



**RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION/FORMATION
FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**ST. MARY MAGDALEN
PARISH**

Developed by the St. Mary Magdalen Formation Ministry Team
(Revised 2012)

Vision of St. Mary Magdalen Parish

As children of God and disciples of Christ Jesus, we have been assembled by the bishop of the Diocese of Lansing to form a new Catholic community in Brighton. Our vision is to build a community of simplicity, peace, joy, inspiration and renewal; a haven where we share our hopes and our hurts.

God nurtures this vision through individual and communal prayer. In prayer we abide in God, freely opening ourselves to listen and respond to our Lord's gracious will. The Eucharist is our fullest prayer in which Christ's faithful love makes us one. By the Eucharist, the power of Christ's sacrificial love transforms us into His real presence in the world. We celebrate this joyous belief with uplifting liturgies that transform our daily lives.

The conviction of Scripture and Church teaching is the foundation of our ongoing faith enrichment, all throughout the unfolding of our lives. We embrace our children as our younger brothers and sisters in Christ. We envision a strong religious education program that will excite our youth into learning and sharing with us fully.

Our community supports the importance and integrity of families. For those who have no one we are family. We are truly woven together, supporting our pastor and each other. On our journey of faith we warmly embrace the seeker; we are supportive to those struggling in faith and compassionate towards those who have wandered. Our faith is living and vigorous. As the Body of Christ we reach out to invite and welcome strangers and offer support and encouragement to those burdened by need, hurt and sin. Believing that the Kingdom of God is in our midst, we work for a more just society.

Because the union of all Christians is one of our great hopes, we focus on what unites us rather than what divides us. We extend ourselves to other faiths, cultures and traditions. Through shared friendship and service we hope to foster understanding and peace.

We commit ourselves to this vision, dedicating to it our energies, individual talents and expertise, time and our financial support. We pray that God who began this good work in us, will bring it to its fulfillment!

INTRODUCTION

St. Mary Magdalen's Religious Formation Program strongly supports the primary and essential role of parents in bringing children into a life of faith. It is by the parents' Christian example, their participation in weekly celebration of the Eucharist and their interest in the children's formal religious formation classes that true knowledge and faith are developed.

The Religious Formation Program at St. Mary Magdalen strives to:

- Help each individual involved develop a vibrant faith life
- Encourage parents and children to grow in faith together
- Challenge parents to continually grow in faith
- Recognize the gifts we all possess

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Any family registered in St. Mary Magdalen Parish has the right to enroll their children in the Religious Formation Program sponsored by this parish. Registration is on a yearly basis. In order to provide placement and to schedule catechists and assistants, the children must be registered within the announced enrollment period. Every attempt will be made to accommodate individual family needs for class time placement. Therefore, it is requested that your child remain in the class in which they have been placed. No assurance of first placement request can be made if children are registered after the enrollment period, but every effort is made to help. Registration will be announced in the Visionary and Sunday bulletins.

"As the primary educators of your children, parents also agree to commit to share this responsibility with our faith community and to be an integral part of religious education and formation for your children. By signing the Covenant, you as parents are committed to bring your children to religious formation, and agree to participate in weekly Liturgy."

Please notify the Religious Formation Office of any special needs, i.e., dietary needs, allergies, special learning adaptations or concerns regarding your child.

The Formation fee covers the cost of textbooks and some supplies. The parish subsidizes the ministry of religious education through your generosity in the Sunday collection. Each family registered in the St. Mary Magdalen Religious Formation Program will be charged a tuition fee. Non-registered families will pay the full cost per child for this program. The fee may be paid at the time of registration or parishioners will be billed after the program begins. Any family who is financially unable to pay these fees should contact the Director of Religious Formation.

COMMUNICATION

The Rite of Baptism of Infants appropriately refers to parents as the foremost teachers of their children. It is the policy of St. Mary Magdalen to maintain close communication with the parents as an integral part of the total education program.

Frequently, notes and other papers are sent home with your children. Be sure to check your child's folder weekly. Email is the preferred method to communicate important program information. A current, family email address needs to be on file with the Religious Formation Office. Parents are encouraged to visit and help out in the classes, as volunteers are always needed to help with special projects, or as hall monitors or substitutes.

HOMEWORK/AT HOME ASSIGNMENTS

Occasionally, catechists may send home activities in addition to the student books to be completed. Parents are asked to review the assignments, assist children in memorizing prayers as recommended by the Diocese of Lansing, and serve as a resource. Homework will be sent home for missed classes.

