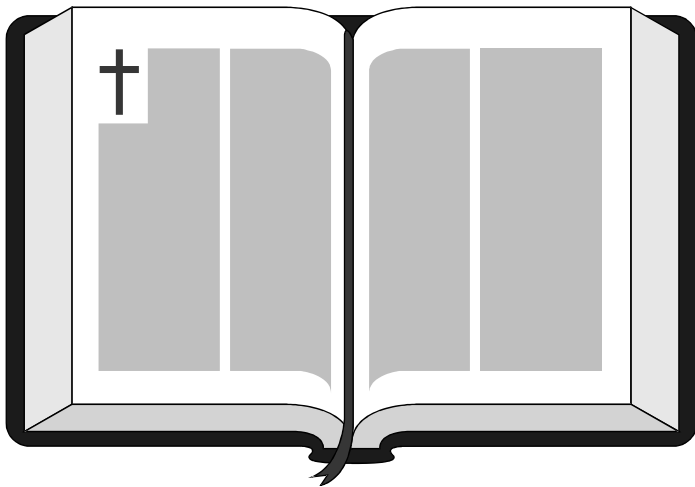


DIVINE SAVIOR parish

Religious Education Handbook





**THE MISSION STATEMENT OF
*DIVINE SAVIOR PARISH***

We, the members of Divine Savior Parish, of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet, DuPage County, Illinois, as a community inspired by the Holy Spirit, are committed to providing an environment that enables our members to build the Kingdom of God through the sharing of our time, talent, and treasure. As Catholics we are called, by our Baptism, to a life long conversion of the heart by committing ourselves, through the Eucharist, to sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ through the ministries of prayer, worship, education, service and evangelization.

Greetings and the Lord be with you!

We are about to start another year in our Religious Education program. I want to welcome all of you to this program and in a few lines tell you how important this program is for your family.

Religious Education is not like training for a sports, arts or physical fitness program. Programs such as these are temporary stops along the highway of life. These programs are good for the time that we are involved in them and then we move on to either a bigger venture in these programs or we become observers of those who continue on in these events. Religious Education is a program to help us begin our life long study of our relationship with the Lord. There never is an end to Religious Education; there is only an extension of the knowledge we receive as youngsters and then a continuous learning and living process.

The Catholic Parish is called upon to promote this life long process of living out our faith. Our Religious Education program is not an end of some stage of our life but rather the beginning of our formation into a living, breathing, practicing child of God.

Religious Education is like being born into a family. You do not give up family at certain stages of your life ,but you go on to build up family and then be prepared to start a family of your own. There is never a time in life when we can say that our family is complete and we don't need it anymore. I pray that all of you will join with the parish in the life long process of getting to know God a little more each day, each month, and each year, all through your lifetime.

Welcome to our program and may it assist you in growing in your faith.

In Christ,



Rev. Robert E. Pietras, Pastor

Religious Education is...

Religious Education is much more than a “function” that needs to be carried out in the Parish. To know Jesus and to know how to follow Him is the very heart of Religious Education. Through Baptism one is configured to Christ, and in Religious Education that relationship with Jesus is guided and nurtured. Fundamentally, Religious Education helps one to know, to celebrate, and to contemplate the mystery of God.

Religious Education not only shares the meaning and knowledge of liturgy and Sacraments, but desires that all the faithful be brought to full, conscious and active participation in the liturgical life of the Church. Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in His footsteps. Religious Education transmits the core values and attitudes of Jesus. This moral testimony, which Religious Education addresses, always demonstrates the social consequences of the Gospel.

Finally, Religious Education prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church.



Fundamental tasks of Religious Education

- ◆ Knowledge of the Catholic Faith
- ◆ Understanding the Life of Christ and Scripture
 - ◆ Liturgical Understanding and Celebration
 - ◆ Sacramental Preparation
 - ◆ Moral Formation and Development
 - ◆ Prayer
 - ◆ Community Life and Service
- ◆ Knowledge of Church History and Tradition



Diocese of Joliet
Religious Education Office
430 N. Center Street
Joliet, IL 60435

DIOCESE OF JOLIET FAITH FORMATION CURRICULUM

The Diocese of Joliet has introduced a new Faith Formation Curriculum to be used in all schools and Religious Education Programs in the Diocese. We are in the process of implementing it over the next several years. Listed below are the four main precepts of the program that serve as our guide.

Goal 1: Know and understand the basic teachings of the Catholic Church.

Goal 2: Know and appreciate the importance of the liturgy and of the Sacraments in the life of Catholics.

