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ST. AGNES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/YOUTH MINISTRY FAMILY HANDBOOK

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1-2

Welcome to our 2020-2021 Religious Education and Youth Ministry Program!

St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry – Mission Statement

“Ensure quality Catholic education and experiential formation in Christ Jesus”

St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Program – Vision Statement

“Our vision is to assist the youth and families entrusted to us to develop an ongoing personal relationship with Jesus through positive, foundational and nurturing experiences.

St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Program – Goals (in conjunction with the USCCB goals)

1. To reclaim our inheritance of God’s design as beloved, irreplaceable, irrepeatable children of God
2. To embolden young people to live as intentional disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today
3. To mentor young people towards responsible participation in the life, mission and work of St. Agnes Parish and in the larger Church community
4. To nurture the personal and spiritual growth of each young person

We are excited to be helping your child/ren learn more about their Catholic Christian faith. This program will provide knowledge and guidance with their sacramental preparation and spiritual growth.

This handbook will provide your family with pertinent information for the St. Agnes Religious Education and Youth Ministry Program. As a family, please take time to read it so you will know and understand the guidelines and policies.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE FAMILY GROWING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY IN GOD'S LOVE

Parents and family are the primary religious influence on their children. A child's attitude toward Mass, the sacraments, prayer, service to others and a Catholic Christian lifestyle grows out of a parent's example and attitude. The following are ways to nurture your child's religious education and faith development.

- Actively participate with your child/ren in weekly worship at Mass and practice your faith at home.
- Participate with your child/ren in parish events, the holiday Masses and Ash Wednesday Mass and the Advent and Lent reconciliation services.
- Show interest. Encourage your child/ren to do more than attend classes. Encourage them to actively participate. When they come home from class each week, ask them what they learned, what they thought and how they felt about the session.
- Help them to understand and learn the prayers required for their grade level. Make prayer important in your house. Thank God for your blessings and for your struggles. Eat meals regularly with your family; this is a great time to catch up on each other's lives.
- Show family members that you love them. Cultivate an attitude of forgiveness.
- Please feel free to give us a call or stop by if you need some help.

May God bless you and your family. Please know that you are always in our prayers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/YOUTH MINISTRY POLICIES

REGISTRATION & TUITION

**St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color or national or ethnic origin in administration of its policies, supplementary programs or any other program-based function.

** No child shall be denied a Catholic Christian education based solely on the inability to pay tuition & sacrament fees. Payment plans and tuition assistance are available. Please contact the Religious Education/Youth Ministry office for more information at 920-494-6450.

****Students MUST be registered in the Religious Education/Youth Ministry program prior to the start of the fall semester. Tuition (full or partial) is due PRIOR to the first class in fall unless other arrangements have been made. STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ATTEND CLASSES UNTIL THEY ARE REGISTERED.**

Fees for the 2020-2021 St. Agnes Religious Education / Youth Ministry Program are as follows:

In Parish Fees:

One Student - \$110.00 (after 6/30/20 \$135.00) Two students - \$185.00 (after 6/30/20 \$210.00)

Three or more students - \$255.00 (after 6/30/20 \$280.00)

Out of Parish Fees:

One Student - \$220.00 (after 6/30/20 \$245.00) Two students - \$370.00 (after 6/30/20 \$395.00)

Three or more students - \$510.00 (after 6/30/20 \$535.00)

(fees in parentheses apply ONLY if you register after 6/30/20)

Additional Fees:

*****Students preparing for 1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist will be charged an additional \$60.00 sacrament fee (\$120 for out of parish families)*****

*****Confirmation students will be charged an additional \$40.00 sacrament fee (\$80 for out of parish families)*****

Homeschooling fees:

Homeschooled students will be charged \$80/student (in parish) or \$160/student (out of parish). Fees go up to \$105/student (in parish) and \$185/student (out of parish) after 6/30/2020.

*****PLEASE NOTE: All homeschooled students will be required to meet with the Coordinator of Religious Education at St. Agnes at least twice during the 2020-2021 school year to assess student accountability and appropriate academic progression.***

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

All youth in grades K – 11 are **EXPECTED TO PARTICIPATE** in Religious Education classes and related activities, and with their parents, attend a variety of parish events, Holy Day Masses, Ash Wednesday Mass and the Advent and Lent reconciliation services. The preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation must be met by regular participation in the parish program and attendance at Mass. Regular attendance enhances learning and quality group participation as well as rewarding the catechist's time and preparation.

