



St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish  
46 Winthrop Street  
Charlestown, MA 02129  
617-242-4664

Religious Education  
Parent Handbook

## WELCOME

September 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 Religious Education year at St. Mary-St. Catherine of Siena Parish! We have a wonderful group of energetic volunteers who are looking forward to sharing their time, talent, and faith with our students.

I am excited to be in the position of Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation this year. I have been a member of St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish for 17 years. I joined the Faith Formation Team in 2009 when I taught the second grade class. From 2010-2013, I co-led the program with another parishioner. After a few years and a few children, I returned to the Religious Education program in 2016 when I registered my son for Kindergarten and was asked to be a member of the Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Last year, I served as the interim Assistant for Faith Formation, and I am delighted to be named the Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation, now, in this full time serving God, you and your children, and our Parish.

Our Religious Education program continues to grow. Last year, we had 26 students receive their sacraments. It is our goal to have students remain in the program after they receive First Communion and First Reconciliation. In fact, this year our program will incorporate Confirmation I and Confirmation II, as well as Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade education.

The Parent Advisory Council is a group of parents who meet regularly to make decisions and plans for the program. This consultative body is crucial in helping us offer the best program and schedule we can. With the assistance from Father Ronan, Sister Nancy, PAC and our teachers, our Parish offers a comprehensive program to ensure faith-filled learning for your child.

Your participation is crucial, however! We firmly believe that while we can offer the educational resources and support, parents are the fundamental model of faith for a child. We consider our program a Family Program for those who want their child to grow in faith and be a witness to God's presence in the world.

"Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered." - Vatican Council II

The following pages will offer key information such as calendar and logistics, but please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

We are looking forward to working with you and your children as we grow, develop and deepen our faith.

Best,

Katy Fleming  
Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Religious Education Staff

Rev. James J Ronan, Pastor

Sister Nancy Citro, SNDdeN, Pastoral Associate

Katy Fleming, Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation

[jronan@stmaryscatherine.org](mailto:jronan@stmaryscatherine.org)

[ncitro@stmaryscatherine.org](mailto:ncitro@stmaryscatherine.org)

[kfleming@stmaryscatherine.org](mailto:kfleming@stmaryscatherine.org)

### Address

46 Winthrop Street

Charlestown, MA 02129

### Phone

617-242-4664

### Website

[www.stmaryscatherine.org/](http://www.stmaryscatherine.org/)

### TEACHERS (Subject to change)

	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>
Kindergarten	Ms. Cori Shiner	N/A
Grade 1	Ms. Dianne Ludy Ms. Ann Glines	Ms. Dianne Ludy Parent Volunteer
Grade 2	Mr. Bill Polska Ms. Rachael VanRemortel	Ms. Katy Fleming John Walsh Parent Volunteer
Grade 3/4	Ms. Kelley Walsh Ms. Shelley Goode Mr. Brian Tripp	Helen Gibbons
Grade 5-7	TBD	N/A
SAFETY instructor	Dr. Kathy Devaney	
Parish Volunteer Receptionist	Ms. Janet Meuse	

## OUR PROGRAM

The faith formation program at St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish is designed to give young people the opportunity to encounter Christ in their lives through instruction, prayer, service, and participation in the Liturgy. Each of these elements is essential to experiencing the joy and peace that comes from living a full Christian life.

Christ's command to teach is called catechesis, which in Greek means "instruction by word of mouth."

The instructional curriculum we use in our K-8 Religious Education Program is the We Believe (Project Disciple) curriculum by Sadlier Religion. <https://religion.sadlierconnect.com/wbpd>

While we use the books as a basis for the Scope and Sequence for the curriculum, we also incorporate other videos, articles, and materials as appropriate to teach the concepts. Each grade level has a loose curriculum prepared and posted on the St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish website.

## SAFETY CURRICULUM

Safety is an important part of the Religious Education program at St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena parish. We take many steps to keep our children safe:

- All staff and volunteers who work with children in the parish must pass a CORI background check.
- All staff and volunteers must sign and adhere to the Code of Ministerial Behavior.
- All new staff and volunteers must attend a *Protecting God's Children* training session on child abuse prevention strategies.
- All of our classrooms have large windows to allow for easy monitoring.
- Our website includes resources to help us all protect God's children.

As part of our efforts, we also deliver two safety training programs developed by the Archdiocese of Boston:

- The first program, "Talking About Touching", teaches students in Grades 1-3 about personal safety and touching safety. This program teaches children skills that will help keep them safe from dangerous or abusive situations. Children also learn to ask for help when they need it.
- The second program, "Keeping Children Safe", teaches students in Grades 4-8 about personal safety, internet safety, acting responsibly and showing respect.

