

S  *William*
Catholic Church



2023-2024

Student/Parent Handbook

LETTER OF WELCOME



Dear Parents,

The peace of our Lord Jesus be with you!!

This handbook has been prepared to acquaint you with our PSR program. Even if you have participated in our program in past years, we hope that the information contained herein will help to give you a total picture of the Religious Education provided for your child.

We are very aware that you, as parents, are the primary religious educators of your children. All of our efforts are meant to support you in providing an environment of living faith for your child. We provide the formal catechesis that goes with the every day lived experience of the faith that is shared in your home.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation in our Religious Education Program.

Sincerely,

Carol Timko
Coordinator of Religious Education
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ST. WILLIAM PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION

The Parish School of Religion Program is the parish religious education program for children who attend public schools grades Kindergarten through eighth grade. The policies for the program are determined on the diocesan level by the Office of Religious Education. The program is administered by the Coordinator of Religious Education with the help of parish volunteers.

PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of Catechesis is *“to make a person’s faith become living, conscious and active through the light of instruction.”* (National Catechetical Directory)

Faith is not a private affair. It does not “come naturally,” nor does anyone ever achieve a level of completion. Faith has to do with living out the reality of our relationship with God within the context of the Christian community.

It is essential that all children grow in the knowledge of their faith, in the love of Christ and in the life of the Church. Only with catechesis can children become truly adult Christians rather than adults with primary notions about the Church and our Faith.

The Church community and family unit must work together in this endeavor, supporting one another and respecting every person.

The policies and information contained in this handbook have the sole purpose of moving us closer to our common goal of a truly Christian community, which includes people of all ages.

Our program offers a variety of opportunities for students to grow, including formal religious instruction, planning and participating in prayer experiences and service projects.

The task of St. William PSR is to help the individual think and act as Jesus did. It is hoped that as our students become young adults and enter society, their faith and actions will help bring about a more just world.

II. ACADEMICS

BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE CURRICULUM

Pre-School	Use simple stories to help teach simple life lessons
Kindergarten	Develop a positive sense of self worth and Christian attitudes
Grade 1	God loves me, Creation, Jesus, the Church, Baptism
Grade 2	Reconciliation and First Eucharist
Grade 3	The Church
Grade 4	The Beatitudes and the Commandments
Grade 5	The Sacraments and the Liturgical Seasons
Grade 6	The Old Testament
Grade 7/8	Use the Curriculum for Catechesis and a variety of resources, along with social justice, scripture and life skills to prepare students for Confirmation

The PSR program includes the four-fold dimensions of catechesis (education), community building (social), service, and worship.

REGISTRATION GRADES K - 8

St. William students who attend public schools are expected to attend PSR classes each year. Public school students from other parishes are welcome to attend St. William PSR classes with written approval from their pastor. Registration is necessary for ALL returning students, as well as students new to the Parish PSR Program.

CONSENT FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

We will be taking pictures of students randomly throughout the year. Your child/children may be in some of these pictures. Therefore, we need permission in case your child's photograph is used for media purposes which may include, but not limited to, our parish website. Photo Consent is included on your registration form for PSR.

FEES

Tuition for the school year is DUE BY the 21st of October.
The fee for textbooks and materials is as follows:

\$30.00 per child

\$60.00 for two or more children

PLEASE make checks payable to: Saint William Church and include on the envelope the child's name and grade level.

Individuals having difficulty paying this fee should contact the Coordinator of Religious Education to make arrangements.

Inability to pay the fee will not exclude or negatively affect any student. No child should be kept from Religious Education Class because of an inability to pay.

CLASS TIMES & PROCEDURES

*FFC Sunday * *See Calendar for dates and times*

Sunday — Grades K-8 — 9:00 am - 10:15 am

***Family Faith Celebration (FFC) Sessions**

If you bring your child to class and the catechist is not in the classroom, please stay with your child until the catechist arrives. We have noticed a GREAT re-occurrence of **TARDINESS**. This unfavorable habit disrupts the class and adds an unfair burden to both students and catechists. Regular tardiness will result in parents receiving a phone call to address the problem. **Please be prompt in picking up your child.**

All students will be picked up in a designated area by a parent.