Student's **FRIENDS/VISITORS** are **NOT** permitted to attend classroom sessions without prior approval from the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff.

ABSENTEEISM & PUNCTUALITY

Students are required to attend all classes. Catechists will take attendance at the beginning of every class.

If a student is not present at class, and said student is not previously excused, then a member of the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff, or program volunteer, will contact the student's family.

In case of prolonged absence from class, the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff will set up a meeting with the parents to discuss the situation. Parish programs are expected by the Diocesan Department of Education to meet a minimum of required class hours (30-35 hours/year) for all students.

Students are expected to participate in the religious education/youth ministry program throughout their primary and secondary educational years.

**** IF YOUR CHILD/REN CANNOT ATTEND CLASS FOR ANY REASON, PLEASE CONTACT THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/YOUTH MINISTRY OFFICE (920-494-6450).**

MEETING PLACE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SESSIONS

GRADES K – 8, 5:45 – 7:00P.M. Religious Education classes, unless otherwise notified, will meet at the Holy Family School building. Registered families will receive a schedule of session dates. These dates can also be found on the St. Agnes RE/YM web site at www.stagnesreym.com.

GRADES 9 – 11, 7:15 – 8:30P.M. Religious Education classes, including Confirmation classes, unless otherwise notified, will meet at the Holy Family School building. Registered families will receive a schedule of session dates. These dates can also be found on the St. Agnes RE/YM web site at www.stagnesreym.com.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS CANCELATION

It is the policy of St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry to cancel classes when the public schools cancel classes or dismiss early due to dangerous weather conditions. (All other cancellations will be solely at the discretion of the RE/YM Office pending circumstances.)

In case of class cancellation due to inclement weather, St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff will notify the catechists of class cancellation. Once the catechist is notified of the class cancellation, the catechist will notify the students in his or her class. Emails will also be sent to all families from the Coordinator of Religious Education.

In addition to notifying the catechists, the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff will notify the following television stations: WBAY, WFRV, WGBA, WLUK.

PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF YOUR CHILDREN ON EVENINGS WHEN CLASS IS CANCELLED! The doors of Holy Family School will be locked! There will be a sign on the doors notifying that classes have been cancelled.

Use your own discretion as well. If you feel road conditions are too bad for you to drive from your location, please notify the RE/YM office at 920-494-6450 that your child/ren will not be attending class.

EXPECTATIONS

1. Students are to be in the classroom seated and ready to participate when class begins.
2. Students are to respect all catechists, each other and church property.
3. Students are to follow the classroom catechist's directions.
4. Students are not allowed to bring in gum, candy or soda into the building without the permission from the catechist.
5. Students are not allowed to use cell phones, smart phones, iPods, iPads or any other electronic equipment in class

DISCIPLINE

We believe all students are entitled to religious education. All students will be expected to conduct themselves in a CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN manner, respecting all catechists and staff as well as fellow students. If your student is disruptive in the classroom and interferes with the rights of the other students, the following four-step process will be implemented.

1st step: Student will receive a verbal warning from the catechist and told to stop the behavior. The catechist will also warn the student that if the behavior persists that his or her parents will be notified.

2nd step: If the behavior continues, the catechist will once again tell the student to cease the inappropriate behavior. The catechist will then inform the Coordinator of Religious Education of the situation which occurred. The staff will then contact the parents of

the student to inform them of the behavior and document the situation in the student's file.

3rd step: If incorrect behavior continues, the catechist will ask the hall monitor to bring the student to the RE/YM Office. Then parents will be notified by the student that he/she has been excused from class and parents need to come and pick him/her up. Parents and students will then meet with Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss the behavior and what measures will be taken for the behavior to cease.

4thstep: The student will be excused from the class and an alternative option for continuing religious education will be explored.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

School and parish property damaged or destroyed will be restored or repaired by the parents and students responsible for the damage.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Emergency contact information must be provided to the Religious Education/Youth Ministry office for every registered student. There is a place on the registration form for this information.

In case of fire or tornado, each class will follow the emergency procedures listed in the classroom.

