

ST. ELIZABETH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
San Francisco, CA



FAMILY HANDBOOK
2017-2018

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W E L C O M E

Dear Parents & Children:

The catechetical staff and I hope this handbook will provide you with valuable information about St. Elizabeth's Religious Education Program for children/youth.

It is important that you read it and discuss it with your family. After you have done so, please sign and return the last page titled, "Acknowledgement and Signature," to Mrs. Tessie Alano.

We ask you to keep this handbook in a convenient place and refer to it as needed.

We welcome any questions you may have and look forward to serving you and your family.

Please contact Mrs. Tessie Alano at 415-601-0310 / email address:

t_alano@yahoo.com

Sincerely,

Mrs. Tessie Alano
Director of Religious Education
St. Elizabeth Parish

PHILOSOPHY

St. Elizabeth Parish believes that catechetical ministry is a share in Jesus' own mission of proclaiming the Reign of God. Catechesis is the activity which enables faith to become living, conscious, and active through the light of instruction.

The Church teaches that the primary responsibility for the spiritual growth and development of the children rests first and foremost with the parents. Parents may share this responsibility with others, but they do not relinquish it. The Church assists the parents in passing on their faith through the ministry of catechesis. Catechists echo the Catholic faith in a way that those being taught (children, youth, adults) can understand. Catechists must do more than merely teach about the faith. They help children build and strengthen their relationship with Jesus and the Church. Catechists do this by proclaiming the Word, building a sense of community, leading in prayer and worship, encouraging loving service to others and through the examples of their own lives.

Our catechists are all volunteers, from many walks of life. They are people who have answered a call to minister to our parish children and who have prepared themselves in a variety of ways to serve as catechists. Above all, they are people for whom faith is important enough to share. In conclusion, the catechetical process seeks to help the students grow further in their faith, deepen their understanding of our Catholic tradition, and unify in Christ the many gifts of the Holy Spirit within the Catholic Christian community of Saint Elizabeth Parish.

PARENT’S ROLE

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Our staff is eager to work with parents to help them fulfill this responsibility and asks each parent’s cooperation in the following ways

- Participate actively in the sacramental and community life of the parish, share your faith and what it means to you with your children.
- Pray with your children and help them memorize the traditional prayers of the Church.
- Discuss with your children, what they have learned in class.
- Be aware of what homework is to be done. Help younger children with their homework and discuss the lesson with them.
- Read religious books to your children or purchase religious books for your older children. Watch religious movies with your children.
- Discuss with your children moral issues and how they affect them and our society.
- Attend all parent meetings.
- Familiarize yourself with scheduled catechetical sessions and events for your children such as family Masses or religious holidays.
- Read and act promptly on all communications from Mrs. Alano and their teacher.
- Assure your children’s punctual and regular attendance at all sessions.
- If your child is absent, be responsible to call Mrs. Alano and to collect information needed for your child to do missed class work at home. They are to bring the missed work to class upon his/her return.
- Be patient if your child’s class ends later than unusual.

Celebrate Sunday Mass weekly with your children. The schedule is as follows:

Saturday – 4:30 pm

Sunday, 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. and 5:00pm in Spanish.

STUDENT’S ROLE

Students also have a responsibility to cooperate in order to benefit from the catechetical sessions at St. Elizabeth’s Religious Education Program.

They are expected to:

- Be respectful and co-operative with all catechists.
- Students are expected to be respectful of one another, one another’s belongings, and parish property.
- Listen carefully, follow directions and participate in the session activity.
- Complete class assignments, homework assignments, and projects and return to class on time.
- Bring religious education book to class every week.
- Follow attendance, emergency and safety procedures and discipline policies set on pages 13 and 15 of this handbook.
- Share what they have learned and experienced in their catechetical sessions with their parents and families.
- Do not bring food or gum to class. No horse playing in Cantwell Hall or outside.
- Do not take out cell phones during class time. Do not wear earplugs or have electronic games during class.
- Dangerous materials shall not be brought to classes such as alcohol, drugs, weapons and other illegal material.

The director or teachers have the right and duty to protect the health and welfare of all the participants of the catechetical program. This includes the right to inspect property of any individual suspected of possessing any of the above listed items. If any of these mentioned items are found, the parents/guardians, police and pastor will be notified as appropriate.

Gangs: The parish catechetical program is a gang-free environment. No evidence of gangs or gang-related activities will be tolerated. Students participating in any gang or gang-related activities while on parish property or in conjunction with program-related activities will be subject to immediate disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from our religious education program.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM

St. Elizabeth Religious Education Program welcomes all children and youth, baptized or not to participate in the catechetical program.