COMMUNICATIONS

Because the purpose of the PSR Program is to assist both students and parents, communication is very important. Some teachers provide students with a folder. Please check this folder weekly. Notes from the catechist and PSR Office, along with your child's work, can be found in this folder on a regular basis. The folder should be brought back to class each week.

In case of emergency or last minute scheduling changes, the Parish App will be used to inform parents/students in a timely and effective manner and will be considered to be the primary form of communications between the Parish School of Religion and parents/students. The Parish App is free to use and is available for iPhone and Android phones. In addition, the Parish App has Group chat capabilities where conversations between the PSR coordinator and PSR catechists can be held within a safe and friendly environment 24/7. Please see Carol Timko for more information.

ATTENDANCE

Religious Education classes consist of prayer, instruction and attendance at Liturgical functions. **In addition to regular Sunday Mass, there are Liturgical events, such as Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday and Good Friday, that are required attendance for students and parents.** Regular attendance is required in order for your child to grow in knowledge of their faith and understanding of being a disciple of Jesus. If your child is going to be absent from class, as a courtesy to their teachers and fellow classmates, please notify the CRE in advance by calling: 330-847-8677(M-F 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.) or text Carol Timko at 330-240-7367 or email Carol Timko at ctimko@stwilliamchampion.org

INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATIONS

Parents are always welcome to contact the Coordinator of Religious Education at 330-847-8677 or email ctimko@stwilliamchampion.org with any questions or concerns.

YOUTH IN OUR LITURGIES

When young people are personally involved in the weekly Liturgy they become more active participants. The youth at St. William have many opportunities to serve the parish in liturgical ministries. Students in fourth grade and above are invited to become Mass servers. After receiving Confirmation, eighth graders (and older) are invited to become lectors. Recruiting and training takes place on a regular basis. Please contact the Parish Office at parishoffice@stwilliamchampion.org or 330-847-8677 for more information on either ministry. The music ministry is another area in which children are encouraged to participate. Students in grades 2 through 12 are invited to become a member of the Youth Music Ministry. Our Music Director, Pat Maciejewski, may be contacted at pmaciejewski@stwilliamchampion.org or 330-847-8677 for more information.

CONDUCT

If a child is causing disruption in the classroom, the catechist will meet with the child after the class to discuss his or her behavior. If the disruptive behavior continues, the child will be sent to the office of the Coordinator of Religious Education. The CRE will try to resolve the problem with the student. On the third offense, the parents will be asked to come in for a conference.

- Disrespectful behavior of any kind towards teachers or other students will not be tolerated.
- Replacement for any damage done by a student to the building, general facilities, or materials is the responsibility of the student or parent/guardian.
- Chewing gum is not permitted in the building.
- Cell phone use is not permitted in the classroom. Catechists reserve the right to require that all phones be left in a basket during class times. It is the responsibility of the student to retrieve their cell phone after class.



III. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

Religious Education can only *be effective and developed* in the broader context of the Church as a whole when parents regularly participate at Eucharist, nurture prayer life in the home, get involved in parish activities and strive to live daily by gospel values.

PARTICIPATION AT SUNDAY EUCHARIST

The PSR Program can only *be understood* in the broader context of the Church as a whole when children who participate in the PSR Program are present when the Church gathers for Eucharist on Sunday. Our PSR Program is designed for children to become regular practicing Catholics. **Parents are expected to participate regularly with their children at weekend Mass.**

INVOLVEMENT IN THE PSR PROGRAM

Because the PSR Program is a cooperative program, parents need to be involved in other ways outside their responsibilities at home. Parents are always needed as catechists, substitutes, aides, to host parent meetings, help with class service projects, and in many other ways. Contact the Religious Education Office to offer your services.

RESPONSIBILITY OF STUDENTS

In addition to attending classes regularly, students are expected to participate fully, complete all assignments and conduct themselves in a Christian manner and exhibit that same Christian manner towards fellow students and catechists. Each student is expected to demonstrate adequate understanding of the content presented during the school year.