The St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff reserve the right to perform a fire or tornado drill at any point during the school year.

SECURITY POLICY

For the safety of students, catechists and staff, a volunteer or staff member will monitor the outside doors from 5:45-7:00 P.M. the night of every class.

Parents are encouraged to visit their child/ren's classroom at any time.

If a parent is visiting or helping out in their child's class, the parent is strongly encouraged to call ahead and inform the St. Agnes Religious Education and Youth Ministry Staff. Please sign in and out with the RE/YM Secretary in the RE/YM Office, and a guest pass will be issued to the parent who is in the classroom.

All doors, including Door #6 (which leads to cafeteria at Holy Family School) will be locked on Wednesday nights. Door 6 will be monitored by a volunteer. Please ring the bell to be admitted.

In the event of an unauthorized person entering the building, catechists and hall monitors will be notified of the situation and will respond appropriately to keep the students safe.

PERSONAL LEARNING – HEALTH CONCERNS

Information about learning, health or other problems should be communicated in person to the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff or written on the student's family registration form. This will allow the student, St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff and the catechist to develop a healthier relationship and provide protection against harmful reactions in class. We want to minister to each child, as his/her individual needs dictate.

MEDICATION

The St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff does not supervise the taking of medication nor do we administer it except in extraordinary circumstances. In order for us to administer any prescription drug we must have a written doctor's order with the student's name, dosage, date and instructions. This must also be accompanied by a parent/legal guardian's written permission.

COMMUNICATIONS & PROGRESS REPORTS

Parent letters and notices are sent home in one or more of the following ways: with students, through the mail, weekly parish bulletin, the parish web site and/or email. Please check these sources each week to keep informed. Conferences with the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Staff can be scheduled at any time. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Office at 920-494-6450.

FIELD TRIPS – OUTSIDE PARISH GROUNDS ACTIVITIES

Parents must submit the permission slip provided by the St. Agnes Religious Education/Youth Ministry Office through the Diocese of Green Bay which is attached to the back of this handbook. Parents or the legal guardian must sign the form. **NO TELEPHONE CALLS OR HANDWRITTEN SLIPS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMS

The Diocese of Green Bay requires religious education programs to devote the equivalent of 1 class to the topic of Safe Environment. The purpose is to help the children realize that each person deserves to be loved and cared for and can help themselves stay safe, to recognize experiences of good and bad human relationships and friendships and to differentiate between safe, unsafe and unwanted touches. Many of the benchmarks are met in chapters in the textbooks used in the classes.

ALCOHOL/DRUGS/TOBACCO

The possession, sale or use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or any other controlled substances on the parish grounds, property or while participating in a parish sponsored event is strictly forbidden. Parents and or guardians will be notified and violations will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

FIREARMS, WEAPONS, DANGEROUS OBJECTS

Any object brought to the religious education programs that would endanger the safety of any or all participants is prohibited and the offender is subject to discipline and expulsion procedures. Parents and or guardians will be notified and violations will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND YOUTH MINISTRY FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES

All persons with special needs and/or disabilities have the right to religious education, youth ministry and sacramental preparation. If our parish cannot offer an appropriate placement; we will seek to join with other parishes to create acceptable options.

ASSESSMENT OF CATECHESIS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Bishop Ricken has required that all Religious Education programs in the diocese conduct the Assessment of Catechesis/Religion (NCEA/ACRE) test annually with students in grades 5, 8 and 10/11. This will take place in March 2020. The purpose is to evaluate the effectiveness of a religion program. This is a mandatory portion of the religious education/youth ministry program.

CURRICULUM

Grades K-8 will use the “*Christ Our Life*” series by Loyola Press. Using this series brings us into compliance with Bishop David Ricken’s directive from the Green Bay Diocese asking all Catholic day schools and parish faith formation programs to use one of five series he selected.

At the heart of the “*Christ Our Life*” series is a harmonious integration of Scripture, tradition and action. In the spiral curriculum, Scripture is centered between the four fundamental themes of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer. In addition, Catholic social teachings are woven into each chapter to encourage active participation in the faith. Other features of the student books include:

- **Seasonal Sessions** – includes 13 lessons on celebrating the Mass & liturgical seasons
- **What Catholics Should Know** – includes common prayers, “how-to” guides on the Mass and other practices of our faith.
- **Saints and Feast Days** – includes saints and feast days celebrated from Sept. – May.
- **New Evangelization** – empowers adults to grow in their faith as they share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the children in their sphere of influence

The **KINDERGARTEN** curriculum entitled *God Loves Us* recognizes that young children have a readiness to learn about God. The program integrates Scripture and doctrine in each lesson to help the children relate the richness of our Catholic faith to their everyday lives.

