

ST. MATTHIAS PARISH

SUNDAY MORNING CHRISTIAN FORMATION PROGRAM



Parent and Student Handbook 2024-2025

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St. Matthias Parish
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St. Matthias Mission Statement

St. Matthias Catholic Parish is committed to continuing the ministry of Jesus Christ. We invite and welcome all. Come...live, grow and be challenged by the message through prayer, formation and service

Sunday Morning Curriculum

K4-8th Grade

The K4-8th Grade will use the *Blest Are We: Faith In Action (2019)* series. This curriculum is a teacher-led style of instruction that provides a solid foundation in the basics of faith for our students. In these programs, each student receives a workbook that enables them to leave the class with a tangible record of their learning gains and engage parents to continue the learning beyond the classroom. You can find out more information about *Blest Are We: Faith In Action* by visiting this website: <https://store.rclbenziger.com/program/blest-are-we-faith-action-parish>

By registering your child for the Sunday Morning Program, you agree to the policies outlined in this handbook.

Admission Policy

St. Matthias, in its mission to bring everyone closer to Christ, takes its mission seriously by welcoming anyone to be a part of the St. Matthias Christian Formation Program. You do not have to be a parish member to join. That being said, the mission of St. Matthias is also strongly rooted in community. Families that are part of our program are encouraged to be actively involved here at St. Matthias through Mass on weekends and service opportunities throughout the year.

Program Policies

Attendance:

1. Families are encouraged to attend Mass on the weekends. Please see the website and bulletin for our Mass schedule.
2. Children's Liturgy of the Word (K4-5th Grade) is offered on Sunday mornings (bi-weekly every month) during the 8AM and 10AM Mass.

3. Class will begin at 9:15 am and end at 10:30 am (except for Hospitality Sunday). Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class.
4. In the event of inclement weather, the Directors will make a risk assessment-based decision on whether to cancel class that Sunday.

If a session needs to be canceled because of inclement weather, the Directors will notify Channels 4, 6, & 12 on TV and their corresponding websites. An email will be sent out, and it will be posted to the website as well. Please tune into one of these sources.

Arrival/Dismissal:

To ensure the safety of all, the play structure MAY NOT be used during this time.

Arrival

1. Door opening and closing times:
 - a) Doors will open at 8:45 am-9:45 am for arrival.
 - b) Doors will open at 10:15 am -11 am for dismissal.
2. Entering the building:
 - a) For K4-4th grade: The students will be entering the Beloit building through two possible entries. The atrium door (the area that links the gym and the classrooms) that is labeled A5 and the front entrance located on Beloit Rd., which is labeled A1. Parents/guardians of children in the grades K4-2nd must drop the child off to their respective classrooms.
 - b) Students in grades 5th-8th: Utilizing the church main parking lot, drive all the way back towards the main cemetery entrance, and enter through the main door (Labeled E1) of the Parish Center.

Dismissal

1. Students in the Parish Center will be dismissed from the classroom by the catechists at 10:30am. Students exiting the building may head to their designated cars when they see them.
2. Students in the Beloit building: 3rd graders will be dismissed by the catechists at 10:30 am, but Parents/guardians of students K4-2nd grade will be allowed to enter the Beloit building to pick up their child starting at 10:15 am.
3. If a student is heading to church after class, please notify the Director where they are going.
4. Students not picked up by 11 am will be stationed at the lobby entrances for each building.

Handwashing/Hygiene:

1. Handwashing will be a routine expectation when applicable. Students will wash their hands at appropriate times (i.e., after using the bathroom) or when directed by the catechist. When handwashing is not possible, students and teachers will use hand

sanitizer. Hand sanitizer stations are installed in every classroom, hallway, and entry in all buildings.

Parent/Guardian Involvement:

1. Your ability to model your faith will be how your child models theirs. To aid in that development, it is our commitment to give quality support in your faith journey. Below are some suggestions for ways for you to model and grow in your faith:
2. **Go to Mass.** If you need to recommit yourself this is a perfect time to do so.
 - a. Encounter Jesus in the Scripture readings and receive Him in the Eucharist.
 - b. Build the parish community.
 - c. Reinforce your family's Catholic identity.
 - d. Livestream and recorded Masses will be available from St. Matthias.
3. **Take time to Pray.** Make these experiences something that you and your children share.
4. **Take time with the Scriptures.** Whether in a personal setting, or joining a bible study (which we have one here that is on Thursdays from 6:30-8PM), subscribing to a podcast, or getting a bible app. The list is endless.
5. **Get to know your child's Catechist.** Meet your child's Catechist through a medium you are comfortable using (in-person, phone, zoom) to foster a relationship that not only benefits your child's learning, but could possibly aid you in your spiritual journey.
6. **Talk with your child about what they are learning.** Ask them questions. Have discussions about their classes. Check the weekly newsletter for information on what they covered.
7. **Get involved at the Parish.** Visit the St. Matthias website and look under the "Get Involved" tab (<http://www.stmatthias-milw.org/get-involved/>), look for opportunities in our weekend bulletins, and see communications from the Faith Formation staff for opportunities in the parish and Christian Formation specifically.
8. **Adult Faith Formation Opportunities** – throughout the year there will be opportunities for parents to get involved in Adult Faith Formation. Check the newsletter and bulletin for updates. **Please see the following link for more information:**
<https://www.stmatthias-milw.org/faith-formation/adult/>.
9. **Parish Staff Assistance.** The Parish Staff of St. Matthias can assist you in whatever way you need. If you feel there is a need for something in our parish that could benefit all families in the Christian Formation Program, please do not hesitate to contact the Lifelong Faith Formation Office.
10. **Hospitality Sundays.** Since our class will start 15 minutes later on these Sundays

(9:30AM will be the start time), take your family down to Stieger Hall for refreshments and fellowship before we begin to gather for the program.

Family Events:

1. Please watch your email for more opportunities that will arise during the year.

Sacramental Preparation:

1. Students in 2nd Grade will start immediate preparation for First Communion and First Reconciliation. Parents will receive information on sacramental prep in a timely manner.
2. If for whatever reason your child has not received Baptism, First Communion, or First Reconciliation, and they are beyond 2nd Grade, please contact the Faith Formation Office. We will work with families to help students get caught up in their sacramental preparation.

Cell Phones:

1. **Students with cell phones are not allowed to use them during class. Cell phones should be turned off before the start of class.**
2. In cases of emergency where a student must have their cell phone on them, a parent must indicate that to the Directors prior to the start of class.



Communication

Communication is the cornerstone to keeping the program running smoothly. We have multiple ways of communicating, i.e. phone, email, website, etc.

Phone Calls – You may reach us at the phone numbers provided on the cover of this handbook. The phone numbers you provide allow us to reach you during the week or during the program if need be.

Emails

1. The email addresses you provide us with allow us to send you information about the program and upcoming events. You can reach us with the email addresses provided on the cover of this handbook.
2. Weekly Updates
 - a. Christian Formation – during the year you will receive weekly updates sent to all of the families within Christian Formation. In these updates you will see:
 - Information on what was covered in the previous class
 - Upcoming Schedule
 - Parish Wide Events
 - b. Advertisements – periodically, depending on what grade your child is in, you will receive emails for service opportunities and general reminders of upcoming deadlines/events.

Website

1. The St. Matthias Parish website is loaded with information about what's happening in the parish.
2. Everything for Christian Formation is located under the "Faith Formation" tab. If you have questions, check these places:
 - a. Sunday Morning Program – information about the program.
 - b. 9th, 10th, 11th grade Christian Formation – information about the high school program and curriculum.
 - c. Formation Forms – printable schedules, service forms, handbooks, and parent forms.



Procedure for Communication

1. In order to provide everyone with the best possible program, the Director of Youth & Adult Ministries and Director of Religious Education rely on the communication of the families to ask questions, express their concerns, or talk with someone if need be.

2. If you have a question or concern about your child's Catechist, please contact the Co-Directors first.
3. If you have any questions or concerns about the program in general, call or email the Co-Directors during office hours to discuss or set-up an appointment.
4. Contact Info
 - a. Brian Jens – Director of Youth & Adult Ministry – can be reached at 414-982-2406 and bjens@stmatthias-milw.org.
 - Office hours are Monday – Thursday, 8am-4pm and periodically in the evenings.
 - b. Peter Morello- Director of Religious Education – can be reached at 414-982-2413 and pmorello@stmatthias-milw.org.
 - Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 7am-3pm and periodically in the evenings.

Behavioral Expectations

1. All students are expected to have a level of respect that is appropriate for their age.
2. Respect The Building/Church
 - a. Students will be respectful of the buildings and classrooms they use.
 - b. Students will demonstrate awareness of the place and situation they are in.
 - c. Students will not deface, damage, or destroy any property of St. Matthias. Families will be responsible for any costs that are incurred.
 - d. Students will be extra respectful and reverent while in the church.
3. Respect for Catechists/Directors
 - a. Students will display respect for their Catechists and the Directors.
 - b. Students will listen to the Catechists and follow directions when asked.
4. Respect for Each Other
 - a. Students will display a high level of respect for their peers.
 - b. Students will demonstrate good listening skills by giving full attention to what their peers share.
 - c. Students will show respect for each person's background (where they come from, who they are as people, and where they are on their faith journey).

Procedure for Breaking the Rules

1. Any forms of misbehavior or disrespect will be addressed immediately.
2. If a student continues to have behavioral issues, parents will be contacted following the class to be made aware of their son/daughter's behavior.
3. If a problem persists, parents/guardians will be called immediately and will be asked to speak with the Director and student after class to discuss behavior.

4. If a parent/guardian disagrees with any action taken by the Director they may contact our pastor Father Jerry Herda to discuss the situation.

Drugs and Weapons Policy

1. Drugs, alcohol, smoking and any drug paraphernalia are not allowed. If any youth is found with any of these substances the parents will be called immediately, and the student will be expelled from the program.
2. We hold a zero tolerance policy for weapons of any kind. If a youth is found with a weapon, in addition to the parents being called, the Milwaukee Police Department will also be called immediately.

Use of Parish Grounds and Facilities

Sports & Christian Formation

1. Students who are in the Sunday Morning Program and are members of St. Matthias are eligible and encouraged to play on the parish school's sports teams. Any interested participant is asked to contact the St. Matthias School's Athletic Director, (Daniel Sowu, dsowu@stmatthiasmilw.org).
2. Student's participation in St. Matthias sports is dependent on their involvement with the Sunday Morning Program. If you do not attend the parish school, you must be enrolled in the Sunday Morning Program prior to beginning to practice or play and follow the addendum below.