END OF YEAR REVIEW

In order for your child(ren) to be well-informed in the Catholic faith, they will be required to have a familiar understanding of various prayers and general information about our faith. An End of Year review will be conducted in the form of a parent/student/teacher conference. This assessment will be based on their comprehension of required prayers and learned material. A child is expected to retain a familiar knowledge of their faith in order to continue advancing in the Parish Religious Education Program.

ASSIGNMENTS

Home activities may be assigned throughout the year. All assignments are in the interest of the child and family. Students are also expected to complete all class work which was covered on a day they were absent.

PARENT MEETINGS

Parent Meetings are usually scheduled once or twice throughout the school year to encourage communication about the program, concerns, and activities. These meetings also offer an opportunity for parents to meet and interact with each other. In an effort to strengthen the faith formation of the family, parents are expected to participate in the Family Faith Celebration Sessions (FFC).



IV. HEALTH & SAFETY

The intention of the staff of your parish religious education program is to provide a safe environment for all children. Please be assured that we have assumed this serious responsibility with courage and hope and are committed to the proper care your child deserve.

STUDENT HEALTH & SAFETY

Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for the health and well-being of their children. The Parish School of Religion supplements, rather than substitutes, for parental care and concern for the health of the students.

ACCIDENTS & FIRST AID

The parents of an injured student will be notified of the accident/injury by the Coordinator of Religious Education or the Coordinator of Religious Education's designee as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the student.

If an incident results in a medical condition or injury which can be reasonably known to the appropriate supervisory faculty/staff member and/or the principal, the school and/or its staff are authorized to render reasonable basic first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion of the school, serve to minimize the severity of the injured person's condition. As an example, staff should initially resort to using only ice, band aids, soap and water when treating cuts and/or scrapes to avoid any possible known or unknown allergic reactions to salves or creams. In addition, staff may secure professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion of the school, appears to be reasonably warranted. In the latter situation, the school shall be expressly held harmless from any costs or expenses associated with the professional diagnosis and/or treatment provided (including but not limited to the cost of transportation), such costs or expenses being the responsibility of the injured party or, if a student, the student's parents.

If it is necessary for the student to be taken to a doctor or hospital for emergency treatment, the parents should be informed as quickly as possible. Either a parent, a staff member or those listed on the EMF (Emergency Medical Form) is to accompany the child to the doctor or hospital. The Emergency Medical Authorization Form should be taken with the student.

ILLNESS

The school makes accommodations for students who become sick at school by removing them from the rest of the student population until the parent or other authorized person can take the student home. Students with fevers or communicable diseases will be sent home to reduce the risk of infection to the student body.

INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The protection and welfare of each individual student is of importance in the schools of the Diocese of Youngstown. In an effort to enhance protection of students:

1. All students must be immunized and/or tested according to the current Ohio Board of Health requirements found in the Ohio Health Guidelines (or modified schedule as approved by the student's physician or local Public Health Department). Parents or guardians of the child who object on the grounds that administration of immunizing agents conflicts with their religious tenets or practices must produce such documentation and complete a Religious Exemption form from the principal. The completed form will be submitted to the superintendent for approval. The school must keep a copy of the documentation on file.
2. The school utilizes the Ohio State Health Department's Communicable Disease Chart to determine the procedures for referral of suspected communicable diseases, notification of parents whose children have come in contact with this disease, and requirements for exclusion from and re-admittance to school for children found having a communicable disease.

MEDICAL FORMS

In the event that a student becomes ill or injured during PSR and a parent is not in the building, EACH student is to have an *Emergency Medical Authorization Form* on file in the Religious Education Office. You are asked to fill out a new form at the beginning of each school year. If your information changes during the school year, please update your child's form or procure a new form from the PSR office.

FIRE/RAPID DISMISSAL/ TORNADO/EMERGENCY DRILLS

Practice drills are held throughout the year. Students must follow the directions posted in each room. Students are not permitted to talk during emergency or practice drills and are to remain in the assigned area until a signal is given to return.

INFORMATION REGARDING LEGAL CUSTODY

On the *Registration Form* is a section regarding *Legal Custody Information*. We ask that you fill out this information to enable us to ensure your child's safety and well being. It will also help make us aware of your child's attendance pattern. If he/she spends every other weekend with a non-residential parent and is not able to attend class, the catechist will be able to prepare regular make-up assignments for your child.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Every parish and institution in our Diocese is expected to comply with the Diocesan Child Protection Policy. Mandated in 2002 and revised in 2016, this policy was created to ensure a safe environment for all children participating in the programs and processes made available to them by local parishes and other Catholic institutions.