Classes are offered on Saturday mornings from September 23, 2017 to May 18, 2018. Door opens at 8:30am and end at 10:30am.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation (first confession) and First Holy Communion is a two-year process beginning the first grade. Sessions are also available for older children. They begin with the Older First Timers class for the first year and continuing to the Older First Holy Communion class in the second year. Reconciliation is usually held in February and First Holy communion is held during the first weekend in May.

A copy of your child's Baptism is required by the last class in October. One parent must attend the mandatory parent meeting for both First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.

Practice for the sacrament of Reconciliation will be held during the regular CCD class time. The sacrament of First Holy Communion requires two practice dates. One practice day will be during the regular CCD class on the Saturday before the ceremony. The second practice will be on the Saturday before the ceremony. A reception will be held after both First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Families are required to donate food for these receptions.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is a two year process beginning in the 7th grade. The Sacrament of Confirmation will be held at Saint Mary's Cathedral along with other parishes. The date of this Sacrament is given to us by the Archdiocese at a later date and is usually in April or May. Only one (1) sponsor is required and allowed. Parents and students must attend the mandatory meetings. Students will be given a contract of what is expected of them to complete this course which will be signed by both students and parents. Service hours, three projects and two retreats will be required to be eligible to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. A copy of your child's Baptism certificate should be on file. If not, a copy will be required. We ask that both parents and sponsors be involved in the student's preparation. Approval of the outfit to be worn at the Confirmation will be required by the director and teacher.

REGISTRATION

Registration and Fees

All students must be registered for St. Elizabeth Religious Education Program.

Registration forms for all students are available at the St. Elizabeth website: (www.stelizabethsf.org). Please return the registration form and payment of \$45.00 per child to the Rectory Office during office hours (8:30am – 4:00pm) at 449 Holyoke Street, San Francisco, CA 94134, no later than the last class in October of the new school year. Checks are payable to St. Elizabeth Parish.

Emergency forms are attached to the registration forms and must be fully filled out before your child can attend religious education classes for their safety.

Baptismal Information

A copy of a baptismal certificate attached to the form is required for all children who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation /First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Copies must be given to the director. If the student has yet to be baptized, please call the Rectory at least one month before the desired Baptismal date at 415-468-0820.

Change of Address/Phone Number

Please notify the director of any change of address or telephone numbers (home, work or cell) immediately so that the director will be able to contact you in the event of an emergency involving your child.

Custody Arrangements

The primary responsibility for seeing that custody arrangements are carried out rests with the parents. The catechetical staff wishes to cooperate with special custody arrangements of families to the best of their ability. Parents are asked to meet and submit in writing detailed information regarding such arrangements to the director.

Allergies and other special medical conditions or concerns

Please notify your child's teacher and director in writing of any medical condition/allergies, or learning disability.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Pre-K through 8th

Students may arrive at Cantwell Hall by 8:45 am. The entrance door is kept locked for the children's safety. Please ring door bell near middle front doors for admittance. Classes begin at 9:00am. We ask that your child be at Cantwell Hall by that time.

Class ends at 10:30am. If you will be later than 10:30am to pick up your child, or if there is an emergency, please contact Mrs. Alano's cell phone at 415-601-0310. Please put this number in your cell phone.

Dismissal for all grade levels. Persons authorized to pick-up your child should be listed on the emergency forms or in a written signed note from the custodial parent. If your child is allowed to walk home alone, please send a written note at the beginning of the school year to be kept in your child's file.

Early dismissal. Early dismissal is discouraged. If it is necessary, please give your child's teacher a parent-signed note before class stating the date, reason and time of early dismissal. A parent or guardian must come to the classroom to pick up the student. He/She will not be allowed to leave the building alone. Please ring the doorbell for entry into Cantwell Hall.

Any missed class work must be done at home and shown to the teacher the following week.

Please make sure your child has collected any homework before leaving. Inform the director in writing of any special circumstances when someone other than an authorized person is picking-up a student early or at dismissal time.

ATTENDANCE

As it is the parent's wishes that their child be raised and taught the Catholic Faith, we at St. Elizabeth Religious Education Program, take seriously the religious education of your child. We believe that a child learns from their parents, the importance religious education makes in their lives. If the child's is allowed to skip classes, then they learn that religion in their life is unimportant. Therefore, a commitment to this program has to be made by both parents and child.

