

St. Denis Religious Education
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Dear Parents:

Welcome to the St. Denis Religious Education program. This handbook is designed to inform you and your child of the procedures and expectations here at St. Denis Parish. We also wish to inform you about the curriculum for each grade and the importance of attending each year. All of our students are expected to observe and respect the procedures set forth in this handbook. Please note some changes from last year.

The Second Vatican Council states that ***“Parents are the first and primary teachers of their children.”*** Teachings are based on the authority of the Catholic Church and the materials, books, videos, activities, etc. are approved and recommended by the diocese of Worcester. The religious education program of St. Denis seeks to assist families in passing on our faith by providing children, youth and adults with the knowledge, experience and skills needed to become true and faithful disciples of Jesus. We believe that a partnership between our pastor, coordinator, teachers, parents, students and the community will create the team effort that is so important to achieve this goal.

We encourage students and their families to become active church members through the many activities, programs, ministries and volunteer opportunities available. It is a way to share more fully in the life of your church. With everyone’s participation, the parish grows spiritually and a powerful sense of community is cultivated.

A lot of time and effort goes into forming the classes. Since we try hard to accommodate a variety of schedules and are working with volunteers, we ask that you don’t request changes to the class lists unless it is absolutely necessary. We also work to keep class sizes as equal as possible. If your schedule cannot be accommodated, you do have the option to homeschool your student in a non-sacrament year, until they are able to attend their class. Please keep in mind, however, that a lot of how and what they learn is through group discussions and projects. This is an important part of community building.

The PINK, parent/student agreement form MUST be signed and returned to your student’s teacher at the first class or meeting. Volunteers will be on hand to collect them. ***There are THREE areas on this form that we need you to sign off on.*** Be sure to get the teacher’s contact information at this first meeting so if you have any questions during the school year, you can contact them. If you have any further questions or concerns you are welcome to call me at 476-2002, on Sunday mornings 7:30 – 11:30, Monday – Thursday from 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. or Sunday and Monday evenings from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. If I am unavailable at the time of your call, please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as possible. I check my e-mails routinely, so you may prefer to e-mail me at karchambault@saintdenischurch.com.

We look forward to sharing this experience with your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Kathy Archambault
Coordinator of Religious Education

Classes are held in the rectory, Church basement or in the teacher's home depending on the grade your child is in. Some classes meet weekly while others meet every other week. This schedule can vary due to holidays, school vacations, or teacher availability. Be sure to **save and **check** your schedule for the correct week of your child's class and watch the Church bulletin each week for updates. Notices and updates are also posted on our web-site and notices for certain events are sent home with students. ***It is not up to the teachers to make sure you are aware of all events!*** They will help with reminders, but it is your responsibility to keep updated through the resources made available to you. If your child misses a class, the teacher should be contacted to find out what information may have been missed.

The St. Denis web site is a valuable resource with many materials that can be downloaded. Check this weekly at: www.saintdenischurch.com for all Parish information.

These are the ways we keep in touch with our families and ask for your cooperation. **

All Grades – Weekly worship at Mass and participation in the Sacraments is the most important expression of our faith. All students and their families should attend Mass weekly and on Holy days throughout the entire year. When Mass is missed, you miss the prayers of faith, God's word as told in Sacred Scripture and you miss receiving Holy Communion. The Eucharist is a privilege and is essential nourishment for our body and soul. Worshiping at Mass each week will help the entire family deepen their relationship with God and become more familiar and comfortable in their Parish.

COURSE DESCRIPTION BY GRADE

Grades 1 – 8: We use the "Blest Are We" series of books to provide students and their families with a thorough understanding of our Catholic faith. Every year there is a spiral thematic curriculum that is based on the four pillars of the catechism of the Catholic Church. Each year as the children's understanding and faith grow, topics are revisited and new elements are added to continue their faith development. With this approach, children learn all aspects of our Catholic faith at an age-appropriate level.