Goal 3: Understand and appreciate that through Baptism we are called to life in Christ.

Goal 4: Recognize and engage in personal and communal Catholic forms of prayer, of Scripture study, and of other experiences that deepen one's spiritual life.

PARENT'S COVENANT

I realize that when God blessed me with a child, He entrusted me with the obligation of fostering my child's faith development. I acknowledge that I am the primary educator of my child and in fulfillment of this role, I agree that I will actively support my child's formal religious education. Therefore, I promise:

- 1. That my child and I will attend Mass and regularly participate in the Sacraments of the Church .*
- 2. To attend and support all required parent meetings.*
- 3. That my child will attend classes in accordance with the Policies of Divine Savior Parish.*
- 4. To inform myself of my child's course of study and to supervise all assignments and participate in family activities.*
- 5. To role model the Christian lifestyle in our home environment, especially through a reverent form of family prayer life.*
- 6. To nurture my own spiritual growth through prayer, scripture and by attending as many Adult Enrichment programs as possible that are offered by the Parish.*
- 7. To maintain a positive attitude when I am participating in all of the above tasks.*



A Parent's Prayer

God our Creator, make me a better parent.

Teach me to listen patiently to what my children have to say
and to answer their questions kindly.

Keep me from interrupting or contradicting them.

Make me as courteous to them as I would have them be to me.

May I ever be mindful that they are children
and not capable of the judgment of adults.

Let me provide them opportunities to help themselves
and make decisions.

Bless me with the patience to grant their reasonable requests
and the courage to deny those privileges I know will do them harm.

Make me fair and just and kind.

Amen.



Prayers and Teachings

The **prayers and teachings** of the Catholic Church are introduced at various grade levels, but need constant reinforcement. Parents are encouraged to assist their children in the learning of these prayers and teachings of our Church. Also, to familiarize their children with the traditions of our faith. The standards that are listed in the following chart come from the Diocese of Joliet's **Faith Formation Curriculum**. All classes begin with a prayer which at various times include traditional prayers, a prayer service, a meditation, recitation of the Rosary or Benediction. Grades 3-8 are provided with the opportunity to go to Reconciliation (Confession) during Advent and Lent.

Grade	Prayers	Teachings of the Church
PreK - Grade 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recite and make the Sign of the Cross ➤ Learn and say the Hail Mary, the Our Father, and the Glory Be. ➤ Pray the Rosary together ➤ Recite the Act of Contrition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Name three persons of the Trinity ➤ Explain the role of each person of the Trinity ➤ Retell Bible stories in their own words ➤ Know that God loves us and we are part of His family. ➤ Identify articles of worship used at Mass.
Grade 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recite the Apostle's Creed from memory ➤ Recite the Nicene Creed with others ➤ Pray the Rosary and other Marian prayers and devotions. ➤ Pray using various forms of prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognize the Creed as a statement of our beliefs ➤ Know the terms and understand the outline of the Creed ➤ God is all present, all knowing and eternal ➤ Tell the story of Jesus' life ➤ Appreciate and share Catholic Traditions ➤ Know the Seven Sacraments ➤ Name the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments ➤ Know the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy
Grade 6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recite the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed ➤ Recite specific prayers to Mary that are part of our Tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explain truths identified in the Apostle's Creed ➤ Know and explain the Marks of the Church-One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic ➤ Read, study and discuss the Old and New Testaments ➤ Locate scriptural references to Mary. ➤ Explain the Tradition of the Church as celebrated in the liturgical seasons. ➤ Identify and explain parts of the Mass ➤ Explain the ritual of each Sacrament

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS

We invite our young people to join with the Divine Savior Parish Community in celebrating the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. Through parent meetings, at-home preparations, classroom study, prayer and liturgical celebrations, our Parish children receive the necessary ingredients for meaningful initiation into their sacramental life. Preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion is offered in the Second Grade. Confirmation preparation is offered in ninth grade. Further details will be sent regarding these programs.

Sacramental Preparation

To be eligible for preparation for FIRST RECONCILIATION (Confession) and FIRST COMMUNION (Eucharist), the student must:

- Be currently enrolled in our Religious Education program or RCIC program and attend classes regularly
- Required to have two years of consecutive instruction in a formal Religious Education program (Religious Education classes or Catholic School attendance)
- Attend the Parish preparation sessions for each of the Sacraments.