GRADE ONE curriculum entitled *God is Good* is designed to provide a simple overview of the mysteries of our faith. Through learning of the goodness of God, and the love of Jesus, the children respond to God in friendship and prayer.

GRADE TWO curriculum entitled *God Cares for Us* is designed to prepare the students for their first celebration of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

- For sacramental preparation (completed at home with parents), students will use *Encounter with Christ* through Our Sunday Visitor for both 1st Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist.

GRADE THREE curriculum entitled *We Believe* presents the main truths Catholics believe and express in the Apostles’ Creed.

GRADE FOUR curriculum entitled *God Guides Us* focuses on the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes as guides for living.

GRADE FIVE curriculum entitled *We Worship* focuses on the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, as the center of Christian life.

GRADE SIX curriculum entitled *God Calls a People* is devoted to the study of God's saving love as it is revealed in Sacred Scripture, particularly the Old Testament. It is designed to help the students increase their knowledge of salvation history so that they may respond to God with ever-deepening love and gratitude.

GRADE SEVEN curriculum entitled *Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life* is devoted to the study of God's saving love as it is revealed through his Son, Jesus. It is designed to help young adolescents grow in their knowledge of Jesus, that they may love him more ardently and serve him more generously.

GRADE EIGHT curriculum entitled *The Church Then and Now* is devoted to the study of God's faithful love as it is revealed in the Church founded by Jesus Christ. It is designed to help young teens grow in their knowledge and love of the Church.

HIGH SCHOOL will be using the book *Catholic Youth Handbook* published by St. Mary's Press. It is a single comprehensive volume that presents the fundamental beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith. High school students will also participate in *Altaration* DVD series along with small group discussion as well as opportunities to hear live speakers and live their faith through service.

High School Content has been outlined by the Diocese of Green Bay as follows:

- The Revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture (recommended freshman year)
- Who is Jesus Christ? (recommended freshman year)
- The Mission of Jesus Christ (recommended sophomore year)
- Jesus Christ's Mission Continues in the Church (recommended sophomore year)
- Sacraments as Privileged Encounters with Jesus Christ (recommended junior year)
- Life in Jesus Christ (recommended junior year)

GRADE 11 will be preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation. The youth will use the *Decision Point* series through Dynamic Catholic. The classroom sessions will focus on the Sacrament of Confirmation not as a "graduation" from Religious Education, but as a beginning of their new life as fully initiated Disciples of Christ. This series seeks to deepen the faith life within the youth through an awareness of the special strength they receive in Confirmation to live the Christian life and to witness to Christ.

All MIDDLE SCHOOL and HIGH SCHOOL students are required to participate in 10 hours of service as part of our calling to live our faith as disciples of Christ. They must also participate in a retreat experience so they have the opportunity to have a personal encounter with Christ. Both of these elements are crucial to the total RE/YM experience and a required component of the Confirmation process.

In addition, the students will be introduced to Christopher West's *Theology of the Body for Teens*.

"Theology of the Body for Teens is a dynamic faith formation program for teens and pre-teens in Catholic schools, parish youth ministries, Religious Education, Confirmation, and homeschool settings. Using a great mix of stories, real-life examples, activities,

prayers, and relevant references to the culture, it goes beyond traditional chastity programs by connecting the two hottest topics on the planet--God and sex.

With Blessed Pope John Paul II's compelling vision for love and life, and a language they understand, *Theology of the Body for Teens* answers the questions teens and pre-teens have about their own bodies, issues on sexual morality, and how they are uniquely created for greatness.

The High School Edition has been granted the Imprimatur by Justin Cardinal Rigali, of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Middle School Edition has been granted the Imprimatur by Archbishop Gregory Aymond, of the Archdiocese of New Orleans.”

From <http://thetheologyofthebody.com/book-resources/study-information/1853/teens-about-imprimatur>