

TRANSFIGURATION PARISH
SCHOOL OF RELIGION
FAMILY HANDBOOK
2019-2020

F.A.I.T.H.
FORSAKING ALL, I TRUST HIM

The School of Religion

The Transfiguration School of Religion exists to assist families in the faith formation of their children. The program provides opportunities to learn Catholic doctrine, to share faith, to worship through prayer and sacrament, to connect to our parish community, and to respond to the Gospel message in witness and service.

ADMISSION POLICY

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Transfiguration School of Religion is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

The School of Religion admits students of any sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this religious education program.

The School of Religion does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its policies, supplementary programs or any other program based function.



All children of registered parishioners who have turned five by September 1st through Grade 8 or completion of Sacraments of Initiation are eligible to enroll in The School of Religion. New registrants must present a baptismal certificate. Non-registered parishioners may attend (if space allows) with special permission from the pastor or director (out-of-parish tuition applies).

Registration

Registration forms are distributed in the spring for students currently registered. Final registration must be completed by the registration deadline. Because classes are dependent on availability and time preferences cannot be guaranteed. Students are placed in classes on a first come, first served basis. New families are encouraged to register as soon as possible. Completed registration forms and fees may be sent by mail or left at the Parish Office as well as The School of Religion Office or placed in the collection basket. We have a registration deadline of 8/15/2019. Beyond 8/15/2019 we will accept registrations and place children in classes as time and space allow. Once classes begin, we will ONLY accept registrations if office personnel are available during class times for the first two weeks of the program. Any registration received after the second week of class will be held for the next academic cycle.

Eligibility

Children are placed in groups according to their grade level at school, although we sometimes will place a child who is out of sequence in sacraments in a lower faith formation class. This allows the child to be fully catechized before receiving a sacrament. Our program strives to be inclusive of all children. Those children with special needs: academic, physical, or emotional, should be identified on their registration forms so that we can best meet the needs of the individual child.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Class Sessions

The School of Religion offers programs for children Kindergarten through 8th Grade (or the reception of Confirmation) at the following sessions:

*Wednesday Afternoon		
Session "A" (English)	4:45pm – 6:00 pm	Grade 1 – Grade 8
*Wednesday Evening		
Session "B" (English)	7:00pm - 8:15 pm	Grade 7 – Grade 8
*Sunday Morning		
Session "C" (English)	8:45 am – 10:00 am Mass	Grade 1 – Grade 8
*Saturday— Spanish	4:30 pm – 6:00 pm Mass	Programa de Comunion Catecismo
*Wednesday— Spanish	6:45pm – 8:15 pm	Programa de Confirmacion Catecismo

Since attending Eucharist is paramount to a family's faith life we have incorporated the Saturday and Sunday classes with the Mass schedules. We encourage all families to attend the 10:00 AM Sunday Mass with the School of Religion.

SPRED

SPRED is a program which provides faith formation and Sacramental preparation for children and adults with developmental disabilities such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy, down's syndrome, autism, seizure disorders, as well as numerous other classifications. SPRED offers a process which has been specifically designed for persons with special needs. The goal is inclusion into the worshipping life of the parish. Transfiguration does not currently participate in the SPRED program, but we may in the future. We also have access to programs in neighboring parishes.

Office Hours

The School of Religion Office is located in the school to the right of the main school entrance and down the hallway. We have limited office hours during the summer. The office is open regularly from mid-August until late June. While we are often times here beyond them, the normal office hours are:

Monday - Friday	10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Monday & Thursday	6:00 pm -- 7:00 pm

This does not include observed holidays or school holidays. If in doubt, please call ahead. If you need to reach us outside of office hours leave a message on our Voice Mail (847-526-6400).

CURRICULUM

As Catholics we have many beliefs, traditions and doctrines which form our faith and help us grow in our relationship with Jesus. In order to help parents pass on this faith to their children we outline here the core concepts taught at each grade level.

Kindergarten – Kindergarteners experience God’s love through His creation and the people around them. Using their senses and feelings they explore the wonders of creation. They begin to know Jesus through basic Bible stories and an introduction to prayer and the Mass.

Grade 1 – First Graders learn to be a part of our Church community by exploring the Mass and our worship experience. They begin to experience God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through Scripture and their own experience. An introduction to the “Our Father” and other ways to pray are important components. First Graders also learn more about the Sacrament of Baptism.