Catholic education is an ongoing process. It is, therefore, extremely important that each child attend Religious Education classes during all eight years of grammar school. The practice of enrolling students ONLY during the year of sacramental preparation is strongly discouraged. We are sending our children "mixed messages" when we do this. The curriculum missed during years of absence must be made up by enrolling in a make-up program.

Again, active family participation in the preparation process for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation is of the **utmost importance**. Families will be informed in advance of parent/guardian meetings, evenings of reflection and other activities/events at which participation is expected. Also, of critical importance is the regular family participation in Sunday Mass. It is necessary for children to have a home faith environment that supports prayer, reading Scripture and regular Mass attendance so that they understand the importance of these sacraments.

The Catholic Church requires that your child have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving First Communion. The Religious Education Department has the obligation both to provide this opportunity, and to separate by an appropriate time period, the

preparation and celebration of First Reconciliation and First Communion. At First Communion the children affirm their faith that Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ really present. We invite children to join the community at Jesus' table and to learn the meaning of Eucharist through participation in the Sacrament.

Confirmation

Confirmation is the final Sacrament of Initiation in the Church; it completes and seals Baptism. **Preparation for this Sacrament is more than just attending Confirmation classes and programs.** It is a time when teens deepen their understanding of their participation in our Catholic Faith and the parish community. Preparation for the sacrament should aim at leading a teenager towards a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the God.

To be invited to participate in the formation process for the Sacrament of CONFIRMATION, a young person, ninth grade or older, should have completed a formal Religious Education program (grades one through eight). Attendance at all Parish preparation sessions, masses and ceremonies is required.

Our program offers ways to help teens to more fully participate in the Church and develop a personal spirituality. An important part of Confirmation preparation is service; students are required to perform community, Parish and family service.

R.C.I.C.

Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC)

Christian Initiation is a journey of conversion that transforms children as well as their families. Through sacramental initiation, children become active members of the Body of Christ. This program is for children 1st through 12th grade who wish to be baptized or would like to come into full membership with the Church by receiving all of their other Sacraments.



GENERAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Parish Registration

It is the expectation of Divine Savior Parish that all of the families with children enrolled in the Religious Education Program should be **REGISTERED-CONTRIBUTING** parishioners (see financial letter you received at the time of registration for details).

Registration for Religious Education Classes

Registration is held in the Spring for the coming school year. Forms and pertinent information are mailed to each family.

Please note that for **all new students**, if they were not baptized at Divine Savior, you must provide a copy of each child's Baptismal Certificate at the time of registration. We also need a copy of their previous religious education records and sacramental certificates.

Parental Involvement and Responsibilities

The education of any child begins long before he or she is enrolled in school. At Baptism, parents are entrusted with their child's life that God gave them. It is through the living witness of parents that children first experience the faith. Children will learn the importance of attending Mass, prayer and receiving the Sacraments by the example of their parents. This experience is irreplaceable and lasts throughout life. It is this religious formation that is the foundation of all other forms of religious education a person receives.

Parents are asked to attend all scheduled parent meetings, and other liturgical celebrations, to actively be involved in the sacramental preparation programs (in order for their children to receive the Sacrament), to work with their children on learning their prayers, and to respond to all evaluation forms. The role parents play in their children's education does not end when the children start religious education, it just changes. Living as role models of God's love will always be the most important way parents can educate their children.



Attendance

1. If your child is not able to attend class due to illness or family emergency, please contact the office (630-969-1673,ext.40) at least one hour before classes begin. Please leave child's name, grade, catechist and reason for absence. We will call to verify any absences not reported.
2. Students are to attend classes on a regular basis if there is to be continuity in their Religious Education development. **Parents of any student with excessive absences will be contacted by the Director or Religious Education Coordinator, for a meeting** before the student returns to class.
3. If a student is **late** and arrives after classes have begun, he/she is to **report to the office before going to the classroom, so that the attendance sheet can be corrected.** A note from the parent should accompany the student when they report to the office.
4. In case of inclement weather, please check the Parish Website www.divinesavior.net or listen for closings on WGN Radio for information regarding closing, late start or cancellation of classes.

Arrival/Dismissal

Parents and guardians who are dropping off or picking up children before or after classes are urged to use extreme caution at all times in the parking lot. We request that students NOT ARRIVE EARLIER THAN 15 MINUTES BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN. We additionally ask that CHILDREN ARE TO BE PICKED UP PROMPTLY AFTER CLASS.

For grades 1-8, no student may leave the sidewalk area in front of the Parish Center without being accompanied by an adult. If your child is allowed to walk of or ride a bike home, you must notify the Religious Education Office **in advance and in writing.**

Preschool parents must come into the Parish Center to get their children after each session..