Promptness and regular class attendance is important because one lesson builds upon the previous lesson.

If it is necessary that your child miss a session, the parent must call Mrs. Alano at 415-601-0310 before the desired date.

This is both so that lesson information can be given and for the safety of the child. Any missed lesson should be done at home.

Arrangements for the homework to be picked up or to be dropped off at home, must be made with the director.

If parents do not contact the director for absences, or absences occur often, a meeting to address this problem will be arranged.

Lack of class attendance, repeated tardiness, homework and discipline problems may affect your child's ability to move up to the next grade level or to receive the Sacraments.

COMMUNICATION

Parent/guardians and catechetical staff work in partnership in helping children grow in faith. Therefore, good communication is essential. If problems develop, they should always be resolved whenever possible.

If a parent/guardian wishes to speak with a catechist they may do so after the session or they may make an appointment with the catechist by calling the director. Parents/guardians may also make an appointment to meet with the director at (415) 601-0310 / t_alano@yahoo.com.

There will be periodic parent notices sent to you by the following methods:

- A note sent home with your child.
- An email to the parent/guardian.
- By phone.

Please check with your child every week to see if any notices have been sent home.

When asked to reply or contact the director either by email or phone, please do so as soon as possible. Some information is time sensitive and planning for events that need your child or family involvement cannot move forward without your reply.

All communication between parent/guardian and teacher or director must be conducted in a respectful manner.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

One of the catechist's first concerns is to maintain an atmosphere in which the students can form a community, share faith, and enjoy an optimum learning environment.

Students are encouraged to participate positively and be attentive in the catechetical sessions. Parents expect their child to attend religious education classes to learn. It is not fair to parents and students if one student's behavior makes it difficult for the other students to learn.

Catechists will not tolerate attitude, rude remarks or talking back by students.

Parents/guardians will be called during class time to pick up their child if they disrupts the class session.

Program rules are found on page 6.

The director, in consultation with the pastor, is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations.

HARASSMENT

St. Elizabeth Parish believes in the sanctity and integrity of all persons: that we are all created in God's image and are of inestimable value. Any form of harassment is completely contrary to this belief. St. Elizabeth Parish is committed to providing an environment free of harassment.

CHILD PROTECTION

St. Elizabeth Parish is committed to the protection and safety of all children entrusted to its care.

As mandated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, teachers and any adults who work with children, volunteer or paid, are required to view the Archdiocese of San Francisco's on-line program, "Shield the Vulnerable." They must become familiar with this program to follow the Archdiocese Policies and Procedures regarding child abuse and harassment.

As required by state law, evidence of apparent non-accidental injury, suspected neglect or child abuse will be reported to proper authorities. As mandated by the Archdiocese of San Francisco, students each year, must be taught the "Shield the Vulnerable" program during class time for grades 1st through 3rd by their teacher or director.

A note will be sent home when this lesson will be conducted. Parents may sit-in on this lesson.

For students in grades 4th through 8th students, with the supervision of a parent/guardian, must complete the online "Shield the Vulnerable" program. The parents must make a copy of the certificate at the end of each lesson and return it to the director by the end of December.

A note will be sent when this online course should begin and when certificates are due.

EMERGENCY/SAFETY PROCEDURES

The safety of the students and catechetical staff is of paramount importance. All actions taken shall bear in mind the safety and well being of both students and staff members.

In case of emergency/natural disaster, the Emergency Procedure Plan will be followed:

Fire and earthquake drills are conducted at the first monthly class. In the case of an emergency/natural disaster, catechists and director will remain with the children until either a custodial parent/guardian or designated person picks up the student.

Only a person who is listed on the emergency/earthquake release form that is attached to the registration form, will be allowed to take the student home. It is **VERY IMPORTANT** that you list anyone that you think may call to take a child home in an emergency such as relative, friend, neighbor, and child's friends' parent. If the name is **NOT** on the list, we will **NOT** allow the child to go home with that person. If you think you may need to add more people to the list you already filled out, then please stop by at the end of class and speak with the director to fill an additional names and phone numbers.

The person who comes to take the student home **MUST** sign the release form at time of pick-up.

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND SIGNATURE

I _____

the Custodial Parent/Guardian of the following student(s)

acknowledge that I have read and understand all that I have read in the St. Elizabeth Handbook. I will abide with all that is listed in this Family Handbook.

Signature(s) of Custodial Parent(s)/Guardian:

Date:

(1) _____

(2) _____