

## **Family Program - Parents and Parish Handing on the Faith Policies and Procedures (Updated June 2015)**

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### **General Information:**

**Family Program** is the title of our religious education program and spiritual formation process for families with children in elementary school. It was begun here at St. Elizabeth Parish in 1991, after a year-long pilot project. It is based on the Church's constant teaching that parents are the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith. **Family Program** offers parents the opportunity to witness for their children their own faith journey as they grow and learn with their child. Children study with trained catechists in grade level classes, while parents are updated in the essentials of the faith with their own qualified instructors. There is a Home Study option for those wishing to work one on one with their child in their home. In either case, parents who have baptized their child, promise to raise them in the faith. **This involves weekly attendance at Mass in addition to religious education classes.**

### **Admission:**

All children must be formally registered in the religious education program. An original copy of the baptismal certificate must be provided for each child entering the program. Transfers from another parish faith formation program will require verification from the previous parish. Any child who has not received prior instruction will be evaluated for placement in the appropriate grade level.

### **Registration Fees:**

There is a yearly family registration fee of \$285.00, for both Center-based and Home Study families. This fee represents your commitment to the religious formation of the young people of our parish, and not for services rendered. The fee covers all books and supplies. Any family experiencing financial hardship should contact the Director.

### **Parents' Participation:**

Placement in a designated parents' track will be indicated on the first day of classes. The course of study will be based on past participation in the program. Upon completion of 5 years of study, participants will receive parish certification. Once a parent achieves certification, participation will continue to be expressed by Mass attendance each week. Those parents not wishing to achieve certification may opt to become involved in ministerial service to the program (ie. Hall monitor, adult supervisor, catechist) based on program needs. Children in babysitting, PreK and Kindergarten must have a parent in the building while class is in session. In addition, parents of children with allergies requiring the use of an **EpiPen** must always be present in the building during their child's scheduled session time.

### **Class Session:**

Classes are in session in the Parish Center from fall through spring for parents and children in grades one through six. Childcare will be provided for all younger siblings of students enrolled in the program. There are PreK and Kindergarten classes for three, four and five year old youngsters, as well as babysitting services for those under three. Classes are offered on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, from 4:30 to 5:45 pm and on Tuesday evenings from 7:15 to 8:30 pm.

### **Class Placement:**

Class assignments are based on receipt of a completed registration form and accompanying fee. We are unable to accommodate requests for class placement with specific catechists or students.

**Arrival and Dismissal:**

Parents/legal guardians and children will meet in the church promptly at 4:30 or 7:15 pm for prayer and announcements. Children will be dismissed to their classrooms, where they will be picked up at dismissal (5:45 or 8:30 pm). If someone other than the parent/guardian is to pick up the child, the catechist must be informed of this in writing before class begins. You are responsible for informing our office of any orders of protection and/or custody issues we need to be aware of.

**Program Calendar:**

A program calendar will be mailed to you in September. Please refer to this throughout the year, as it will give you information concerning dates we are in session and special events that are planned.

**Cancellation of classes will be posted on our website ([www.stelizabeth.org](http://www.stelizabeth.org)) and on News 12.**

**Attendance and Lateness:**

Children are expected to attend class on a weekly basis. If a child is going to be absent, a call should be made to the religious ed office on or before the day of the absence. A note explaining the absence should be provided when the child returns. Frequent absences will require a doctor's note. Those with excessive absences will be contacted by the Director to discuss the completion of missed work, and/or repeating the grade level. Families who are consistently late to class will be asked to move to the Home Study Option.

**Early Withdrawal:**

No one may take a child from class early without an Early Withdrawal Form. It is obtained from the front desk and must be signed by the Director. The signed form must be given to the catechist at the start of the session. Parents will pick up their child at the classroom, retrieve the signed form, and present it to the desk monitor before leaving the building with the child.

**Classroom Behavior:**

Courtesy and respect is expected from our children at all times. Discipline problems will be referred to the Director. No food or drinks may be allowed in the classroom. Children should be encouraged to use the bathroom before coming to class. Homework may be given at the discretion of the catechist, with clear consequences stated for incomplete assignments.

**Textbooks:**

All educational materials that have been selected for use in the program are in conformity with the guidelines published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

**Home Study Option:**

This option allows parents to instruct their own child in their home each week. They take the responsibility for completing the prescribed grade level curriculum with their child using the same materials as the Center-based students. Participation in the Religion Fair that is held each March is required. In addition, children must meet with the Director yearly with their completed workbooks for an assessment as to readiness to continue on to the next grade level.

**Children with Special Needs:**

We make every effort to accommodate the special needs of some children. Those with mild developmental delays may be placed in a classroom with an assistant, if possible. For children who are more challenged, we offer a comprehensive program that meets monthly and is tailored to the needs of these children. Parents remain with their child during instructional time.

