

## **Religious Education Mission Statement**

**The Mission of the Religious Education Department of Holy Cross Parish is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people.**

Those involved in this area of church ministry share a common view of Religious Education as a lifelong Journey. Through constant prayer, commitment, and sharing of personal faith experiences, Holy Cross Catechists enthusiastically help to provide the atmosphere and opportunities for learning and spiritual growth needed by people of all ages and developmental levels.

The Religious Education Ministry of Holy Cross Parish has expanded over the years. Currently, our sessions offered include Basic Religious Instruction for levels Pre-K through Grade 12" Generations of Faith (GOF) a Family/Intergenerational Program, complete Sacramental Preparation (Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist), ongoing Adult Education and Scripture Study, Youth Ministry, and a continuous Catechumenate Process for both youth and adults. Spanish language Catechesis and Sacramental Preparation is also offered to accommodate the growing needs of our parish.

On-going training, continual education, and Diocesan Certification classes are also provided for our team of very committed Adult and Junior volunteer Catechists.

Religious Education and Youth Ministry are solidly linked at Holy Cross Parish. Many events throughout the year are offered after shared preparation by those working in both areas of ministry. Parents are invited and encouraged to participate in many areas of catechetical, sacramental, and social programming and facilitation.

## **Attendance at Sunday Mass is required of all Religious Education Students**

- Religious Ed Families are encouraged to participate in the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Family Mass.
- Spanish Religious Ed Families may also attend the 1 :00 p.m. Sunday Spanish Mass
- "Little Ones", along with adult facilitators and youth assistants, are dismissed after the Opening Prayer for their own Liturgy of the Word so that they can understand God's Word more clearly. They return to their place in the assembly for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- Students Grade 3 through 12 are invited to volunteer for various liturgical ministries such as: Altar Servers, Readers, Ushers/Ministers of Hospitality, and Choir (instruments also).

The basic foundation of Holy Cross Religious Education Sessions is lectionary based catechesis. The Sunday Readings are used in class each week; therefore, it is necessary for the students to have participated in Mass in order to be able to fully participate in class

### **Religious Instruction Sessions: Pre K through Grade 12**

Offered:

Sunday mornings from 11:00 a.m. to 12: 15 p.m. in the classrooms.

Necessary extended sessions may be scheduled - notification in advance.

**Home School Families** are requested to be in compliance with Diocesan requirements for Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation. Please contact the D.R.E. for detailed information and supplies.

**GOF:** One Sunday monthly. Program includes Family Mass, Complimentary Breakfast, Topical Presentation, Hands on Activities for all ages.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

**Baptism:**

An appointment with the pastor is necessary\_ after the pastoral meeting has been completed, a preparation session is scheduled as needed each month for the parents (& godparents) who are seeking the Sacrament of Baptism for their babies and very young children (under age 7). A Calendar of Baptism dates and times will be provided to families during the preparation session. \* Participation in the preparation session is required.

**First Penance and First Eucharist:**

A two year period of preparation is required for the sacraments of First Penance and First Communion. Foundation and formation is begun in grade 1. Immediate preparation and the receiving of the sacraments occurs in grade 2. New second grade students wishing to receive the sacraments of Penance and Communion must have had prior Religious Education in order to be eligible to participate in the sacramental program - home teaching is acceptable in most instances.

## **Confirmation:**

Is offered every other year at Holy Cross Parish. A two year period of preparation is required for the sacrament of Confirmation. Junior and Senior High Candidates must attend the required sessions scheduled during the preparation time.

Adult preparation for Confirmation is offered each year.

## **Catechumenate:**

Christian Initiation of both adults and children/youth is offered continually. RCIA/RCIC (The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults/Children) is a process – not a program. Those inquiring about the Catholic Faith are welcomed into a very warm community of people. This faith filled group accompanies the inquirers on their spiritual journey toward full initiation into the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This ongoing process is arranged to accommodate each individual's needs according to God's plan. (in accordance with the requirements of the Diocese as well).

**Children/youths attending Catholic Schools are required by the Diocese to participate in the immediate preparation and the celebration of First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation in the home parish where they are registered members and attend Mass.**

## **Youth Ministry:**

Events and projects are regularly scheduled and implemented in order to foster total personal and spiritual growth of our youth. Our youth program strives to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of our parish and the community. Youth Group is open to all Junior (grades 6-8) and Senior (grades 9-12) High Students. This ministry encourages open discussions, spiritual activities, service projects, socials, and involvement in parish events. Our program includes the following seven Youth Ministry Components:

**WORD      WORSHIP      COMMUNITY      GUIDANCE & HEALING**  
**JUSTICE & SERVICE      ENABLEMENT      ADVOCACY**

- Adult volunteers to assist in different areas of Youth Ministry always needed and welcome!