STUDENT EMERGENCY

Parents/guardians should fill out the "Emergency" information on the registration form and the health form completely so that vital information on student health can be kept current. Should an

injury occur immediately before, during, or after class time, parents or other designated persons will be notified and apprised of the situation. ***Please make sure we have an emergency/cell phone number to contact you or the designated emergency contact.***

STUDENT SUPPLIES

All students should be prepared for class. Some classes will have textbooks only in the class setting, if you would like a book at home for your child, please ask.

PRAYERS AND DOCTRINES (Recommended by the Diocese of Lansing) *Traditional Catholic Prayers and Basic Knowledge Students Should Memorize. These are available online at: dioceseoflansing.org/catechesis*

GRADES K-2 PRAYERS

Sign of the Cross
Our Father
Hail Mary
Glory be to the Father (Doxology)
Morning Offering
Grace Before Meals
Grace After Meals
Act of Contrition
Prayer to the Guardian Angel

INTRODUCE:

The Ten Commandments
Sacraments of BAPTISM, EUCHARIST and RECONCILIATION
Holy Days
Rosary

GRADES 3-5 PRAYERS

Grades K-2 Prayers **PLUS**
Apostles' Creed
Act of Faith
Act of Hope
Act of Love
Come Holy Spirit

GRADES 3-5 MEMORIZE

Ten Commandments
Seven Sacraments
Corporal Works of Mercy
Spiritual Works of Mercy
Four Mysteries of the Rosary

GRADES 6-8 PRAYERS

Grades K-5 Prayers **PLUS**
Nicene Creed
Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel
Regina Caeli and Memorare

MEMORIZE

Precepts of the Church
Holy Days of Obligation
Theological Virtues & Cardinal Virtues
Beatitudes & Stations of the Cross
Gifts of the Holy Spirit

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

FIRST EUCHARIST is usually celebrated in 2nd grade. Students must be baptized and have completed one full year of religious formation or Catholic school education before being accepted the following year for sacramental preparation. A retreat and parent meetings are an integral part of our sacramental preparation and parents are expected to attend with their child.

FIRST PENANCE will be offered in 2nd grade if parents feel their child(ren) is ready. All 4th grade youth in St. Mary Magdalen parish will celebrate Solemn Penance along with any parishioners who are also interested. We will continue the in-depth study of this important sacrament while offering adult preparation as well. A retreat and parent meetings are an integral part of our sacramental preparation and parents are expected to attend with their child.

CONFIRMATION completes the Sacraments of Initiation and is usually celebrated in the 10th grade or later. A student must be a practicing Catholic (attending Mass and receiving Eucharist regularly). It is expected the student will attend religious formation classes through 8th grade followed by 9th and 10th grade Confirmation prep classes to be eligible for Confirmation. It is expected that all candidates will attend the Confirmation retreat and parents will attend all parent meetings.

Grade levels given for sacraments are the minimum guideline. If your child is not ready, he/she may wait an additional year. As always, if you have any questions, problems, or need additional help, please contact the Director of Religious Formation.

MASS ATTENDANCE

Religious Formation is not a substitute for our Sunday obligation to attend Mass or participate in other Sacraments, such as Penance. The Religious Formation process relies upon the children's ongoing experience of the larger faith community, participation in the Sunday Eucharist, as well as their participation in the other sacraments and Church traditions. Parents make a commitment recognizing the *importance* of the Sunday Liturgy when they sign the covenant as a part of the registration process.

ATTENDANCE in FORMATION CLASSES

The Office of Education and Catechesis of the Diocese of Lansing requires all parishes to provide at least 30 class hours of Religious Formation. Students should arrive no more than ten minutes before class time and be picked up promptly at the end of class. Parents in grades K-3 are **required** to pick their children up at the classroom door. **Parents are asked to call your child's catechist when they will be absent and to arrange for make up of missed work.**

CLASS DAY & TIMES

Classes are held:

Sunday 9 & 11am Kindergarten, Family Program 10:15am-12
High School (5:30-7:00 pm)
Wednesday Grades 1-8 (4:30—6:00 pm)
Wednesday Grades 1-8 (6:30—8:00 pm)
Thursday Grades 1-8 (5:30—7:00 pm)

High School Youth Group, Sunday, 7-9 pm

Middle School EDGE, two Mondays/month, 7-8:30 pm

ABSENCE

Attendance is taken at each class. It is expected that parents will use the same guidelines as you would for your child's school attendance. **If your child must be absent, please inform the catechist.** Parents should also obtain the missed material from the catechist so that absences will not hinder the child's progress in class. Short-term home study is offered for sports and other short-term scheduling conflicts for a maximum of 6 weeks.