Grade 2 – Second Grade prepares children to receive Reconciliation and First Eucharist. By looking at the choices we make and God’s unending love students are led to an understanding of Reconciliation. By studying the Mass students learn to experience Jesus present in His Word and in the Eucharist. Parents are asked to supplement this learning with additional material at home.

Grade 3 – Third Grade presents the Church as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Through these concepts students learn that the mission of the Church is to serve all people. A basic introduction to the Sacraments, Creed, Mary and the Rosary are included.

Grade 4 – Fourth Graders examine their moral lives as they learn to respond to God’s love. Reflecting on God’s covenant in the Ten Commandments and Jesus’ teaching in the Beatitudes, students learn to live in the love of God. A thorough study of the “Our Father” is also included. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is reviewed and Fourth Graders have the opportunity to receive this Sacrament.

Grade 5 – Fifth Graders learn to experience God through the Sacraments. By studying each of the Sacraments students learn how God is active in our lives. Fifth Graders are given their own Bible and learn to see Scripture as the Word of God.

Grade 6 – Sixth Graders study the Old Testament story as a means of reflecting on how God acts in our world. They are led to a deeper understanding of the idea of covenant with our God.

Grade 7 – Seventh Graders follow the Lectionary Cycle of our Church. Using the Sunday Scriptures as a base for discussion, students learn to apply the Scriptures to moral decisions in their lives. Grade 7 also begins the formal preparation for Confirmation by reviewing basic Church teachings and by presenting the Gifts of the Spirit and the concepts of commitment and service.

Grade 8 – Eighth Graders choose to make their commitment to the Catholic Church in the sacrament of Confirmation. Further study of Scripture, the Sacraments, and our Church teachings will aid students in making the choice to be confirmed. Peer discussion, community service and a portfolio of personal reflections assist students to see faith as an important part of their lives.

NOTE: Many other concepts and components are part of the curriculum at each grade level. In Grades 1-6 particularly each unit is based on the four pillars of our faith: what we believe, how

we worship, how we live and how we pray. This provides much needed review and reinforcement of our core beliefs. In addition, all grade levels celebrate the Church year and are guided to an understanding of service and prayer in their lives.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Attendance

Punctuality and regular attendance are necessary if we are to serve your child well. Absences need to be reported by phone **BEFORE** your child's session begins (847-526-6400). Children who are ill should be kept home for their own benefit and the health of others. In the case of an extended illness the director should be notified.

Frequent absences are a cause for concern. Faith formation requires continuity and commitment. Catechists will try to provide make-up work for children who miss more than 2 consecutive classes. However much of what we are trying to accomplish cannot be made up. Continued frequent absences will be brought to the attention of the coordinator and may require a conference with the family.

To emphasize the commitment of preparing for Confirmation we have a separate attendance policy for our Confirmation and Pre-Confirmation programs (Grade 7 & 8). After three absences (not necessarily consecutive) students will be required to complete a make up assignment given either by the catechist or the director. This simple assignment needs to be completed if the student is to continue in the program.

Tardiness

Students who arrive after the attendance is taken will need to notify the office so we can change our records. In the case of pre-Confirmation and Confirmation attendance, when a student is marked tardy three times, it is equal to one absence.

Safety

From the moment a child leaves home until he or she reaches their classroom at Transfiguration School and from the moment he or she leaves the classroom and reaches home, the parent is responsible for the safety of their child. No supervision is provided before or after class time therefore it is IMPERATIVE children arrive on time and be picked up punctually.

The parking lot on Sundays is a very busy place and can be quite dark on Wednesday evenings. **DO NOT ASK YOUR CHILDREN TO WAIT OUTSIDE.** When children are observed standing outside they will be asked to come wait inside. If you know you will be detained have your child wait inside the school. If an emergency arises please call our office and we will have the child wait with us until you arrive.

Children and parents must use the crosswalk when crossing Mill Street.

Parking

Parents are asked to park in the lot across Mill Street or the main church lot when they enter the building to drop off or pick up their children. PLEASE DO **NOT** DOUBLE PARK ALONG MILL STREET when waiting for your children. Children have been seen darting between cars and it's an accident waiting to happen. We realize finding a parking spot can be difficult but the safety of all our children is worth the extra effort.

Building Entrances

The school entrance off of Mill Street is also the **ONLY** entrance for the School of Religion on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays. Parents are asked to park in the lot across the street and then walk their children to the entrance using the crosswalk. The main entrance will be open 10 minutes before class time on Saturdays and Wednesdays to facilitate parents escorting their children to and from class. The main entrance WILL NOT be opened on Sunday until students have returned from Mass.

NO OPEN DOOR POLICY

We live in a changing world. Last year the Archdiocese of Chicago has asked all parishes to update their Emergency Operations Plan in order to keep our children safe at all times. At Transfiguration Parish, we have adopted the A.L.I.C.E. program, a cutting edge emergency plan.

As part of our initiative, for the benefit of everyone, particularly our children, we will no longer have an open door policy in the School of Religion. The school doors will open to receive Religious Education students 10 minutes before classes begin. The doors will then be locked again once classes begin and will be unlocked at the end of class time.

It is important to note that the doors only lock from the outside; students always have access to exit in case of emergency.

Arrival and Departure

Whenever possible children should be escorted to their classroom and picked-up afterwards. Having parents present in the building speaks to our teamwork philosophy and adds to the sense of order. Children should not arrive any sooner than 10 minutes before class, as there will be no supervision provided. No one is permitted in the classrooms without a teacher/aide present. Children and parents should **ALWAYS** wait in the hall until the teacher arrives. Upon dismissal, parents should wait outside the class door until the class is dismissed. **RUNNING** in the hall is always prohibited. Parents who wish to wait in the building during class must stay in the front hallway near the school office or in the atrium only, although Catechists would welcome your classroom visit.

****Please remember that your child's teacher is often a parent like yourself who needs to leave immediately after class to tend to his/her family's needs and should not be expected to be left waiting for other parents.****

Discipline

Faith formation includes developing care and concern for others. Children are expected to be courteous, respectful, and watchful of their words and actions. Catechists deserve full support and cooperation. Disrespect of adults, peers or property will not be tolerated.

Catechists are encouraged to go to the director with behavior concerns. If a child persists in misbehaving or continually shows lack of respect for property, parents will be asked to accompany them to class if the child is to continue in our program.

Students are **not** allowed to have cell phones, pagers, or other electronic devices turned on during class time. If a parent feels their child needs a cell phone, etc. it must be off and put away during class. If this is not followed the catechist will hold the cell phone, etc. until the student leaves the classroom. Please support the catechists in these efforts.

Students are expected to dress appropriately for class. No clothing with violent or inappropriate slogans or logos will be allowed. Shoes with wheelies are not to be used in the building.

Drugs, alcohol, guns, knives or objects capable of causing harm are not to be brought into the building or onto parish grounds. Possession of any of these is a serious infraction of the rules and may result in exclusion from the program. We reserve the right to inspect the personal property of any student when there is reason to believe the student has violated the rules and policies of the Transfiguration School of Religion.

Sharing Space

Children all need to learn how to respect other people's things. Many of our children will be using desks and class space that is used by another child during the school day.

Children in our program are provided materials and should never use pens, pencils, scissors, etc. from any class desks. Any destruction or theft of property will become the responsibility of the student and parent.

Supplies and Textbooks

All children in grades K through 8 are issued materials and a folder to take home communications. Grades 1-8 have a textbook. It is the student's responsibility to bring needed materials to EVERY class, whether they are used or not. Bibles are given to those in Grade 5 or who are new to our program in Grades 6-8. Students are responsible for their Bible and these Bibles are used in class from Grade 5 to Grade 8. If a Bible or textbook is lost or damaged it is the responsibility of the student or parent to replace it. (Bibles and textbooks are available for purchase in the School of Religion Office).

COMMUNICATION

The School of Religion can be reached by phone at 847-526-6400. This phone has a 24-hour voice mail.

On-going communication between families and our program is essential to the life of The School of Religion. While yearly calendars are established early in the year, all events cannot be predicted and the calendar is subject to change; therefore the children take home fliers in their folders. IT IS CRUCIAL YOU READ THIS INFORMATION TO STAY INFORMED.

The parish bulletin contains articles on The School of Religion and important parish activities. Bulletins are given to the youngest child in our program for your convenience.

Due to the cost constraint we limit our mailings. Therefore it is important to check your child's folder after every session for current communications. Parents are expected to make an effort to meet their child's catechist. There will also be special events for those involved in Sacramental preparation.

Parents are ALWAYS welcome to observe groups and/or participate with their children. Arrangements should be made through the Catechist prior to class.

The School of Religion has adopted the SchoolMessenger program to facilitate better communication through voicemail, email and texts. If you do not wish to be a part of the SchoolMessenger system, please speak with the office about getting your information removed from the system.

Communication is a two-way street. These are some ways we communicate with you; however, it is just as important you communicate with us!

Please Let The Catechist Know: Any special needs of your child (physical, emotional, learning, dietary) or if the child is experiencing any significant stress (death in family, divorce, illness, etc.) as well or ANYTHING that might help the catechist understand your child better.

Please Let The Office Know: If a child will be absent from class or any extended illness, family vacation, family trauma, etc. Any change in address or phone should be given to the office IMMEDIATELY (this is for your child's safety). Also inform us of any concerns you have about your child's spiritual development.

Cancellation of Classes

A calendar of classes is issued on a yearly basis and is posted on the back of your child(ren)'s take-home folders. Class schedules also appear in the church bulletin. In the event of any further calendar changes notice will come through fliers and/or through SchoolMessenger.

The School of Religion has also substituted the traditional phone tree with SchoolMessenger to be used in the event of an emergency situation which would require the cancellation of classes. The cancellation of classes will be activated by the pastor or director only. Your information will not be used for private purposes. Since this is not always 100% effective we are also part of the Emergency Closing Center. These closings are broadcast on many TV and radio stations and can also be checked on their website www.emergencyclosings.com.

In addition, if Wauconda School District #118 cancels classes or after school activities due to inclement weather on a Wednesday, The School of Religion (both afternoon and evening classes) will also be cancelled.

If for any reason you do not feel it is safe to travel to the school for Religious Education, please err on the side of caution. While we will make the decision to cancel classes or not, the ultimate decision made for your child's safety is yours.

Custody

If parents are divorced or separated, The School of Religion presumes that both parents have access to the children unless one parent can provide evidence that he/she has the sole right. If non-custodial parents would like to receive SchoolMessenger notifications, please notify The School of Religion Office.

Confidentiality and Sharing Information

Those who minister in our program are encouraged to respect the confidentiality of ALL information that they become privy to as a result of their ministry. As a team we respect the uniqueness of each person and family in our program.

Any violation of confidentiality should be brought to the attention of the office.. This information does not refer to child abuse or neglect. Illinois Law requires that catechetical personnel promptly report alleged or suspected child abuse to The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.

Class lists and phone numbers may **NOT** be used for private purposes. A student's legal name, awards received, and participation in Sacrament events are considered directory information and may be used in the parish bulletin, website and similar postings. Photographs may also be taken at specific events. This information may be disclosed without the consent of the parent of a Transfiguration School of Religion student less than 18 years of age. If parents of Transfiguration School of Religion students do not want this information released without parental consent, parents must notify Transfiguration School of Religion in WRITING as soon as possible. In not doing so, it is assumed the parents do not object to the release of the designated directory information.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Often times we take photographs at our events and they are shared with the parish bulletin, Facebook page, and hallway collages. Please let us know if you do not wish to have your child photographed for these displays. We have complete respect for your privacy.

FINANCES

Tuition rates are established on a yearly basis. This year we have eliminated book and sacramental fees to help struggling families and to simplify bookkeeping. We are asking that a \$50.00/child deposit be paid before placement into classes. The program does NOT receive any subsidy from the parish. Therefore, it is important ALL families pay their fees as soon as possible. If necessary, payments on tuition are accepted, and will be billed on 9/15/2019, 10/15/2019, 11/15/2019 and 1/15/2020. If you need further time to pay, please contact the director.

Again this year we have an opportunity to sell raffle tickets to help subsidize your tuition payments if you are in need. Due to budget issues, we are unable to offer financial assistance at the current time, but if you find yourself unable to make your tuition payments, PLEASE be in communication with the office. Whenever possible, parents will be asked to work volunteer hours to offset tuition costs.

SACRAMENTS

All Sacramental experiences are based on providing formation experiences for children as well as education. Sacramental years require EXTRA teamwork from families.

As established by Archdiocesan Policy, children must be in our program for TWO years before they receive Sacraments. Parents are required to attend celebrations, and work with their child at home in preparation for Sacraments. Special programs are available for older children preparing for Sacraments.

The time of "first" Sacraments for children is an opportunity for parents to enter into their child's spiritual development in a significant way. If we can be of ANY assistance in making this experience a more meaningful one for your family, please let us know.

Reconciliation

In accord with Archdiocesan guidelines and Transfiguration policy, students will be prepared for Reconciliation during their First Grade year. All students are expected to receive Sacramental Reconciliation before receiving First Eucharist. Most children of this age have sufficient maturity to understand that they can hurt others and that our loving God is waiting to

forgive them. Services geared especially to those making First Reconciliation are scheduled near the Advent season. All Second Grade parents are asked to attend the Reconciliation Parent Open House in the fall for a further explanation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Students older than Second Grade who have not received Sacramental Reconciliation should be identified to the director immediately. The parents and director will meet to work out age-appropriate preparation for this important Sacrament.

Forgiveness and peace are important beliefs of our faith and should not be denied our children.

Holy Eucharist

Eucharist is usually received at the end of Second Grade provided the child was enrolled in a religious education program for First Grade. Students enrolling in the program for the first time in Second Grade will be placed in a first level class and will receive Eucharist at the end of the second year. This is to allow time for adequate faith formation and development.

As children are being prepared for Eucharist, attendance at Sunday Mass is especially important. Parents will be asked to work with students at home as well as to attend several programs at the parish to help prepare the children for this important Sacrament.

A special program is available for older students who are preparing for First Eucharist.

Confirmation

Confirmation is usually received during the Eighth Grade year provided the student is ready to make a commitment to our Catholic faith and provided the student has been a regular part of a religious education program. Special provisions are made for older students who wish to be confirmed. Confirmation is a Sacrament of commitment and service therefore students will be expected to do make up work after three absences. Preparation begins during the Seventh Grade year with special topics, a retreat and service opportunities. During the second year of preparation (Eighth Grade) parents will be expected to attend several rites at the parish and to encourage their child at home. Sponsors are encouraged to attend these rites and to take an active role in the students' preparation also. Students will be required to complete service projects and a portfolio to show their understanding of the Sacrament. A retreat experience is a required part of the program. Students unable to attend the scheduled parish retreat will be asked to attend another retreat often at another parish. Rather than an end or graduation from religious education, Confirmation is to be seen as an affirmation of our Baptismal call to faith and service.

CATECHIST

Whenever we refer to the teamwork of Religious Formation we cannot overlook the tremendous importance of a core member of the team – the Catechist. There are over one-hundred volunteer Catechists/Aides in our program. Catechists are men and women of faith who give freely their time, talent, and treasure to YOUR child.

Catechists are encouraged to communicate directly with the families in their group. Expect to hear from them during the year. Get to know each other. The support of the community of The School of

Religion can make a difference in your life. So much in our culture does not support our values. We need and depend on each other to help our children. We were not meant to walk this walk alone!

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Throughout this handbook there have been references to you being part of a team. WE NEED YOUR FAMILY!

DO NOT WAIT TO BE CALLED. Offer your help where your gifts lie. If working with children is life-giving and energizing to you consider being a Catechist or Aide. If you have music or art gifts OUR CHILDREN NEED YOU. If you cannot volunteer at this time we respect that. There are other ways to show your commitment to your child's faith development:

- First and foremost, attend Sunday Mass regularly as a family. Nothing can substitute for this.
- Pray together before meals and eat as a family as often as possible.
- Attend parish Reconciliation services or individual Reconciliation at the times notated in the bulletin. Show your child(ren) the joy of God's loving forgiveness.
- Be involved in the Transfiguration Parish Community. Transfiguration has many active ministries that need help. Attend parish events regularly.
- Show interest in what your child(ren) is/are learning. Ask questions and review materials with your child(ren). Support their teacher.
- Pray and celebrate the Church Seasons and Feast Days in your home. Many suggestions and activities are available.
- Let your child(ren) see you as a model of faith. Work to develop your own relationship with Jesus Christ. If it's important to you, it will be important to your child(ren).

FAMILY MASSES, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION MASSES AND CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

The School of Religion has adopted the 10:00 AM Sunday Mass as our weekly Family Mass. The students of the Sunday session attend this Mass before class each week. We strongly encourage all SOR families to attend this Mass (or another Mass if the 10:00 AM time doesn't work for your schedule). These events offer a unique opportunity for families to actively participate in ministry roles. We would never ask our children to attend all the practices for a sport they were participating in without playing the "BIG GAME". Please make sure your child is participating by attending Mass as well as coming to religion classes. They will never completely know their faith without attending weekly Mass.

In addition, we have scheduled seasonal program-wide opportunities so that all can participate. This is in addition to special Masses on Christmas and Easter. See the calendars included here and give these events high priority on your family calendar.