

# THE 2023/2024 ST. MARGARET PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION (PSR) PROGRAM

## LITURGICAL PARTICIPATION

The Sunday Eucharist is the foundation and confirmation of all Christian practice. For this reason, the faithful are obliged to participate in the Eucharist on days of obligation, which include Sundays and Holy Days. This obligation extends to all the baptized faithful unless impeded by some grave reason or unless dispensed on singular occasions by one's pastor. Catholics are invited and encouraged to participate weekly in Mass since as "first teachers" of their children, parents should be attending Sunday Mass within the context of their faith community; children should also be attending Mass at the same interval.



The Parish School of Religion Program functions only in tandem with the Sunday liturgy; without it, such catechetical instruction is fruitless since the program merely explains the faith that is proclaimed in the liturgy and lived in the world. **All children along, with their parents, are required to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation throughout the calendar year.**

## TIMES & DATES OF CLASSES

To greater emphasize the link between the liturgy and religious instruction, PSR classes will be held at St. Margaret in the Hall of Saints and/or the Parish Hall for grades Kindergarten (K) through six (6) from **11:15AM until 12:30PM on Sundays**. This provides families both the opportunity to attend Mass together and subsequently engage in holistic catechesis afterward.

PSR classes will be held in the Hall of Saints for grades seven (7) through eleven (11) from **6:45PM until 8:00PM on Sundays**. This, too, provides families the opportunity to attend Mass together and to take advantage of other programs for adult catechesis offered at St. Margaret.

As class time is valuable, children should be at the Hall of Saints on time and prepared for class.

While we do realize that some families will have children in both morning and evening sessions of the Parish School of Religion, our facilities simply cannot handle further realignment of the program to accommodate more particular class times during the morning session. Such is a wonderful dilemma of parish growth!

## CATECHETICAL MATERIALS

Catechetical manuals and textbooks are important and helpful tools in the process of catechizing children. There is probably no single series best for every parish. Programs should be sequenced to present the essential truths of the faith in an understandable manner that corresponds to the stage of the student's development. The process in lesson planning should reflect good and various methodologies.

With the evolution of our new in-house program, there are various texts and publications that will be used by students. Prayer exercises and activities will be utilized. In terms of the catechetical lesson, it is the goal of St. Margaret to have these lessons videoed and available for viewing by parents and

even parishioners, especially if off-site learning is necessary due to weather, pandemics, or other reasons not to participate in person.

### **CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT**

The structure of the Parish School of Religion Program is linear – each year’s instruction builds upon the previous year. To receive the sacraments, students are required to attend every year of religious education beginning in kindergarten and ending in eleventh grade. Students who do not attend every year of instruction will be required to participate in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA) or the Order of Christian Initiation of Children (OCIC) to receive Confirmation or Eucharist respectively based upon their age and their understanding of the precepts of the faith. Students transferring from other Parish Schools of Religion will be required to show proof of their previous level(s) of instruction before integration in the St. Margaret PSR Program.

### **REGISTRATION**

All students currently enrolled in the Parish School of Religion Program will be required to register for the 2023-2024 school year by or before **04 August 2023**. No late registration will be permitted. This facilitates facile planning for the Religious Education Staff and prevents the parish from uselessly wasting resources by purchasing unneeded supplies. Only new parishioners will be allowed to register their children for the Parish School of Religion Program after this date. **Registration fees are \$35.00 per child and \$20.00 for each additional child in each family.**

**Only territorial or registered parishioners are allowed to register their children in the PSR program.** Parishioners of neighboring parishes can register *only* with the written consent of their pastor.

### **ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT**

Retreats are a common component of many spiritual traditions. They provide structure to answer the inner calling to step away from the ordinary and routine in order to be redirected and grounded in what God desires. All students in grades nine (9) through eleven (11) are required to participate in the annual retreat provided by St. Margaret on her campus by the NET Ministries National Evangelization Team on **Saturday, 02 March 2024 from 9:00AM until after the conclusion of the 4:00PM Mass at St. Margaret. If the student is unable to attend, service hours for the length of duration of the retreat shall be completed and approved by the pastor and Religious Education Coordinator.**

### **FAMILY FORMATION – EDUCATING THE FIRST TEACHERS**

Being a parent in a Christian context in today’s modern world can be a daunting task. Some parents are unaware of their duties as teachers and models of faith within their homes; other parents believe their role in their children’s faith formation is to assure they receive the sacraments of initiation while placing the onus of doctrinal catechesis on the Church and its clergy. Yet, no one can replace the influence and example of a parent on the spiritual life of their child!

To assist and equip parents in their responsibility as “first teachers,” **Family Formation Sessions** for parents will be scheduled at the same time as the Parish School of Religion (PSR) at least once per month. For parents with children in grades Kindergarten through six (6), these sessions will be held in the St. Margaret Room of the Hall of Saints (or Parish Hall) from **11:30AM until 12:30PM** and will be facilitated by the Pastor or his delegate. For parents with children in grades seven (7) through eleven (11), these sessions will couple with the adult formation *Theology in a Bottle* sessions which are

also scheduled monthly from **6:45 until 8:00PM** and facilitated by outside professionals of theology. **At least one parent per student is required to attend each session every month**, though it is preferable that both parents attend these sessions. Should a parent(s) have children enrolled in both morning and evening PSR sessions, or should a parent have a scheduling conflict due to work or other obligations, those parent(s) can choose which monthly session to attend, either the morning Family Formation Sessions or the evening *Theology in a Bottle* sessions; at least one session must be attended monthly for a total of eight sessions in the academic year. Attendance at as many sessions as offered is surely preferable.

Such engagement and the witness of parents learning alongside their children coupled with their intentional decision to bring the whole family to Mass weekly and on Holy Days of Obligation communicates to young people that life is more than work, sports, or other extra-curricular activities (as important as are these activities!) Rather, it communicates the message that we are worth more than we do and illustrates this not just by words but also by family action!

### **RECONCILIATION SESSIONS**

To emphasize the importance of regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, each PSR class will be scheduled twice annually as a class or group of classes to attend Reconciliation in St. Margaret Church with the Pastor and/or priests from surrounding parishes. Parents of PSR students are also invited to participate in these sessions, especially as a witness to the importance of its routine use. Dates will be chosen by the Pastor in collaboration with the Religious Education Coordinator and communicated with all parents in a timely fashion.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Once registered, students are expected to attend all classes, and parents will be notified of repeated absences and/or tardiness. Excessive absences will result in a lack of completion of the grade in question. **No more than four absences per year** will be accepted. If a student is absent from class, that student is to present a signed note from their parent detailing the reason for their absence from class. **It is the responsibility of the parent or student to contact the catechist for missed assignments due to absence.**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Students should enter the Hall of Saints in a quiet and orderly manner observing any screen-in procedures. Out of respect for other students and parochial property, no running or pushing is allowed. Unless an adult is in a classroom, students are not allowed to enter classrooms. Students should also dress in an appropriate manner. Food and drinks are prohibited in class.

Good Christian attitude and respect should be shown to both catechists and classmates. **Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.** Parents will be contacted, and students sent home should such situations occur. Repeated disciplinary action will result in dismissal from the Parish School of Religion Program. **Any student found in possession of cigarettes, alcohol or drugs, or who perform any illegal activity on the parochial grounds will be immediately removed from the Parish School of Religion Program.**

All electronic devices brought into the Hall of Saints should remain in the off position.