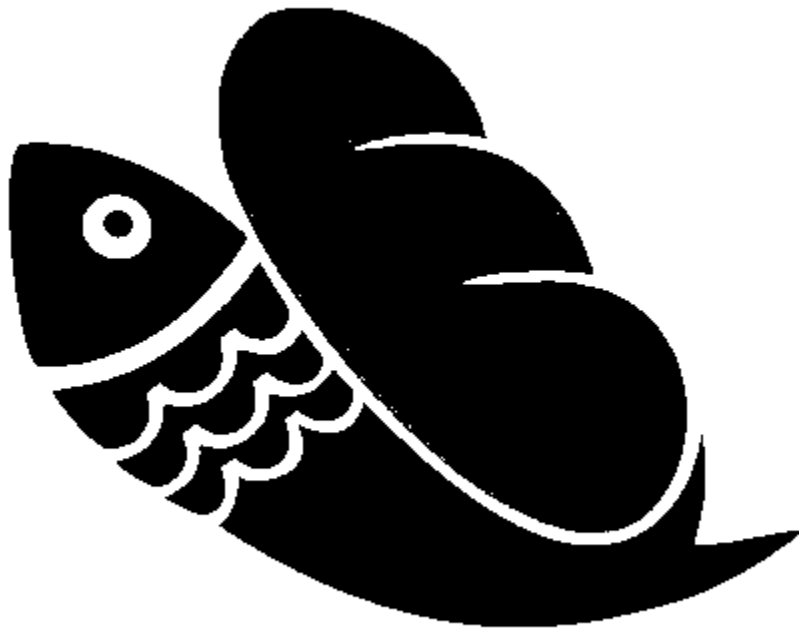
Attendance Addendum

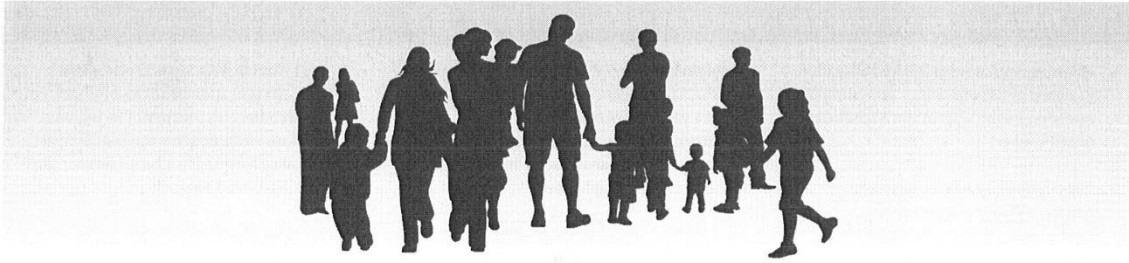
1. For Students who are participating in athletics through St. Matthias School Christian Formation, to ensure that faith stays the main priority, one must adhere to the following:
2. If a student receives three absences (unexcused), within the current season the student will be declared ineligible to participate in athletic games for the following week. If a student exceeds six absences within the current season (unexcused), the student will be declared ineligible to participate in athletic games for the following two weeks. If a student exceeds more than nine total absences (unexcused) within the current season the student will be declared ineligible to participate in athletics for the remainder of the year.
3. If any special circumstances arise, final decisions will be made jointly by the Athletic Director and Co-Directors.

Safeguarding All of God's Family

Classes Required by Archdiocese

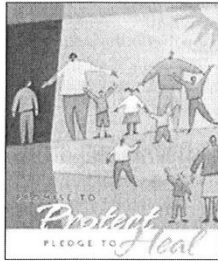
- The goal of the Safeguarding All of God's Family program is to protect our children and all in the church family from abuse and related dangers. To assist in meeting this goal, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee requires us to do a Safeguarding lesson with each grade appropriate for their age level. When this class takes place, you will receive notice in advance of the lesson date.
- This communication will indicate the time, place, and what will be covered in the lesson. Parents are welcome to attend with their child. A parent may also choose to have their child opt out of the class. If that is the direction the parent wishes to take, they must indicate that prior to class and will have to give a signature verifying their decision.
- For more information on the Safe Environment Office in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, including the Safeguarding All of God's Family program, visit <https://www.archmil.org/archmil/Offices/Safe-Environment.htm>.





CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

in the ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE



All efforts and programs in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee that relate to protecting God's children come under the umbrella of Safeguarding All of God's Family. As a faith-filled people, we respect and value each and every individual, as we are created in the image and likeness of God. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is committed to creating an environment of healthy and responsible relationships where all of God's family will be able to work, live and play.

Maintaining Compliance with the Charter

For Children All children and youth in grades K4 through 12, both in day school and religious education, are required to receive safe environment education. This is NOT sex education. Because of the value and dignity of human life, it is important that we teach children and youth about personal safety, awareness and boundaries. As God's children, we deserve love and respect.

For Adults The following requirements must be met prior to employment or volunteer service:

- Safe environment education for all clergy and religious (men and women), paid personnel and volunteers.
- State and national background checks for all clergy and religious, paid personnel and volunteers, repeated at least every five years.
- All clergy and religious, paid personnel and volunteers must read and sign a form acknowledging they have received and read the Code of Ethical Standards for Church Leaders.
- All clergy and religious, paid personnel and volunteers must receive and read a copy of the Mandatory Reporting Responsibilities.



ARCHDIOCESE
of MILWAUKEE

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People

The Charter is a comprehensive set of procedures established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in June 2002 for addressing allegations of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy. The Charter also includes guidelines for reconciliation, healing, accountability and prevention of future acts of abuse.

The Charter's policies and procedures were reviewed and revised in 2011.

ARTICLE 12

"Dioceses will establish 'safe environment' programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses will make clear to clergy and members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse."

ARTICLE 13

"Dioceses are to evaluate the background of all incardinated and non-incardinated priests and deacons who are engaged in ecclesiastical ministry in the diocese and of all diocesan and parish/school or other paid personnel and volunteers."*

*Volunteers are defined as those individuals who have regular contact with children and young people.