In rare circumstances, we understand that there may be a reason for your child to have an early dismissal from the program. It is required that you send a note with your student on the day of the early dismissal explaining the reason and the time you will pick up your child. Please come to the office at the requested time, and someone on our staff will bring your child to the office so you can sign them out. Students will only be released to their parents or your designated emergency contact person. If someone other than these individuals will be picking up your child, please call the office ahead of time and also include their name on your request note.

Communications

Parents are encouraged to speak with catechists if they have questions or concerns. Catechists are likewise encouraged to call upon parents for assistance. Please be open to communication. It is the best way to prevent small problems from becoming crises. We will have a scheduled Open House early in the year. Parents are welcome to observe a child's class at any time and meet with your child's catechist. However, we ask for security reasons, that you check in at the office prior to going to the classroom.



Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in a manner suitable for a Religious Education program. Therefore, clothing that has satanic or cult symbols, gang symbols, inappropriate groups or inappropriate language is not to be worn to classes.

The following dress items and styles are prohibited

- ✓ Headgear worn in the building (hats, scarves, bandanas, visors, etc.) by students and/or adults.
- ✓ Excessively short dresses/skirts and shorts are not to be worn. Pants and jeans worn below the waist or in an inappropriate manner.
- ✓ Low neckline shirts or blouses, see-through clothing, strapless tops, tank tops, mesh shirts, or bare mid-sections are not permitted.
- ✓ Shoes must be worn at all times.
- ✓ Any form of dress determined to disrupt the educational process, offensive in nature, or a possible safety hazard will not be tolerated.
- ✓ If you are not sure about an item of clothing, please contact the office before your child wears it.

Student Evaluation Process

The purpose of the student evaluation process is to offer each family some feedback as to what is being observed in Religious Education classes gatherings. This evaluation allows a Catechist to let families know what is happening in the area of the Parish program, and how their child is responding to those experiences. This evaluation is not grading “faith” – the teacher isn’t determining whether or the child is religious or not. The evaluation reflects what the Catechist is observing. Evaluations will be sent to parents mid year.

Disruptive Behavior

Unacceptable behavior will initially be handled by the Catechist. If the behavior problem continues, the student will be sent to the Coordinator's office. In the event the student is sent to the office, parents will be contacted for a meeting with the Coordinator. Serious misconduct will result in a parent conference with the Director and the Coordinator, which must take place before the student is allowed to return to class.

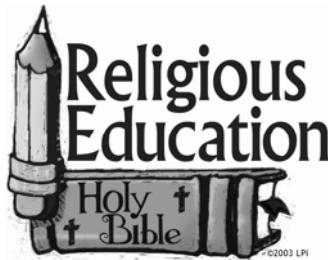
Classroom Rules and Behavior

- no gum or candy
- no foul or inappropriate language
- no verbal or physical abuse
- no pushing, touching, or shoving of others
- no pressing on or leaning on the walls
- no sitting on the tables or stacked chairs
- no disrespect for others' property
- no screaming or shouting
- no running anywhere in the building
- no going to the restroom without Catechist's permission
- students are to remain quietly seated if the Catechist must leave the room.
- NO CELL PHONES, pagers, electronic games, Ipods or other electronic devices. All items will be removed from the classroom and can be picked up in the office at the end of class.



Student Responsibilities

1. We will respect God and ourselves.
2. We will respect everyone's right to learn.
3. We will be on time, so we can end on time.
4. We will respect people, their property and their ideas.



Learning Disabilities & Children with Special Needs

If a child has any learning disability, hyperactivity, physical handicap such as deafness or other special needs, please come in and confidentially inform us BEFORE THE START OF CLASSES. We ask that you provide us this information in writing so that we have a reference guide. It is important that we be informed so that we can provide the best assistance to teach your child. It would also be beneficial to your child if you contacted your child's Catechist. We will provide you with contact information. Physical and learning disabilities will be handled on an individual basis in accord with the Diocese of Joliet policies. Please completely fill out a medical form with the appropriate information to have available in the Religious Education Office.

Medications

All prescription and non-prescription medication to be distributed during class time must be given to a responsible adult.

Protecting God's Children

Divine Savior Parish cares about our children. As part of its ongoing mission, the Diocese of Joliet is requiring that all Parish staff members and volunteers, who work with children, to participate in a workshop called "Protecting God's Children." It is designed to provide the facts about child abuse and hopefully motivate people to action in preventing abuse. In addition to participating in the "Protecting God's Children" workshop, all volunteers are required to complete a standard application that includes a release of information to conduct background checks. Volunteers are required to read and operate by the "Standards of Behavior for Those Working with Minors."