TARDINESS

As scheduled class time is short and moves quickly, it is important that parents make every effort to see that their children arrive on time and plan on staying for the entire class period.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLASS CANCELLATION

If the Brighton Area Schools are cancelled for bad weather, the Religious Formation classes will also be cancelled. In case of inclement weather occurring prior to classes, the Director of Religious Education will determine whether classes will be conducted or cancelled. In case of cancellation, Radio station WHMI, 93.5 FM. **Every effort will be made to call all families in the affected sessions, as always use your best judgment.**

Some families live on hilly side roads, and their situations differ from those who live near the church. If the parent makes the decision to keep his/her child(ren) home from class because of severe weather, the student's absence will be excused.

In case of inclement weather during class time, the Director of Religious Education will individually notify each classroom catechist. If threatening conditions arise, the catechists will be instructed to escort their classes to the church basement.

If a severe weather warning has been issued during class time, children will not be allowed to leave the building unless their parent or guardian accompanies them (not older siblings in this case).

FULL-YEAR HOME STUDY
FOR GRADES 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 ONLY

Materials will be the same as all Religious Formation classes to provide continuity. Cost of tuition will be the same as the traditional program. Home study will be offered to parishioners and non-parishioners alike (they will have out-of-parish tuition as is our policy). Home study is not offered for High School Confirmation classes.

NO HOME STUDY FOR YOUTH
IN PREPARATION FOR SACRAMENTS

- There is no Home Study for the years of sacramental preparation which includes grades 2, 4, 9 and 10.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FAMILIES IN HOME STUDY

- Attend parent meetings
 1. Fall start-up meeting
 2. Advent family activity
 3. Winter meeting
 4. Year-end wrap up meeting

SHORT-TERM HOME STUDY PROGRAM

- Available for students missing classes for a maximum of 6 weeks (all at one time) .
- Short-Term Home Study must be **pre-arranged** through the Religious Formation Office and the child's catechist.
- Class work will be completed at home and turned in to the child's catechist for classes missed.

- Youth **must** attend at least the first class to meet the other students, catechist and aide and give the parents an opportunity to meet the catechist also.
- This program is NOT available for grades 2 or 4, 9 or 10 (or if the child is in preparation for any sacraments).

MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUPS

The Youth Ministry Team is a community of youth who share the common goal of living their faith in Jesus and seeking to walk His path. They meet to pray, to learn, and to have fun in a way that reinforces their beliefs through their actions, discussions and reflections. Included are high school teens (grades 9-12) who meet weekly on Sundays from 7:00 to 9:00 pm and middle school youth (grades 6-8) known as EDGE who meet two Mondays a month. Call the parish office or check the parish bulletin for more information.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

We have established a specific behavior code. We hope that by establishing guidelines for behavior, we will be able to maintain a respectful, thoughtful and orderly learning environment. Our intent is to provide our children with a truly spiritual and religious education/formation opportunity.

CODE OF STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Students are expected to behave appropriately and respectfully and will not be disruptive in class. There will be no use of abusive or insulting language or any conduct unbecoming a Christian student.

- No cell phones, iPods or other electronic equipment will be permitted in class.
- Youth are asked to be good stewards of all the materials in our building.

- Students will be respectful of catechists and fellow students.
- Students need to ask permission to leave the class room.
- No gum will be permitted.
- No hats are to be worn during Religious Formation classes.
- No skateboards, roller shoes or roller blades are allowed in the building.

Students are expected to come to class prepared according to their catechist's instructions. Missed assignments are to be made up.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO CORRECT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

- 1st Offense: Private verbal warning from catechist or aide, or a talk with Director for solutions to stay on task.
- 2nd Offense: Verbal warning from catechist and phone call to parent.
- 3rd Offense: If necessary, conference with student, parent, and Director of Religious Education to help work out a Solution.

GENERAL PARISH INFORMATION

Office Phone: (810) 229-8624

Director of Religious Formation (ext. 115)
Religious Formation Administrative Assistant (ext. 114)

Fax: (810) 229-6471

Website: www.saintmarymagdalen.org

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 9:00 pm
Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm