

St. Matthias P.S.R. Handbook

2019-2020

Reference Guide for Religious Education Programs and Requirements

Primary Catechists:

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: 3 to 6 Atrium: Michelle Lonero

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: 6 to 9 Atrium: Karen Griffiths

St. Matthias Active Religious Training (S.M.A.R.T.)

S.M.A.R.T. Level I grade 4,5,6: Home School

S.M.A.R.T. Level II Grade 7: Tom Shiban

S.M.A.R.T. Level II Grade 8-9: Dianne Laheta/Gloria Litwinowicz

Sacramental Preparation- First Reconciliation and First Eucharist: Janet Rymut

Sacramental Preparation- Confirmation: Nadine Grimm, Dianne Laheta, Gloria Litwinowicz

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) Dianne Laheta

Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (R.C.I.C.) Dianne Laheta

Adult Catholic Education (A.C.E.) Dianne Laheta

Vacation Bible School (V.B.S.) Dianne Laheta

Dear St. Matthias Family,

This handbook has been designed to give you a general overview of the many catechetical programs that St. Matthias has to offer to you and your family. Please keep this handbook as a reference tool for your family to use when selecting formal faith formation programs here at St. Matthias.

We believe that Christian formation is the ministry which enables ALL people to experience the love and faith of Jesus Christ so that they might make that faith their own. As a stewardship community we incorporate what we have learned into our daily lives by spending time in prayer, caring for the resources God has blessed us with, and reaching out to those who are in need.

The mission of the St. Matthias Religious Education Office is to provide children and adults with sound Catholic teachings designed to empower them into a life of discipleship by proclaiming the message of the Gospel through word and deed in our world. This dynamic process involves youth, adolescents, and adults. It is a continuous experience of God's love begun, primarily and most importantly, in the Christian family and supported by a more formal catechetical program. The formal education is intended to continue to build on and nurture the firm foundation parents have rooted in their family life.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION is a lifelong process aimed at:

- conversion*
- growth in faith*
- service to others*

Our St. Matthias Mission Statement reflects the four tasks of catechesis which result in evangelization and Christian stewardship:

1. *community building -*

"provide for the spiritual growth and development of our community"

2. *proclaiming the Christian message-*

"Proclaiming the message of the Risen Lord"

3. *leading people to full and active participation in the Church-*

"sharing liturgies, ministries and responsibilities"

4. *motivating people to serve others-*

"called to be disciples of Christ, reach out with a loving and caring spirit"

Our staff strives to provide a caring, loving and enthusiastic atmosphere whereby children and adults can experience and share in God's love. Participants will be involved in a variety of endeavors that broaden and deepen their Christian faith. The text and learning resources invite the participant to respond to all of life's experiences through liturgy, prayer, music, art and drama.

Thank you for sharing your time with us. Each and every person is truly a gift.

In Jesus' love,

St. Matthias Religious Education Staff

Catechetical Leader: Dianne Laheta 440-888-8220

FAITH FORMATION OPTIONS

We offer three options for your child to participate in faith formation:

- Option One: The first option for ages 3 yrs to 9 yrs is **Catechesis of the Good Shepherd**
- Option Two: A second option is the **SMART Program (St. Matthias Active Religious Training)** level I for grades 4 – 6; level II for grades 7 – 8.
- Option Three: The third option is **Family Home Schooling**.

All three options include attendance at weekly Mass, parent participation, participation in St. Matthias service projects and other activities throughout the entire year. In compliance with guidelines set by the Diocese of Cleveland Office of Catechetical Services all three options will be supplemented with the Blest Are We book and require the completion of weekly online assessments.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of the child. It is rooted in Sacred Scripture, liturgy, and the educational philosophy and method of Maria Montessori. Each week the children gather in a room prepared for them called an "atrium." This specially prepared space contains many materials that the children can work with and use. For example, there is an area in the room set aside for work with the articles of the Mass: a smaller than child-size model altar, chalice, paten, lectionary, sacramentary, tabernacle, chasubles, among other articles. Another area is dedicated to the sacrament of baptism, another has dioramas depicting key events in the life of Jesus (the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, the Presentation in the Temple, the visit of the magi, and the Last Supper), yet another for a few select parables, and a prayer table is set up in an area where the children gather to pray.

This particular type of religious experience is well suited to the needs and capacities of the young child.