Safe Environment

All Catholic schools and parish religious education programs in the Diocese of Joliet must offer instruction for children, grades K-12, and their parents to prevent child sexual abuse. It is very important for you as parents to understand what we are doing, why we are doing it, and to know that they can choose to send their child for safe environment instruction or not. Detailed information will be sent at a latter date regarding the time of this special program. You have, by state school code, and by the preference of the US Catholic Bishops, the right to exempt your children from any instruction having to do with sexuality. It is your right to provide such instruction themselves. Parents will be sent home a resources to assist them — *Parents Guide: Understanding and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse* will be provided with the student schedules. Signs of abuse will be reported to the proper authorities.

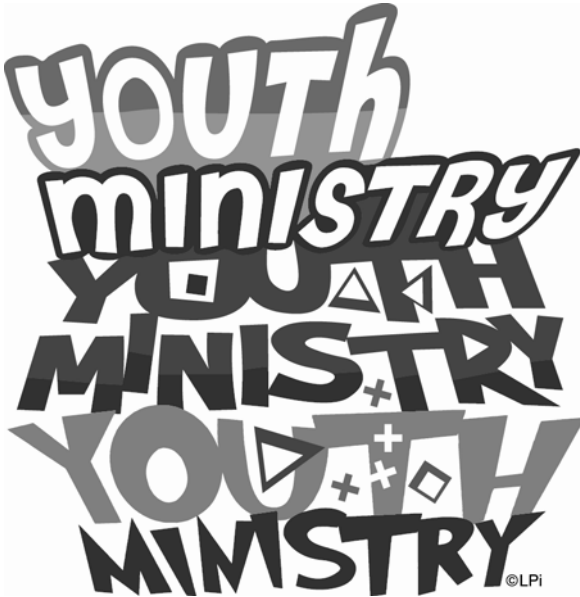
Youth Ministry Program



The Youth Ministry Program seeks to minister to teens of Divine Savior Parish by helping them to grow into healthy adolescents. It also seeks to develop the leadership and ministerial abilities of our teens. Teens can participate in Parish life through being a Lector, a Eucharistic Minister, an Altar Server, a Choir Member, Usher or participant in various special liturgical celebrations. Another important component of the program is the involvement in community service and outreach programs.

Youth Ministry Events

Our Youth Group program is for eighth grade through senior year in high school and focuses on the spiritual, personal and social needs of today's youth. There are many different facets to our Youth Program, including service projects and fund raisers for charity.



Code of Behavior

The following *Code of Behavior* applies to all Youth Ministry Programs. You are representing Youth Ministry in our Parish during all events and programs, and we expect that you will represent us and your peers well. We expect that you will display mature and responsible behavior, which for many years has been the trademark of Divine Savior's Youth Ministry.

Expectations at all Youth Ministry Programs:

1. All participants are expected to arrive on time.
2. All participants are expected to demonstrate common courtesy and respect at all times based on Gospel Values.
3. Socializing should always be done in public areas.
4. Dress should reflect the value of modesty. Clothing that has satanic, gang, cult, and/or inappropriate symbols or words is not to be worn to the event.
5. Inappropriate language/behavior will not be tolerated.
6. The possession or consumption of any alcoholic beverage and/or possession/use of any illegal drug is not permitted. The Parish will contact the proper civil and legal authorities if drugs or alcohol are discovered.
7. Smoking is not permitted.
8. If the participant is under the age of 18, prescription drugs need to be given to an adult leader for storage and distribution.
9. Infraction of these rules can mean immediate dismissal with no refund. Participants will be referred to local authorities as well.

Any time there is an event sponsored by Youth Ministry , students and parents will be required to complete and return a General Permission/ Medical Permission Form that will be kept on file in order for the teen to participate in the event.

The Divine Savior Staff

Father Robert E. Pietras, Pastor—*FrBob@divinesavior.net*

Religious Education Staff

Religious Education Office—Parish Center 6700 Main Street

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Parish web site—www.divinesavior.net

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God made us a family
We need one another
We love one another
We forgive one another
We work together
We play together
We worship together
Together we use God's word
Together we grow in Christ
Together we love all men
Together we serve our God
Together we hope for Heaven
These are our hopes and ideals
Help us to attain them, O God,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.