

Elementary Education Curriculum and Information

Textbooks: In grades 1-5, we use the **faith** and **word** edition of **Blest Are We** published by Silver Burdett Ginn religion.

FAITH: In **Blest Are We**, faith is developed through a spiral curriculum based on the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. These four pillars of Catholic Doctrine are: *What Catholics Believe, How Catholics Worship, How Catholics Live and How Catholics Pray*. The four pillars are taught in every unit, at every level, every year.

WORD: In **Blest Are We**, Sacred Scripture provides a solid foundation for learning the Catholic faith. Individual verses and scripture passages develop the themes for the lessons. The opening prayer in most lessons is scripture based. At each level, there is an introductory lesson on the bible which helps the children develop an understanding and appreciation for the Word of God. In addition, **Blest Are We** has an excellent web site with **great resources for families**, including the ability to download the take home pages in your child's book, should you need to, because of absence or the dog ate the pages! Be sure to check it out at: www.blestarewe.com

The children are also expected to know the **prayers and practices** in the handout they will receive in the first week of class. Catechists will do their best to introduce and review these but it remains the parents' primary responsibility to ensure that the children are familiar with basic Catholic teaching. The handout also includes parent expectations as described in the Saginaw diocesan curriculum. Again, should you ever need our assistance in this, please do not hesitate to contact me. We are here to serve.

Preschool: In preschool, we use the Early Start **Seeds** published by Pflaum. These have as their theme the stories of Jesus we hear in the Sunday Gospels. Each week the children will learn about Jesus and His Good News.

Attendance/Calendar: Attendance is strongly encouraged and monitored. Certificates/awards are presented in recognition of good attendance. The children spend around 27 hours per year in parish faith formation classes: this is just over a day per year!! I think you would agree this is not a lot of time spent on something that is of great importance. This is why it is important that not only the children attend all sessions (or as many as possible) but that our families faithfully complete the take home pages sent home. These take home pages are an extension of the lesson the children have on Sundays and are an invaluable means of reinforcement, not to mention the enjoyment you can have sharing your faith; it is a precious thing experiencing God through a child's eyes.

The Pflaum Gospel Weeklies sent home are also an important part of the children's faith formation and are lectionary based, that is they follow the Sunday readings. Pflaum provides parents with a means to discuss the readings heard at Mass. Catechists have shared with me that you can tell the children who cover the material at home, as not only are they better informed but participate and are more confident in class.

The main educators of children remain the parents. That said, we partner with you in this regard and should you need any help or support, please do not hesitate to contact me or your child's catechist. For example, if your child is ill and cannot attend class, we are happy to provide any or all of the lessons/take home pages that they missed.

Catechist contact numbers will be given out at the beginning of the year.

Parental visits: we would like to encourage parents to come pay a visit to the classroom and experience firsthand what the children are learning. Perhaps you would like to coincide your visit with the day you supply snacks? Sign up sheets for visits will be next to the sign up sheets for snacks or call the office.

Cancellation of classes: Inclement weather could be heavy snow, freezing rain or sleet, or extremely cold (blizzard-like) conditions. Please tune into WMPX radio 1490am for any announcements regarding class cancellation. Catechists will attempt to call all parents and students.

Classroom behavior: Our classrooms are for making the children's faith come alive. Therefore it is necessary that each child has the opportunity to learn and each catechist has the opportunity to teach. To enable this to happen, should a persistent behavioral concern arise, the parents will be contacted.

In conclusion: Thank you so much for entrusting and allowing us to share in the religious education of your child. We always welcome questions, ideas, and concerns regarding the religious education program.

This year, we plan to put together some lesson plans that will require specific visual, tactile objects that draw young listeners more deeply into the lesson. Therefore, we need anyone who is gifted in woodwork, sewing, and art to help us. We would only ask **one** project per person, thereby sharing the load.

God bless,

Maria
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