## General Program Information

Religious Education, Youth Ministry, & Sacramental Preparation Directory

Director of Religious Education & Sacraments:

**Linda T. Johnston 547-2004**

Religious Ed/Youth Ministry Assistant & Dir. Of Children's Liturgy:

**Helene Robertson 546-9243**

Ministries open to children/youth volunteers who have already received the sacrament of First Communion (usually grade 3 and up).

Altar Servers:	Contact Deacon Corky Hecht	546-3315
Readers:	Contact Linda Johnston	547-2004
Ushers, Greeters, CL W:	Contact Helene Robertson	546-9243
Choir/Music:	Youth Office	547-2004

Religious Ed Program begins on Catechetical Sunday each year (Sept.) and continues until the Feast of Pentecost. Summer Program includes a week long Vacation Bible School offered in *July*. Youth Ministry events are scheduled throughout the year.

Registration for Religious Education Sessions can be done at any time during the year; we do not have a deadline or sealing of classes. Calendars, Registration Sheets, Permission Slips, etc. can be picked up at the Rel. Ed. Office Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Sunday mornings from 8:00 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. or by appointment.

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Program fees, which vary according to the needs and size of the family, are used to defray the cost of books, resources, and supplies. Payment arrangements can be made. No child/youth will be excluded from program due to financial burden!

## **Parents/Guardians**

### **Participation Required**

Registered membership of Holy Cross Parish; or, upon occasion another local parish when there may be a program conflict (pastoral approval needed). Registered membership of our Religious Education Program.

Attendance at Sunday or Sat. Vigil Mass (9:30 a.m. Family Mass preferred)

Make Church a priority; be supportive of your child/children's religious education. Keep your "calendar" handy; be aware of the weekly events.

Participate fully in the faith life of the Church/Parish; set a good example.

Attendance at Parent Meetings is most important; make arrangements to get information when a meeting is missed. Note: Participation in Safe Environment Training for Parents and children/youth is required.

Inform the Director of Religious Education of any important facts regarding family situation, health, learning concerns, behavioral conditions, changes, etc. (Discretion will be honored). Necessary paperwork must be on file regarding custodial parent situations.

When applicable, participate in all sacramental preparations required.

Attend the various ceremonies/events that are scheduled as much as possible. Actively participate in any family exercises that might be sent home.

Volunteer to help with any session/event that may need parental involvement.

Feel free to contact the Director of Rel. Ed. and/or your child's catechists whenever there is a concern. We have an "open door" policy which encourages open lines of communication.

Notify the Religious Ed Office whenever your child will be absent from class for more than one Sunday.

## Students

### Student Responsibilities:

Attendance at Sunday or Sat. Vigil Mass (9:30 a.m. Family Mass preferred).

Participation in weekly sessions, GOF once a month, and additional events.

Get to class on time - participate fully - stay until the end of class.

Dress properly and modestly. No inappropriate words/symbols on any article of clothing please. No I-Pods during class time! C-phones on mute during class!

Be respectful of all catechists, fellow students, church property, & personal property.

No bad language, inappropriate remarks, destructive behavior, cigarettes, alcohol, weapons, etc.

Know and adhere to all class rules and disciplinary actions. Practice self-control.

Participate in the “BE – ATTITUDES”

BE – PREPARED	Bring all necessary supplies/work to class
BE – OPEN	Participate in the various discussions/dynamics of class
BE – YOURSELF	You are unique in God's eyes and ours; know you are special
BE – FLEXIBLE	Be patient and understanding during "those" times
BE – SUPPORTIVE	Good friends/good students are really needed and appreciated
BE – COMMITTED	Don't give up - be part of the solution not part of the problem
BE – HAPPY	Recognize and enjoy all your many gifts and blessings
BE – LIEVE	Treasure, nurture, and strengthen your faith in God and the Church

On behalf of Rev. Paul Kochu, Pastor, and the entire Religious Education Staff and Team, sincere thanks to all of you for continued support and cooperation. It is a privilege to be part of your child/children's faith formation.

We ask that you sign and return this sheet to the Religious Ed Office as soon as possible. Your signature verifies that each of you (parents/Guardians, Students, and Catechists) have read this handbook and that you understand and accept all of the information included within.

May the peace of the Lord be with all of us.

Sincerely,

**LINDA T. JOHNSTON,**  
DIRECTOR of FAITH FORMATION & SACRAMENTS

**Parent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Catechist:** \_\_\_\_\_