Children learn more about safety and are more likely to follow safety rules when they have multiple opportunities to practice and talk about safety with their parents and family. We encourage you to help your child learn and practice the safety rules.

More information about the Safety Curriculum is provided in grade specific letters.

On **September 23, 2018** the safety materials will be available for parents to review in the conference room at the parish center. If you do not want your child to participate in these programs, please sign and return the opt-out letter to the Parish Office.

## CLASS SCHEDULES

<u>Grade</u>		<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>
K		Sunday	9:00-10:15 am; followed by 10:30 mass
1	<b>or</b>	Sunday Tuesday	9:00-10:15 am; followed by 10:30 mass 4:00 – 5:15 pm
2	<b>or</b>	Sunday Tuesday	9:00-10:15 am; followed by 10:30 mass 4:00 – 5:15 pm
3/4	<b>or</b>	Sunday Tuesday	9:00-10:15 am; followed by 10:30 mass 4:00 – 5:15 pm
5-7		Sunday	9:00-10:15 am; followed by 10:30 mass

## REGISTRATION & OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Registration is available on our St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish website. Families may also register via the form at the back of this handbook. Registration fee is \$75; \$30 for each additional child from the same family. Scholarships are available. Please inquire at the Parish Center – 617-242-4664.

**Please Note:** If your child was not baptized at St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish, you must provide us with a copy of his or her Baptismal certificate when registering for the program. Please mail, scan and send via email, or drop off a copy of the baptismal certificate to our office. **Without a Baptismal certificate, your child cannot receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, or First Communion.**

**GRADE 1 and 2:** Preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion is a **two-year** program. If your child did not complete Grade 1 at St. Mary St. Catherine of Siena Parish or another Religious Education program, he/she will be required to complete a packet of information to ensure they have the fundamental knowledge to prepare for sacraments. This will be distributed at the Grade 2 Parents meeting in the early Fall.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### ***Absences***

Parents are asked to call the office or email [kfleming@stmaryscatherine.org](mailto:kfleming@stmaryscatherine.org) if their child will be absent. The office may also call home to confirm an absence. If a student is absent from a class, please contact Katy Fleming to discuss how to make up the work.

### ***Allergies***

Please notify Katy Fleming, Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation of any allergies your child may have and of any dietary restrictions. Parents must be aware that many of the rooms we use for our program are multipurpose. Therefore we cannot guarantee that they are food or peanut free. If this is a serious issue, parents should discuss their child's needs with us so that we may make appropriate accommodations.

### ***Communication***

We may officially communicate with parents by letter or phone, but our principle method of contact is by email. If you do not have an email address, please let us know.

### ***CORI Check***

The Archdiocese of Boston mandates that all religious education teachers and volunteers complete a Criminal Offenders Record Information (CORI) check and attend the Protecting God's Children training workshop in order to work with children in the Religious Education Program.

### ***Custody***

Consistent with the law, in the absence of a court order to the contrary, the Religious Education Office will provide the noncustodial parent access to sacramental information. If a court order specifies otherwise, the custodial parent must provide the Religious Education Office a copy of the court order.

### ***Early Dismissal***

Parents should send a written note with their child if the child is to be dismissed from class early. Children are not allowed to exit the building alone.

### ***Homework***

Homework is generally not given in the lower grades. On occasion, however, children in Grades 1 – 6 may be asked to complete a session review or activity sheet assigned by the catechist or to make-up lessons they have missed.

### ***Lapsed Students***

Students who have missed one or more years of Religious Education are always welcome to return to the program. Those who wish to return at their appropriate grade level will be provided with remedial work to complete before they may join their peers. The materials & requirements for remedial instruction will be tailored to meet the individual needs of the student.

### ***Pick-up and Drop-off***

Students in Grades K – 8 may enter the Parish Center via the Winthrop Street entrance. Classes will begin on time; students may wait in the lobby if they are early, and your teacher will gather the class when it is time. If your child is running late he/she will be escorted to the classroom by the Parish volunteer or the Assistant for Faith Formation. Unless noted on your registration, children are not allowed to leave the building on their own. At dismissal time, teachers will make eye contact with the parent/guardian picking up the child.

### ***School Cancellations***

Whenever the Boston Public Schools are cancelled, Religious Education classes are cancelled as well. In addition, Religious Education classes may also be cancelled for inclement weather that develops later in the day or for other reasons. In all cases, we will announce class cancellations on channel 5. We will also post cancellation notices with our answering service 617-242-4664 and on our website, [www.stmaryscatherine.org](http://www.stmaryscatherine.org).