The implementation and enforcement of this policy are followed here at Saint William. There is an interview procedure for each

new adult volunteer in our Religious Education Programs. Each person is in receipt of a copy of the Diocesan policy and is asked to sign a document stating whether or not they have been accused of child abuse. Each person fulfills the requirements for a background investigation, completed through fingerprinting and a Bureau of Criminal Investigation or an FBI check.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Sexuality affects all aspects of the person, including in a general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others. The Diocese of Youngstown endeavors to provide for its students an atmosphere free from sexual harassment.

For the purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes the following specific instances: verbal sexual abuse; disseminating obscene or sexually explicit material whether in the form of electronic communication, music, written lyrics, pornographic pictures or other literature, or having such material in one's possession in the school, on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities; obscene or sexually explicit graffiti anywhere in the school or on the school/parish grounds, continuing and unwanted written or oral communication directed to another of a sexual nature; spreading sexual rumors/innuendoes; obscene t-shirts, hats or buttons; touching oneself sexually in front of others; obscene and/or sexually explicit gestures; and any other inappropriate behavior of a sexually explicit or obscene nature that demeans or offends the recipient. The above list is not meant to be all-inclusive, but is intended to provide guidance as to what may constitute sexual harassment.

Isolated, trivial incidents are not sufficient to constitute harassment and will be handled according to the student behavior code.

Allegations of sexual harassment (as defined above) are to be reported to the teacher and the principal. Parents of both the offender and the victim will be informed of the allegations. The matter is to be kept confidential by all parties involved and every effort will be made to protect the alleged victim from retaliation. The parents of both the offender and the victim are obligated to cooperate in remedying the situation.

If the allegations are substantiated, disciplinary actions will be taken. These will depend on the nature, frequency and severity of the action, the ages of the offender and victim, the history of similar actions by this individual and the circumstances in which the harassment occurred. Possible disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to any or all the following:

- verbal warning/reprimand and apology to the victim;
- a parent/student/principal conference;
- written warning/reprimand and parent notification entered in the student's file;
- detention or removal from selected school activities and/or extracurricular activities;
- behavior/probation contracts, possibly requiring professional intervention;
- suspension; and/or
- expulsion

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is handled separately because of its potentially criminal nature. If an incident of sexual violence occurs, the principal, pastor or other school authority is required, under state law, to report the incident (ORC 2151.421). The Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately if there is any "reason to believe" (ORC 2151.421) that sexual abuse or violence has occurred involving a child less than eighteen years of age. The Office of Catholic Schools will be contacted immediately in these situations.

Generally, sexual harassment should be construed as sexual violence when: the recipient is physically touched without his/her consent in a sexual manner; is expressly threatened or perceives a threat of physical harm for purposes of the offender's sexual gratification; or is the victim of sex offenses under Ohio law, including Gross Sexual Imposition (ORC 2907.05), Sexual Battery (ORC 2907.03), Rape (ORC 2907.02), Importuning (ORC 2907.07), Voyeurism (ORC 2907.08), Public Indecency (ORC 2907.09), or Felonious Sexual Penetration (ORC 2907.12) as examples. In each one of the above examples, the Department of Human Services and the police will be contacted immediately.

V. ACTIVITIES

FAMILY FAITH CELEBRATION (FFC)

We will hold three (3) group FFC sessions.

October 21 – 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

January 21 – 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

March 17 – 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

All students and parents are expected to attend. Students will also attend Mass after any Sunday FFC. Students will return to their classroom after Mass to retrieve their belongings and will be dismissed from their classroom.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION ENROLLMENT

Acceptance into sacramental preparation classes are based on the family's regular attendance at Mass and class instruction. The reception of the Sacraments (First Reconciliation and First Eucharist—Grade 2; Confirmation—Grades 8 and 9) is part of the curriculum for students. According to Diocesan Policy, in order to be enrolled in sacramental preparation classes, students must be currently enrolled in PSR and must have completed all previous levels of instruction.

FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST EUCHARIST

Confession and Communion: Parents of children in second grade are required to attend parent meetings. These meetings reacquaint parents with the meaning of the sacraments, assist parents in catechizing their child and inform them about St. William's Sacramental Program for children. Students are required to attend Sacrament Preparation Class during this time. After attending classes, parents work one on one in association with the PSR program to prepare their child for the celebrations of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Because each child is an individual, it is the parent and child's decision as to when the child will celebrate the sacraments.

PARENT MEETINGS FOR FIRST RECONCILIATION & FIRST EUCHARIST

- **Two (2) Required Parent Meetings** for First Reconciliation:
Session I – Sunday, October 15, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.
Session II – Sunday, November 12, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.
- **Two (2) Required Parent Meetings** for First Eucharist:
Session I – Sunday, February 11, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.
Session II – Sunday, March 10, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.
- **Reconciliation Retreat** for Student and Parents
(the student’s family is encouraged to attend)
Saturday, January 13, 2024
- **Jesus Day Retreat** for Student and Parents
(the student’s family is encouraged to attend)
Saturday, April 13, 2024

DATES OF FIRST SACRAMENTS

- **Reconciliation** for prepared 2nd graders & others:
TBD
- **Eucharist** for 2nd graders
Sunday, April 21, 2024 – 10:30 a.m. Mass

CONFIRMATION

Full Initiation into the Catholic Church: Confirmation at St. William is every other year. All students in eighth grade (and above if not confirmed) are invited to enroll in the preparation program for this sacrament of initiation. Along with regular PSR classes, candidates, their parents and sponsors, are required to attend additional meetings and participate in regular service. Students are also required to attend a day of retreat. A flyer showing class, meeting dates and retreat dates will be made available at the time of confirmation preparation.

2023 ~ 2024 PSR SCHEDULE

Class Times:

FFC Sessions, * *See Calendar for dates and time*
Sunday, Grades K– 8 — 9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Classes Begin – Sunday, September 17, 2023

Last Day of Class – Sunday, April 28, 2024

NO CLASS:

October 22, 2023 - No Class

November 26, 2023 - **Thanksgiving Break**

December 24, 2023 to January 6, 2024 - **Christmas Break**

February 18, 2024 - **President’s Day Weekend**

March 31, 2024 - **Easter Break**

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

09/17/23 * Parent Meeting - 9:00 a.m.

10/21/23 **FFC/ MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY**

10/15/23 Parent Session I for First Reconciliation - 9:00 a.m.

11/12/23 Parent Session II for First Reconciliation - 9:00 a.m.

01/13/22 Reconciliation Retreat

TBD First Reconciliation

01/21/24 * FFC - 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. - Evening Session

02/11/24 Parent Session I for First Eucharist - 9:00 a.m.

03/10/24 Parent Session II for First Eucharist - 9:00 a.m.

03/17/24 * FFC - 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

04/13/24 Grade 2 Jesus Day RETREAT

04/21/24 First Communion - 10:30 a.m. Mass

04/28/24 * Last Class -9:00 a.m.

STORIES AND SCRIPTURE

for families with children five years of age or younger.

Second Sunday of the Month

9:00 ~ 10:15 am

Room 102-A

Fee ~ \$10 per child

October 8

November 12

December 10

February 11

March 10

April 14

*“Stories and Scripture” is a project of the Engaging Young Families Committee of the Diocese of Youngstown Council for Catechesis, an advisory group for the Diocesan Director of Religious Education that targets families with children five years of age or younger, offering a Catholic story time for **both parents and children.***

DIRECTORY

Kindergarten—Grade 1

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Grade 2/3

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Stories & Scriptures

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ST. WILLIAM PARISH PRAYER

Loving God,
through the waters of Baptism,
You have called us by name
and invited us to share
in the ministry of Jesus.

In our human weakness
help us to respond
in prayer and thanksgiving
to Your call to be a light to each other
and to the world.

Continue to form us in Your body
centered in Your Eucharist.

We ask You,
to give us the vision
to know Your mission
and to make it visible
in our Parish of St William
and to our sister parish of St. Anthony
and to the world.