

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to this year's catechetical program designed to aid you in your responsibility and privileged to teach the Faith to your child. As you know the church has always said that the parents are the first teachers of the Faith. To that end, the parish establishes programs of religious instruction to support you and to become a partner with you to tell the Good News of Jesus Christ to your child and all who come to this place of worship.

It is my sincere wish that you and your family find at St. Dominic a place to worship and grow in every way, spiritually, mentally and physically. By doing our part, to aid in the spiritual education of children, we hope that they might receive from us a foundation in Faith that will support them for their entire life.

This handbook is a tool that lays out expectations, responsibilities and roles thus allowing for clear communication. This booklet is designed to address general information, requirements and policies for the parish of St. Dominic. As a family enrolled in this parish's program our expectations is that you will adhere to policies as presented in this handbook. You can expect that this handbook will be edited annually and that any changes made in the course of a school year will be given to you in writing.

We thank you for your support and cooperation, and look forward to our partnership with you this year. It is in working together that we are the Body of Christ and carry out His mission of building the Kingdom of God.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Jim Cink". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Fr. Jim Cink
Pastor

Mission Statement

St. Dominic Religious Education Program strives to establish a Christian environment where students will learn to respect God, self and others. The program provides an atmosphere that will help develop a strong sense of community service and Christian fellowship that will lead to a productive and faith-filled life.

Objectives of our Parish Catechetical Program *

- ❖ To present a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
- ❖ To center on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- ❖ To be appropriate to the age level, maturity, circumstances, language and ethnic background of each participant
- ❖ To involve all members of the parish community, particularly the parents
- ❖ To focus on the symbols, rituals, and prayers of the Church
- ❖ To enable the believers to live out their faith in their everyday life

* From the *National Directory for Catechesis*, 2005

The parish catechetical program admits students of every race, sex, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this catechetical program. Where possible, our parish program strives to make accommodation for children and youth with disabilities.

St. Dominic Children's Religious Education Program
2009-2010

Rev. James J. Cink, Pastor
Rev. James Havens, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Msgr. Francis C. Murphy, In Residence
Rev. Mr. Edward G. Connick, Deacon
Rev. Mr. Robert E. Kirby, Jr., Deacon

Catechists

Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL): Brenda Christian

Pre-School: Jenny Jauregui

Pre-School Assistant: Josie Lami

Kindergarten: Shelly Proctor/
Mary Katherine Devine

First Grade: Beth Klein

Second Grade: Cathy Huettemann

Third Grade: Helen Higdon

Fourth Grade: Junelle Reid

Fifth Grade: Cassandra Holman

Sixth Grade: Rob Farrell

Seventh Grade: Melanie Fromdahl

Eighth Grade: Johanna Lynch

High School: Joanne Upton

Parish Catechetical Policies

The Parish Catechetical Program is a Catholic Educational Community. As members of this community, every student has certain rights, privileges and obligations. Specific guidelines must be followed so that each child may develop into a responsible person. Please review these guidelines carefully with your child.

Student Behavior and Expectations

- Students will be expected to show respect to their teachers and classmates. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Classroom rules are posted in each classroom. At the first disruption, the child will be referred to classroom rules. After the second incident, the child will be sent to talk with the PCL. If inappropriate behavior continues, the parent/guardian will be contacted.
- All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. They are also expected to complete assignments and participate in group projects.
- The Archdiocese of Mobile has a detailed **Field Trip Policy**. This policy, its regulations, and permission forms will be used for all field trips, service projects, retreats, etc.
- Students attending parish catechetical sessions are expected to regularly attend the Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days, and celebrate sacraments in *this* parish. Parents or guardians are also encouraged to do so.

Communication

Since the catechist has the most direct contact with your child, parents should discuss any classroom problems with the catechist first. If the problem cannot be resolved at this level, parents should speak with the PCL. If still unresolved, the problem may be brought to the pastor.

Sexual and other types of harassment

Harassment, racial slurs, fighting, smoking, drugs, or other inappropriate (or gang-related) conduct among students will not be tolerated. Violations of this rule will warrant immediate notification of parents/guardians of the child involved, and may warrant suspension or even dismissal of the involved from the program.

Weapons

In the unlikely event, a student is suspected of possessing a weapon or drugs while on parish premises or as a participant in a catechetical program or a youth ministry event, the Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL) or Youth Ministry Leader (YML) will immediately notify the parents of the child. The proper civil authorities may also be notified.

Attendance Policy

The catechetical sessions are held every Sunday from 10:15 AM to 11:15 AM with the exception of the Preschool. Preschool classes are held during the 9:00 AM Sunday Mass. High School Religious Education meets from 4:15 PM to 5:15 PM. Students are required to attend 30 sessions. When a student is absent, they will need to bring a note to their teacher when they return to class. Students are also expected to complete missed assignments upon their return. Each student is allowed three excused absences. After a child has two absences, the Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL) or pastor will notify the parents. Students and parents with specific family issues preventing them from attending weekly catechetical sessions will be handled on a case-by- case basis by the PCL in consultation with the pastor. All students must have written permission from their parents or guardian to leave class early. We have a lot of material to cover, which is why regular attendance is very important.

Carpool Safety

Parents are asked to pick their children up in the carpool. To make sure the carpool line moves faster, we ask that you place a sign in your windshield with your child's name or, if you have more than one child, the family's name. If you want, you may walk up and get your child. If you decide to pick your child up at their classroom, you must enter through the gate on the east side of the church. Also, if someone other than yourself is picking your child up, please send a note the PCL or the child's teacher with the person's name. Please make sure that person has identification with them. This is to ensure the safety of the child.

Volunteering

Parents are welcome to volunteer in our program. In order to do so, you must take the Child Protection Training. New volunteers can complete the training program at St. Dominic every fourth Tuesday at 7:00 PM.

Emergency Class Cancellation

If local schools are closed due to an emergency situation, catechetical classes will generally be cancelled. If you have any questions about cancellation, please email or phone the PCL or your child's catechist.

Fire Safety and Disaster Preparation

Procedures for fire or disaster evacuation are posted in each room. Each catechist will instruct the class on their evacuation procedures, and conduct at least one drill per year.

Health Concerns

Health information is collected on the Catechetical Registration Form. Catechists and other personnel are not allowed to dispense or administer medication to students.

If your child is on medications (for ADD or other such medications), please follow their doctor's orders in administering their medication.

Field Trip Information

If the Parish Catechetical Program plans an off-site activity or program, you will be required to complete a parental/guardian release form according to the Archdiocesan Field Trip Policy.

Child & Adolescent Protection Policy

In a pastoral effort to respond to a heightened need for the protection of our children, the Archdiocese of Mobile requires a catechesis be given to children and youth in all grades of Parish Programs and Catholic Schools. It is recommended that this yearly catechesis be done during Respect Life month, which is in October.

A letter will be sent to each family, notifying parents of the dates of the classes.

All priests, deacons, school administrators, teachers, youth ministers, parish catechists, support personnel, coaches, and other volunteers having "substantial contact" with children are required to attend training in the prevention and recognition of all forms of abuse against children. This program is provided by the Archdiocese. All persons who work with children in the Archdiocese of Mobile will be required to have background checks as part of the CAPP training.

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow all Archdiocesan policies on such matters. If you have questions, feel free to contact the Archdiocesan Office of Child Protection.

Phone: (251) 434-1559

Email: childprotection@bellsouth.net.

Sacramental Preparation

During the year, our second graders will be preparing to receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, and our eighth graders will be preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

Ideally, students preparing for any of these sacraments would have participated in a religious education program from Kindergarten until present. However, at the minimum, they should have received at least one (1) full year of religious education prior to the sacrament preparation year.

Before a child receives these sacraments, we will need a copy of your child's baptismal certificate. If your child was not baptized at St. Dominic, contact the church at which he or she was baptized, and request a recently dated copy. Finally, please keep them in your prayers as they continue their faith journey with God.

First Reconciliation

Students preparing for First Reconciliation will be required to do the following:

- Attend Mass every Sunday, and Holy Days of Obligation;
- Regularly attend classes;
- Parents are required to attend parent meetings.

First Eucharist

Students preparing for First Eucharist will be required to do the following:

- Attend Mass every Sunday, and Holy Days of Obligation;
- Regularly attend classes;
- Students and parents should attend the First Communion Retreat;
- Parents are required to attend parent meetings;
- All students are required to attend First Holy Communion practice.

Confirmation

Students preparing for Confirmation will be required to do the following:

- Attend Mass every Sunday, and Holy Days of Obligation
- Turn in a church bulletin, signed by a priest, to their teacher
- Complete a list of questions about the Church, its teachings and practices
- Complete 40 service hours
- Students are required to attend the Confirmation Retreat
- Attend Confirmation Practice with sponsor
- Students will write a letter to the Archbishop asking to be confirmed
- Parents of Confirmation Candidates are required to attend parent meetings

Parish Programs for Children and Youth

Pre-school

The Discovering God series is used in our preschool program (3 and 4 year olds). This series introduces the children to God's gifts of creation, self, and love with family and the Church community through songs and storytelling, and has been found in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops. We encourage parents to become familiar with their child's catechetical textbook. Learning the faith begins at home and our program is designed to assist you in your role as primary educator of your child.

Kindergarten through Grade 6

The We Believe series is used in grades K through 6. This series focuses on specific faith themes and content in each grade and/or sacramental preparation, and has been found in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops. The text includes age-appropriate activities and prayers for memorization. We encourage parents to become familiar with their child's catechetical textbook. Learning the faith begins at home and our program is designed to assist you in your role as primary educator of your child.

Grades 7th through 8th

Students in grades 7 and 8 will use the We Live Our Faith Volume I and Volume II. This series focuses on specific faith themes and content in each grade and/or sacramental preparation, and has been found in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops. The text includes age-appropriate activities and prayers for memorization. We encourage parents to become familiar with their child's catechetical textbook. Learning the faith begins at home and our program is designed to assist you in your role as primary educator of your child.

High School

Students in grades 9-12 will use the Catholic Youth Bible and the Catholic Faith Handbook for Youth. Both books will provide the students with an understanding of Catholic beliefs and traditions, and has been found in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* by the U.S. Bishops. They will learn how to make prayer a central part of their lives by learning about different types of prayer. The texts also include articles that will teach them how to put their faith into action.

Programs

Liturgy of the Word for Children (LWC)

Liturgy of the Word for Children celebrates the Word of God using the Lectionary for Children. Children in Kindergarten through first grade are invited to hear the Word of God proclaimed in age appropriate language.

Adult Faith Formation:

An informative program of Catholic Education for adults. This class meets on Sundays at 10:15 AM to 11:15 AM.

Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive:

This is a community service project. All parish families are encouraged to participate. The food collected goes to Catholic Social Services. This is a great way for Confirmation Candidates to earn service hours.

Christmas Caroling:

This is another community service project. All parishioners are invited to take part. We sing to the sick and homebound of our parish. This is a great way for Confirmation Candidates to earn service hours.

Angel Tree:

Our parish sponsors an angel tree during the Christmas season. Your family is invited to participate by taking an angel from the tree and purchasing the gift requested.

Holy Thursday Procession:

Children in second grade, preparing for First Holy Communion are invited to be a part of this Mass.

May Crowning:

During the month of May, we honor Mary, our Blessed Mother. A special ceremony will be held—all parishioners are invited to attend.

Rosary Pilgrimage:

This is for our second grade students. They will visit different grottos and recite a decade of the rosary.

End of the Year Celebration:

This program concludes the Religious Education year. The Religious Education students will take part in the 9:00 AM Sunday Mass followed by a celebration in the Murphy Center.

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Vacation Bible School is held for one week during the summer. Themes vary each year, however at the center is always the goal of bringing participants to a living faith. VBS is for students in grades Pre-K 4- 5. Students in grades 6-12 can sign up to be student volunteers.

Organizations

Booster Club

The Booster Club is a parish organization. Students enrolled in CRE are eligible to participate in CYO sports. You are required to attend classes on a regular basis to participate. Please check the church bulletin for details on fall and spring registration.

The following sports are available in the fall:

- Football--Grades 2nd through 8th
- Soccer--Boys and Girls; Grades 2nd through 8th
- Volleyball--Girls; Grades 5th through 8th
- Cheerleading--Grades 2nd through 8th

The following sports are available in the winter/spring:

- Basketball--Boys and Girls; 2nd through 8th
- Spring Soccer--Boys and Girls; 1st through 8th

Angels on a Mission

Students in grades fifth through eighth are encouraged to join Angels on a Mission (service organization). Contact Mrs. Joanne Upton for more information.

Jr. CYO

Students in grades seventh and eighth are welcome to join the Jr. CYO. For more information, please contact Mrs. Joanne Upton.

High School CYO

St. Dominic Parish Youth Group is open to all high school students in ninth through 12th grades. This is a very active group. They participate in retreats, social events, summer trips, as well as, community service. For more information, contact Mrs. Joanne Upton.

Parent Acknowledgement Form

This is to acknowledge that I/we have received and read the St. Dominic Parish Handbook for Religious Education. We understand and agree to abide by the policies set forth in this handbook.

Parent signature Date

Parent Signature Date

Student signature Date

Student signature Date

Student signature Date

Student signature Date

Student signature Date

Student signature Date