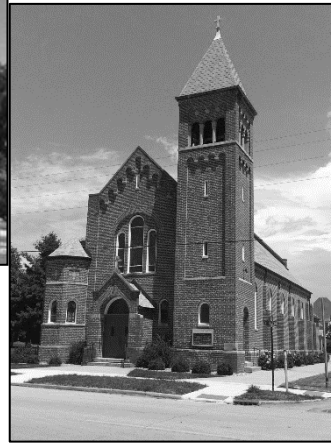


**Roman Catholic Churches of  
St. Philomena & St. Michael  
(217) 762-2566**

**Msgr. Michael Bliss, Pastor**



**Religious Education Handbook  
2024 – 2025**

**Religious Education Coordinator  
Kari Higgins (217) 412-4568**

Dear Parents, Teachers and Students,

Welcome to a new CCD year! I am very excited to begin another year rooted in faith, prayer, and learning. As the Coordinator of Religious Education, it is my job to work closely with our Pastor, Msgr. Mike, to maintain a great quality of education and faith throughout the year. I work with the teachers to help them understand how to best fill their role as a volunteer in our parish and to make sure that all students have the resources they need to learn their faith. This includes ordering our curriculum, supplies, choosing a VBS program, and leading the classes in practices for Mass. My goal is for your children to know their faith better.

The Diocese of Peoria, led by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, gives us some important things to think about. Parents are the first teachers of their children. Give them your faith, pray, bring them to Mass, and find ways to deepen your faith together. Teachers share their knowledge and faith by challenging students to open their eyes to a new aspect of their faith. Students are encouraged to focus each week on learning something new. If we each strive to make true knowledge our goal we will grow in leaps and bounds.

I look forward to what God has in store for us this year. Please pray with me for our teachers and students that they will be inspired by God. Pray also for our parents that God will give them the knowledge they need to impart even more wisdom at home! Thank you for your prayers and I assure you that you have mine!

Kari Higgins, Religious Education Coordinator

### **Religious Education Committee**

The Religious Education Committee is a group of four to six volunteers who aid the Director of Religious Education. The committee meets throughout the year to discuss the program and help with various events such as the First Reconciliation brunch. This group is also encouraged to be a sub for teachers who may have to miss a class.

## **Religious Education General Policies**

### **Welcome**

Welcome to St. Philomena/St. Michael's Religious Education Program! We applaud your sincere desire to pass on the faith to your children and we are happy to join you as partners in that effort. This little handbook is designed to convey basic information regarding our policies and procedures. To comply with the policy of the Diocese of Peoria, parents are asked to read the handbook. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the parish office.

### **Admission Policy**

St. Philomena/St. Michael's Religious Education Program does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, sex, national origin or handicap conditions.

### **Registration**

Each child must be formally registered, each year, prior to participating in the Religious Education Program. Registration forms are available from the parish office. Fees are \$50 per child and \$25 for each additional child. For anyone with a financial need, scholarships may be available – see **Scholarships** in this booklet. Fees are due at the time of registration.

### **Scholarships**

You may apply for a Scholarship through the parish office. Scholarships are limited, so apply early. The Pastor will make the final decisions on all scholarships awarded.

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Attendance at all classes is expected, although we realize that sometimes conflicts will arise. We realize how difficult it is these days to juggle the family schedule, and we thank you for making an effort to ensure that

your child arrives promptly. Latecomers can be disruptive to the class. Religious Education Coordinator will collect attendance sheets from classroom teachers each week. Class times are as follows:

Pre-K & Kindergarten, Sundays, 10:00am – Students will be taken to class during the Liturgy of the Word and returned after the homily.

Grades 1 – 5, Wednesdays, 6:15pm – 7:15pm

### **Textbooks and Supplies**

All textbooks, pencils, crayons, paper, scissors, glue sticks, and any additional materials will be provided by the parish. Occasionally, parents may be asked to contribute something for a special project.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> Grades (Wednesday evening) will be canceled whenever the Piatt County Schools are closed or dismissed early for snow or ice.

### **Permission Slips**

Permission slips may be necessary for a student to participate in some activities. Only adult drivers are allowed to transport students to and from an activity sponsored by St. Philomena/St. Michael.