St. Matthias has two atriums. The upper room is dedicated to children 3 to 6 years of age. The classroom area is dedicated to children 6 to 9 years of age. **Children enrolled in the 6-9 atrium will be required to complete weekly online quiz at Blestarewe.com. Instructions can be found under the S.M.A.R.T. program information on the following page.**

This program is held on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. starting in September and concluding in May. It is highly recommended that children enroll in the program at age 3. **Children must have a minimum of 3 years atrium experience prior to receiving the sacrament of First Holy Communion. ONLY CHILDREN NEW TO ST. MATTHIAS WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENROLL IN THE 6 TO 9 PROGRAM WITHOUT PRIOR ATRIUM EXPERIENCE**

Fee for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: \$65.00/115.00 family cap for all programs

St. Matthias Active Religious Training (S.M.A.R.T)

The SMART program is a more traditional religious education program for children in grades 4-9. Level I is designed for children in grades 4-6 and is modeled after the vacation bible school approach. Each class includes a liturgy lesson based on the previous Sunday's lectionary readings, catechesis related to the four pillars of the catholic faith based on the Blest Are We text, an activity or craft related to the lesson, and concludes with a snack that reinforces the weekly lesson. SMART II is designed for children in grades 7 – 9. It is imperative that students choosing to be confirmed attend SMART II. **CONFIRMATION WILL BE HELD FOR 8TH AND 9TH GRADE STUDENTS on April 21, 2020. Confirmation Students will only attend Monday evening PSR Sept-December. Confirmation preparation sessions will be held on Sunday afternoons January-April.**

This program meets every Monday starting September 17th with a Parent/Child Class at 7:00 p.m. for all levels.

Level I (grades 4-6) Contact Rectory

Level II 6:00-7:15 p.m. (grades 7) Classroom (grade 8-9) Upper Room

The fee for the SMART program is: \$65.00 one child

\$90.00 two children

\$115.00 three or more children (in either program)

Online Assessment instructions:

Log onto the internet and enter www.Blestarewe.com in the address bar.

Click on the Students tab.

Select: Take a Quiz

Select: Grade Level and Chapter

When you have completed the review email the results to dlaheta@stmatthiaschurch.org

Please indicate on the registration form if you **do not** have internet access so we can provide you with a hard copy.

Attention: Hard copies of the online assessments will be provided for families that do not have internet access.

FAMILY HOME SCHOOLING

Families participating in this option will be given a Blest Are We text book to use with their children. Families will be required to visit www.Blestarewe.com on a weekly basis and complete the online chapter review. Results of the review should be e-mailed to dlaheta@stmatthiaschurch.org. See Online Assessment instructions under the SMART description on the previous page.

Family Home Schooling is for families who would like to take responsibility for presenting faith formation to their own child(ren). St. Matthias will provide the textbooks to assist parents in their efforts.

If this is a sacramental year for your child(ren), Family Home Schooling preparation will fulfill the “PSR” portion of the faith formation requirement, but there will be additional requirements for the Sacrament. Additional information on sacramental preparation is addressed later in this handbook.

Registration for Family Home Schooling is required so we can order the appropriate number of textbooks. Families must be signed up prior to the *fall meeting* (September 10 7:00 p.m.) when textbooks will be distributed. Only new parishioners will be admitted into the program after this meeting.

The Diocese of Cleveland’s Office of Catholic Education Home Schooling Policy requires parents to inform the Pastor of the church in writing of their intent to assume responsibility for religious instruction in the Catholic Faith. Our Pastor is charged with the responsibility of insuring that all children are offered an opportunity to participate in Religious Education. This letter substantiates that you, as a parent, are assuming this responsibility on the behalf of your child(ren). The letter should include the names of the child(ren) that will be registered in Family Home Schooling. Letters must be attached to the registration forms when returned to St. Matthias Church. The office will forward these letters to our pastor.

Families opting for Family Home Schooling are to attend a mandatory information meeting at the beginning of the school year. At this meeting more details will be given about the goals and format of the program, and textbooks will be distributed.

Fee for Family Home Schooling: \$50.00 for the first child in the program, and \$20.00 for each child thereafter. Non-parishioner fee 75.00 for each child.

LITURGICAL PARTICIPATION:

The Liturgy (Eucharist/Mass) is the center and foundation of our Catholic life according to Vatican II. Therefore, it is important that students participate in weekly worship with the parish community as well as in Holy Days of Celebration.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

The following is expected of all students attending Catechesis of the Good Shepherd or SMART at St. Matthias:

- Students should be dropped off 5 minutes prior to their class starting.
- Students are responsible for bringing their textbooks and pencils to class each week unless otherwise directed by the catechist.
- Students are expected to cooperate with classmates and staff***, following directives established for the well being and safety of all in the St. Matthias PSR program.
- Parents will be contacted if a student is consistently uncooperative with these directives.
- Chewing gum and eating candy during class are not permitted unless permission is given by the catechist in charge.
- Students are expected to be courteous to others, to speak and act in a Christian manner, and to be respectful of the classroom and all St. Matthias property.
- Students should not be in their classroom area unsupervised. If the teacher is not in the classroom area, parents are asked to please remain with them until a catechist arrives.
- Students are to request permission of the catechist to leave the classroom area for any reason. (**Parents**—*please have your children use the bathroom at home prior to leaving for C.G.S or SMART instruction*).
- Children must be picked up promptly.***
- Unfortunately, we have had to implement the “**Three Strikes—you’re in**” policy for uncooperative students. When a student acts in an inappropriate manner, the catechist will contact Dianne Laheta who will be in touch with you shortly to discuss your child’s actions. In the event this occurs 3 times in one year the parent will be required to attend the remainder of the sessions with their child.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

If Parma, North Royalton or Brecksville does not have school on a particular day because of a holiday or snow day, there will be no classes held that day.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATION:

Should the need arise to cancel PSR, we will broadcast that information on local radio and TV (channels 3, 5 and 8). If applicable, we will also make an attempt to e-mail each family to notify them that PSR has been cancelled.