Initiatives and Actions Implemented by the ARCHDIOCESE of MILWAUKEE since 2002

- No priest with a substantiated allegation of sexual abuse of a minor serves in public ministry, in any way, in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
- The Archbishop has a Community Advisory Board composed of representatives from various social services agencies and experts in the area of sexual abuse. The Board meets regularly, providing guidance in the Archdiocese's response to victims of sexual abuse by church personnel.
- All archdiocesan, parish personnel and volunteers are bound by the mandatory reporting laws of the State of Wisconsin. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee requires all adults to exercise reporting responsibilities for suspected abuse or neglect of a minor, whether or not they are designated mandatory reporters under Wisconsin law.
- Sexual abuse prevention training and safe environment education is required by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee for all archdiocesan and parish employees as well as volunteers who have regular contact with minors. More than 45,000 adults and 100,000 children have participated in the initiative.
- State and national criminal background checks are required for all adults, including priests and bishops, staff and volunteers who have regular interaction with minors in a Church setting.
- All employees and volunteers must sign The Code of Ethical Standards that clearly outlines expected and acceptable behavior. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee participates in a yearly on-site audit of its safe environment practices and procedures. Every year, the archdiocese has been found to be in full compliance.
- Religious order priests are subject to the same standards upheld in the Charter. When a religious order priest requests faculties to minister publicly within the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, that priest's superior is required to provide a statement verifying his suitability for ministry, including assurance that he has not been credibly accused of abuse of a minor, has undergone a criminal background check and has completed safe environment training.
- The Archdiocese of Milwaukee participates in a yearly on-site audit of its safe environment practices and procedures; including parish and school visits. Every year, the archdiocese has been found to be in full compliance.
- There is a whistleblower policy in place to protect anyone who makes a sexual abuse report from suffering consequences related to making the report.
- In 2010, Archbishop ListECKI approved a policy for Social Networking. This policy outlines practices and guidelines to be followed in order to maintain healthy boundaries and safe environments in a virtual world.
- In 2011, Archbishop ListECKI celebrated the first Mass of Atonement as another step in the archdiocese's journey of facing our sins, acknowledging the wrongs of the past and moving forward to a better future. This Mass is celebrated annually.
- In 2011, Safe Environment Week was established and designated as one week during April's Child Abuse Prevention Month so that all parishes and schools could simultaneously focus on abuse prevention and archdiocesan initiatives already underway.
- In 2012, Archbishop Jerome ListECKI approved a policy for Overnight Trips with Minors. The policy addresses not only overnight trips with minors, but any function that might take place away from the parish or school.
- In 2013, partnered with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children with their Take 25 initiative and they also provided parish and schools with Online Education Safety Kits.
- In 2015, partnered with Catholic Mutual to create a user friendly safe environment platform that would incorporate all safe environment requirements in one location.
- In 2016, upgraded the Catholic Mutual safe environment platform, including adding Selection.com as a background check provider. Selection.com provides the highest level of due-diligence when screening employees and volunteers.

Revised 2016



Keeping Children Safe from Sexual Abuse Policies and Practices of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee makes children's safety a priority. The Church is different today because of the courage of victims/survivors who have come forward, told their painful stories and worked diligently to implement initiatives designed to protect children today.

For More Information

Learn more about Safeguarding All of God's Children in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee by visiting our Web site: www.archmil.org/offices/safeguarding

Obtain a full copy of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People from the USCCB's Web site: www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.pdf



SAINT MATTHIAS PARISH

FAITH *first*

2024-2025 Sunday Morning Program Calendar, K4-8th Grade

Classes are held from 9:15-10:30 am on Sundays

On Hospitality Sundays (HS), class will be held from 9:30-10:30am

Families are encouraged to attend Mass on weekends.

September 2024

15th – Parent/Student Orientation 11:00 am-
12:30 pm – Steiger Hall

October 2024

6th – Mass & Class
13th – Mass & Class
20th (HS)– Mass & Class

November 2024

3rd – Mass & Class
10th – Mass & Class
17th (HS) – Mass & Class

December 2024

1st – Mass & Class
8th – Mass & Class
15th (HS)– Mass & Class

January 2025

5th – Mass & Class
12th – Mass & Class
19th (HS) – Mass & Class

February 2025

2nd – Mass & Class
9th – Mass & Class
16th (HS)– Mass & Class

March 2025

2nd – Mass & Class
9th – Mass & Class
16th (HS) – Mass & Class

April 2025

6th – Mass & Class
13th – Mass & Class

K4-4th grade meet in the Beloit Building, 5th/6th and 7th/8th grade meet in the Parish Center:
Children in K4-4th grade must enter through the front doors on Beloit Rd or the Atrium.
Children in 5th-8th grade must enter through the side entrance of the center by the cemetery main entrance/exit (labeled E1).

For exact procedures for entering and leaving the buildings, please see the Parent/Student Handbook and the website.

Please contact:

Peter Morello, Director of Religious Education at pmorello@stmatthias-milw.org,
414-321-0893 x413

We have read and agree to be governed by all policies stated in this handbook.

Detach this sheet and hand it in to the Catechist before the start of the 1st Class.

Student Signature Date Grade

Student Signature Date Grade

Student Signature Date Grade

Parent Signature Date