### **Discipline**

Students are expected to follow the rules developed by the Pastor and the catechists at the beginning of the year. Courtesy, cooperation, and respect are always expected. Parents will be notified if a student behaves in such a way that it continually disrupts the class.

### **Family Involvement**

Our Religious Education Program offers many opportunities for parents and interested adults to become involved and to share their gifts and talents. As parents, it is important for your children to know that you care about their faith development as well as your own. Please take the time to ask your children about their classes and to review any material sent home. Time set aside to pray and read Scripture as a family is also essential to the faith life of your child. The most important part of good Religious Education for your child is Mass attendance weekly.

### **Volunteers**

We are very grateful to our catechists, assistants, and all who so generously give of their time and talents to minister to the children and youth of our parish. In addition to their weekly commitment, they spend many hours preparing for their classes. We ask you to support them, pray for them and express your appreciation whenever possible. We invite you to join our team of volunteers!

### **Liability Waiver/Policy for all Churches & Schools in the Diocese of Peoria, Illinois**

As parent and/or legal guardian, I remain legally responsible for any personal actions taken by my child. I understand the risks that the Religious Education Program may present to my child, including, but not limited to, a serious personal injury or death. In consideration of my child being allowed to participate in the Religious Education Program, I hereby release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless, the Diocese of Peoria, the parish, teachers, chaperones, volunteers, or representatives associated with the Religious Education Program, and their employees and agents, from any liability, except by negligence, for injuries, damages, medical expenses, or any other loss to my child, family, or me (including attorney's fees) arising from or related to my child's participation in the Religious Education Program.

### **Religious Education Curriculum (Themes & Prayers)**

The curriculum used for most ages is the Christ Our Life Series by Loyola Press. The following is an overview of the themes and prayers covered.

#### Pre-School

We use the Children's Bulletin website for pre-school. The activities in it relate specifically to the readings for each Sunday. It familiarizes the children with Scripture, while helping with cognitive development.

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross

#### Kindergarten

We use the Children's Bulletin website for pre-school. The activities in it relate specifically to the readings for each Sunday. It familiarizes the children with Scripture, while helping with cognitive development.

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

Theme: God is Good

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will be using the Ascension Press Curriculum this year. The series is split into two parts beginning with Renewed: Your Journey to First Reconciliation

The second part is Received: Your Journey to First Communion

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer, Act of Contrition, The Apostles' Creed, Responses at Mass/Genuflection, Order/Meaning of the Mass

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Theme: We Believe

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer, Act of Contrition, The Apostles' Creed, Responses at Mass/Genuflection, Order/Meaning of the Mass, Meal Prayers (Before/After)

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Theme: God Guides Us

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer, Act of Contrition, The Apostles' Creed, Responses at Mass/Genuflection, Order/Meaning of the Mass, Meal Prayers (Before/After), Act of Faith, Hope and Love

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Theme: We Worship

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer, Act of Contrition, The Apostles' Creed, Responses at Mass/Genuflection, Order/Meaning of the Mass, Meal Prayers (Before/After), Act of Faith, Hope and Love, Morning Offering, Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Since Confirmation is a two-year process, we will still be using the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum every other year.

Theme: God Calls a People

Formal Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be, Guardian Angel Prayer, Act of Contrition, The Apostles' Creed, Responses at Mass/Genuflection, Order/Meaning of the Mass, Meal Prayers (Before/After), Act of Faith, Hope and Love, Morning Offering, Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary, Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary, Prayer for the Faithful Departed, Angelus, Regina Caeli, Hail, Holy Queen

### **GUIDELINES FOR RECONCILIATION**

1. The second-grade child shall be provided with appropriate catechesis for the Sacrament of Reconciliation distinct from catechesis for the reception of First Communion. Each sacrament is a special encounter with Christ. This simple catechesis should have full parental involvement.
2. The child's individual readiness must be respected as a determining factor in the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Readiness factors include, but are not limited to:
  - a. The child's ability to distinguish between accidental and deliberate wrong.
  - b. The child's awareness of the need for forgiveness and the child's trust in Jesus' forgiving love.
  - c. The child's ability to express wrong-doing and sorrow in his or her own words.
  - d. Free desire of the child to receive the sacrament.
  - e. The child's simple understanding that the priest and the church have a special role in bringing us God's forgiveness.
3. The Sacrament of Reconciliation should normally be celebrated prior to the reception of First Communion.
4. The celebration of Reconciliation should be separated from First Communion by a period of at least two months.

### **GUIDELINES FOR FIRST COMMUNION**

1. Children must be instructed in the Mass including the options and manner of receiving the Eucharist. These options are under one or both species; and the manner may be in the hand or on the tongue.
2. Children are to continue in the Religious Education process after the reception of First Communion and attend weekly Mass.
3. The individual readiness of the child must be respected as a determining factor in the reception of the sacrament of First Communion. Readiness factors include, but are not limited to:
  - a. The child has sufficient knowledge to understand the mystery of Christ according to his/her capacity.
  - b. The child is able to distinguish the Body and Blood of Christ from ordinary food.
  - c. The child has a desire to receive the Lord Jesus reverently in Holy Communion with faith and devotion.

## Dates Subject to Change

**Grades 4-6 CCD Classes are held on Wednesdays from 6:15pm to 7:15pm.  
Pre-K and Kindergarten Class is held on Sundays at 10:00am; Students will be returned  
to parents during Mass after the homily.**

### August

25 ALL CCD Parents Meeting 6:30pm in the  
Sanctuary

### September

4 First Grades 1-5 CCD Classes 6:15pm-7:15pm  
8 First PreK & Kindergarten CCD Class during  
10:00am Mass  
11 CCD Classes  
15 Catechetical Sunday 10:00am Mass  
Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
18 CCD Classes  
22 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
25 CCD Classes  
29 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class

### October

2 CCD Classes  
Religious Ed Committee Meeting 7:30  
6 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
9 CCD Classes (Rosary)  
13 No Pre-K and Kindergarten Class (4-Day  
Weekend)  
16 CCD Classes (Human Dignity)  
20 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
23 CCD Classes  
27 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
30 CCD Classes (All Saints Parade)

### November

3 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
6 CCD Classes  
10 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
13 CCD Classes  
17 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Mass 10:00am  
Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
20 CCD Classes  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Parent Meeting for First  
Reconciliation 6:20pm  
24 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Thanksgiving Break)  
27 No CCD (Thanksgiving Break)

### December

1 No CCD (Thanksgiving Break)  
4 CCD Classes  
8 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
11 CCD Classes  
15 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class

18 CCD Class  
22 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Christmas Break)  
25 No CCD Classes (Christmas Break)  
29 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Christmas Break)

### January

1 No CCD Classes (Christmas Break)  
5 No PreK and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Christmas Break)  
8 CCD Classes  
Religious Ed Committee Meeting 7:30pm  
11 First Reconciliation and Brunch 9:00am  
12 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
15 CCD Classes  
19 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
22 CCD Classes  
26 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Mass 10:00am  
Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
29 CCD Classes

### February

2 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
5 CCD Classes  
9 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
12 CCD Classes  
16 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(3-Day Weekend)  
19 CCD Classes  
23 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Student Mass 10:00am  
Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
26 CCD Classes

### March

2 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
5 No CCD Classes (Ash Wednesday)  
9 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class

### March (Continued)

12 CCD Classes (5th Grade Confession)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Parent Meeting for First Holy  
Communion 6:20pm  
16 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Spring Break)  
19 No CCD Classes (Spring Break)  
23 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Spring Break)

- 26 CCD Classes (4<sup>th</sup> Grades Confession)
- 30 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class

April

- 2 CCD Classes (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Confession)
- 6 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class
- 9 CCD Classes (2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Confession)
- 13 Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class
- 16 CCD Classes
- 20 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Easter Sunday)
- 23 CCD Classes  
First Communion Pictures
- 27 No Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class  
(Pancake Breakfast)
- 30 Last CCD Classes  
First Communion Practice until 7:30pm

May

- 3 First Holy Communion 4:30pm Mass
- 4 Last Pre-K and Kindergarten CCD Class

Vacation Bible School to be Announced

