

Divine Word Catholic Church

Parish School of Religion



Handbook for Families

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome to Divine Word's Youth Faith Formation Program. We look forward to working closely with you to help provide a Christ-filled school year for all PSR students of the parish. Please know that as parents you are invaluable to this program. We recognize that you are the first teacher of your children and that no one knows them better or loves them more than you do. It is our goal therefore, to work with you to support their faith formation.

Our PSR program will provide a balance of religious instruction (message) with the experiences of Catholic community, service and worship throughout the year. The spirit of this program is to empower our children to live out their baptismal call and to give witness to the Gospel by fostering their love for Jesus Christ.

We look forward to working with you and your children. Please know that the PSR team will continue to offer prayer and guidance as we journey together.

Sincerely in Christ,

Gina

Gina Rensi, Director of Religious Education

Youth Faith Formation

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is used in our faith formation process with the children in preschool. Kindergarten program uses the We Believe Program. *We Believe with Project Disciple* is a catechetical program parishes that focuses on students, catechists, families, and the Church community. Currently, an integrated traditional approach is used for grades 1 through 8 that include the use of a workbook. The series of books we use have many resources for families online. Check it out!

<http://www.blestarewe.com/>

. Registration Procedures

To participate in our programs, families must be registered members of Divine Word parish or receive permission from the pastor of Divine Word or their home parish. PSR registration takes place annually.

Please note, no family will be turned away because of an inability to pay fees. In the event of financial difficulty, please contact Gina Rensi, Director of Religious Education at 440 - 256 - 1412.

Tuition for 2018 - 2019

1 Child \$75
2 Children 130.00
3 Children 170.00
4 or more Children 190.00

Attendance Policy

Regular class attendance is crucial to a child's religious education. A record of attendance will be on file during your child's enrollment. Frequent absences make it difficult for children to master the material designated for that grade level. If a student has chronic absences without notification by the parent, a call will be made to follow-up with the family.

If your child will be absent, the parent must call Gina Rensi at 440-256-1412 prior to class.

Class Cancellation

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, our program will follow the Kirtland public schools for a decision on closing due to inclement weather. If Kirtland School is closed on a given Tuesday or Wednesday, then PSR is also cancelled, even if the weather improves during the day. We will also be using a confidential texting service. On Sundays, you will only receive a text from our PSR Parent Texting service unless otherwise requested. Mass at 8:30am and 11:00am are never cancelled. Please use your best judgment regarding the safety of your family. For more information on the Parent Texting Service, please see a catechist or contact Gina Rensi at 440-256-1412

Emergency Information

Emergency medical information is to be completed for each child registered in the program. This will enable us to contact you in the event of an emergency.

Illness

If your child is ill and unable to attend PSR please call the parish office to report your child's absence (256-1412,). Please note that no medications are administered during the PSR program.

Early Dismissal

When a child must leave school during PSR hours, a note should be sent to the catechist stating the time that he or she must leave. The parent/guardian must come to the classroom to pick up the child.

Discipline Policy

All students will be treated with dignity and respect. We rely on your continued support in discussing the PSR behavior policy with your child(ren). In order to provide a safe environment and effective program, some rules for behavior are necessary. Each classroom will have a set of rules set by classroom teacher. All students are required to be respectful and display a Christian attitude in the way they dress, speak and behave. If a student does not follow these basic rules, the following disciplinary process will be used:

1. Teacher will remind student of appropriate behavior in a positive manner.
2. If inappropriate behavior is consistent and disruptive to the learning of other students, the student will be sent to the PSR office. The student may be required to develop a plan of action to correct the disruptive behavior and have it signed by their parents/guardian in order to return to the regular classroom. Anytime a student is sent to PSR office, a parent will be notified by the disciplinary plan or a phone call by the Director of Religious Education.
3. If a student's behavior does not improve as a result of the above, the parish reserves the right to have the student removed from the classroom.

Dress Code Policy

When selecting clothing for your child, please refrain from choosing items that have disrespectful or violent pictures, characters or words on them. These items do not support our philosophy of nonviolence, respect for life and the dignity of the human spirit. Clothing with large buttons and buttonholes, easy zippers or Velcro supports the independence of our preschool and kindergarten students.

