

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.



VISION STATEMENT

A Roman Catholic community called by God to be a loving family consecrated through Baptism and transformed by the true presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist so as to grow in spiritual maturity and in reverence for the Lord.

MISSION STATEMENT

- Nurture a deep life of prayer beginning with the celebration of the Mass.
- Encourage one another to announce and live the Gospel with a joyous heart.
- Unify the parish family through fellowship and hospitality.
- Foster ministries which will bring people to a closer relationship with Christ and strengthen the faith life of the parish.
- Recognize and provide for the spiritual and corporal needs of others.



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

Plaistow: Vigil 4:00 PM; Sunday 11:00 AM; Tuesday 8:00 AM; Wednesday 6:30 PM

Newton: Sunday 7:30 AM and 9:00 AM; Monday and Thursday 8:00 AM

Holy Day Liturgies are celebrated on the Holy Day at 8:00 AM in Newton and at 6:30 PM in Plaistow.

RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered in Plaistow on Saturdays from 3:00 PM to 3:30 PM or by appointment. Advent and Lent on Sunday evenings following 6:00 PM Evening Prayer in Newton.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Arrangements can be made to celebrate this Sacrament at any time by contacting the Parish Office.