FEES:

No family will be turned away because of an inability to pay fees. In the event of financial difficulty, please contact the Religious Education Office.

CATECHISTS & AIDES:

Our catechists and aides are volunteers who give of themselves freely and devote their time to our PSR program because of their love of children and desire to pass on their faith. All catechists are fingerprinted, and have taken a Virtus training course on protecting God's children. They have also read the Diocesan Policies for the Safety of Children and the Code of Conduct in Ministry. Would you please consider being part of our catechetical team?

SCHEDULE:

Advance copies of our schedule for the upcoming Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and SMART will be available through our website. Our website is: www.stmatthiaschuch.org

DROP-OFF AND PICKUP:

Parents must park and walk their child(ren) into the building each day for CGS and SMART.
Parents

should pick up SMART students in the gathering area.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO PARKING ALLOWED ALONG THE SIDEWALK AT

DISMISSAL. YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY IS OUR FIRST CONCERN!

CARPOOL INFORMATION:

If you choose to make carpool arrangements, please know that it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your child(ren). Please talk with your child(ren) about what family friend or neighbor has permission to take them home. Please notify your child's catechist in writing in the event your child will not be picked up by you. Children must be picked up promptly at the end of classes.

PSR TEXTBOOKS:

Blest Are We, published by RCL Publishing, is the textbook used by all three of our catechetical programs 1 through Jr.High. RCL has an excellent web site; check it out at www.blestarewe.com.

OTHER FORMATION PROGRAMS

A.C.E:

A.C.E. Adult Catholic Education: This program is designed for adults desiring a deeper understanding of our Catholic Faith and Traditions. Topics such as Church History, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and Sacred Scripture will be covered this year. The A.C.E. program is a collaborative effort of our parish cluster. Presentations are held at various locations within our cluster. Check the bulletin or www.stmatthiaschurch.org for a full schedule with times and locations.

RCIA:

The **Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (R.C.I.A.)** is for non-Catholics who wish to know more about the Catholic faith, or for baptized Catholics who never completed their sacraments of initiation (Confirmation and Eucharist). The journey involves learning about the teachings and traditions of the Church as well as sharing in its rituals, which outwardly express the community's blessing, joy and support. RCIA is active all year round. Joining RCIA is not an obligation to become Catholic; however, those who desire may be fully initiated as Roman Catholics at the Easter Vigil Mass. TO INQUIRE, call Dianne Laheta 440-888-8220.

Bible Study:

There are several Bible study groups that meet throughout the year. Contact Dianne Laheta for times and places.

Catholicism :

St. Matthias offers a variety of courses throughout the year. Check the bulletin for dates and times.

Altar Servers:

Boys and girls in 3rd grade or older are invited to sign up for training sessions to become altar servers. Watch the Sunday bulletin for announcements for the training sessions, or call the parish office at (440) 888-8220 for information. Children should have received their First Eucharist prior to signing up for training sessions.

Sacramental Preparation CONFIRMATION Schedule

January 26, 2020 12:00-2:30 Session 1 and Parent Meeting

February 9, 2020 12:00-2:00 Session 2

February 23, 2020 12:00-2:00 Session 3

March 15, 2020 12:00-2:00 Session 4

March 29, 2020 12:00-2:00 Session 5

April 19, 2020 12:00-2:00 Retreat Day With Sponsors and Practice.

April 21, 2020 7:00 PM Confirmation Liturgy.

First Communion Saturday May 2, 2020 4:00 PM

IMPORTANT LITURGICAL DATES

NOVEMBER 1, 2019 ALL SAINTS DAY

December 1, 2019 FIRST SUNDAY ADVENT

DECEMBER 9, 2019 IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

DECEMBER 25, 2019 NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

DECEMBER 29, 2019 FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

JANUARY 1, 2020 MARY MOTHER OF GOD

FEBRUARY 26, 2020 ASH WEDNESDAY

APRIL 5, 2020 PALM SUNDAY

APRIL 9, 2020 HOLY THURSDAY

APRIL 10, 2020 GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL 11, 2020 HOLY SATURDAY

APRIL 12, 2020 EASTER SUNDAY