Child Safety and Virtus Training

In compliance with the child abuse sexual abuse policy issued by the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, all employees and volunteers involved in our religious education program that have contact with children are to be fingerprinted and properly screened. In addition, they are required to attend a three – hour **VIRTUS** training session focused on Child abuse and prevention, along with the reporting of the same to the proper authorities. Our Catechists have also been trained in Praesidium, which is a series of catechetical materials that teach children about physical safety and warning signs of abuse. Each year our catechists use a series of worksheets grades 1-5 and videos for middle school that teach the children about safety in an age appropriate way. Check the PSR calendar for more information regarding related parent meetings about this program.

Role of Parents

Communication with your child's catechist is important and encouraged. Please feel free to speak to your child's teacher concerning his/her performance or progress in PSR. We encourage parent involvement in our programs. Parents may volunteer by speaking with your child's catechist or by calling Gina Rensi, Director of Religious Education at 440-256-1412.

Our program is designed to supplement what is being taught in the home, not to take its place. Parents are vital for nurturing the faith of their children. As cooperative participants in our program parents should:

- Attend Mass with their child on Sundays and Holy days of Obligation
- Teach their child the traditional prayers of the church
- Bring their child to class on time every week
- Maintain an open line of communications with their child's catechist.

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The following pages include legal policies directed by the Diocese of Cleveland. We are responsible to inform you of these policies, noting that **a complete copy of each policy is on file at the PSR office.

Diocese of Cleveland – Legal Policies

Weapons Policy

In furtherance of the overall philosophy, goals and objectives of the Catholic education experience, the Diocese of Cleveland has proposed a policy that expressly prohibits the use, possession, sale or discharge of any weapons or explosive devices in the school, on school grounds, or at school-sponsored activities. This policy shall apply to all students, participants in parish programs, teachers, administrators, and other personnel in the school or parish.

Chemical Use / Abuse

Parents will be notified immediately if a student is found to have or to be under the influence of tobacco, alcohol or drugs, or to have drug paraphernalia in his/her possession on school property or during off-campus activities sponsored by the school. A mandatory conference with both parents/guardian will be arranged before the student is permitted to return to school.

Youth Gangs Policy

Youth gangs and gang-related activity are prohibited. If a participant in any parish youth activity is suspected or identified as being a member of a gang, shows interest in joining a gang, initiates or participates in any gang related activity, or has been approached for recruitment, the parents/guardians of this individual will be contacted immediately and appropriate intervention initiated.

Abuse Policy

According to the Ohio Revised Code, section 2151.421, any...licensed school psychologist, school teacher, school employee, or school authority...having reason to believe that a child less than eighteen years of age or any crippled or otherwise physically handicapped child under twenty-one years of age has suffered any wound, injury, disability or condition of such a nature as to reasonably indicate abuse or neglect of the child, shall immediately report or cause reports to be made of such information to the child services board of the county department of human services exercising the children's services function, or a municipal or county peace officer in the county in which the abuse or neglect is occurring or has occurred.

If a member of the staff suspects child abuse, they must report it immediately to the Pastor, Pastoral Associate or Coordinator, who in turn reports it to the County Department of Human Services. Each report of suspected child abuse and/or neglect is confidential.

AIDS Policy

Children with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) enrolled or seeking enrollment in Grades K through 8 shall be permitted to attend school/parish religious education programs in regular classroom settings or other parish programs provided:

1. The health of a child, as documented by his/her physician, allows participation in regular academic school activities or programs.
2. The child behaves acceptably; in a manner that would not cause spread of the disease or in any way put others at risk.
3. The child does not have open sores, skin eruptions, or any other condition that prevents his/her control of bodily secretions.
4. There are periodic evaluations of the child's physical condition with written certifications from his/her physician allowing continuing participation in regular academic school activities.

Sexual Harassment and Violence Policy

Divine Word YFF is committed to providing a safe, positive learning and working environment for everyone. For this reason, and in keeping with the goals and objectives of Catholic education, Divine Word YFF expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence in the school environment. This policy reemphasizes the personal dignity of the individual and fosters positive sexual attitudes and respect for all.