Pre-K & Kindergarten – Classes are optional although the children really enjoy learning about their faith through art, song and storytelling. Classes are held in the rectory basement and run weekly starting at 8:20 and ending at 9:20. This time affords parents the opportunity to worship at the 8:30 Mass. **Prompt** pick up is essential to avoid congestion when First Grade arrives at 9:30. Check the schedule provided and the weekly Church bulletin for updates. **All** children must be accompanied by an adult during drop off and pick up. (Approx. 22 classes, plus special events)

PRIMARY

First Grade – children are getting prepared for the Second Grade when they will make their First Holy Communion. They will be introduced to some of the basic teachings that the Catholic Church teaches about the Blessed Trinity. They will put together a booklet titled "This Is My Church" (some in class and some at home) and will learn about their church through field trips and group classes. They will focus on the prayers they need to know by Second Grade and will learn the "Lord's Prayer" to music where they will have the opportunity to sing it for the parish during their Christmas show and Grade Mass. ***Practicing all of the prayers at home is still very important since we only meet every other week for 1 ½ hours.*** Classes are held in the rectory basement starting at 9:30 and ending at 11:00. Due to the large number of students, be sure to check your schedule for the correct week and time of your child's class. Also check the Church bulletin and web-site weekly for updates. (Approx. 14 classes, plus special events, grade Masses and 2 parent meetings.)

Second Grade – this year your second grader will be introduced to some of the basic teachings about the sacramental life of the Catholic Church as they discover what it means to belong to the Christian community. This is a **very important** year for the children as they concentrate on the preparation for the Sacrament of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Attendance and parental involvement is imperative and **any missed classes or meetings will need to be made up.** (See the schedule for make-up dates.) Three parent meetings are a part of this program and **must** be attended by at least one parent or guardian. A three-hour retreat will take place 3 – 4 weeks before receiving the Sacrament of First Eucharist. Children, accompanied by at least **one** parent or guardian **must** attend the rehearsal on the evening prior to the First Eucharist ceremony. Information will be given to you during the year to keep you updated. Classes are held in the Church basement and run every other week from 9:30 to 11:00. Many classes involve the students getting together as a whole group so please try to have them at each class. Check your schedule, church bulletin and web-site weekly for the correct time and date of all events. (Approx. 14 classes, plus special events & grade Masses)

Third Grade – the focus of Grade 3 is the Church and the kind of community the Church is called to be. The mission, the message, the prayer, and the actions of God's special family will be explored. They will learn about the Saints (downloadable "Saints" form off web-site should you misplace yours) and one of the Third Grade Masses is on the Sunday before "All Saints Day", where they form a procession of Saints into the Church. Prayers should continue to be practiced at home. Classes are held in the Church basement and run every other week from 9:30 to 11:00. Be sure to check your schedule for the correct time of your child's class. Also check the Church bulletin and web-site weekly for updates. (Approx. 14 classes, plus special events and grade Masses.)

INTERMEDIATE

Fourth Grade – this year your fourth grader will learn about the Church's rich tradition of moral example and teaching. This tradition will provide motivation and direction for your child's moral growth. This is an important year as students explore the Sacrament of Reconciliation in greater depth. They will begin to learn about the devotion of the rosary. Prayers should continue to be practiced at home. Classes are held in the Church basement and run every other week from 9:30 to 11:00. Some of these 4th grade classes will involve the students getting together as an entire group. Please try to have the students at each class if it is at all possible. Be sure to check your schedule for the correct time of your child's class. Also check the Church bulletin and web-site weekly for updates. (Approx. 14 classes, plus special events and grade Masses.)

Fifth Grade – the students will study the sacramental life of the Catholic Church. Your child will also learn that the Church is the sacrament or sign of Christ in the world. They will come to appreciate the difference Jesus makes in our lives. Students will continue to learn about the Rosary and will be introduced to the children's Way of the Cross. Prayers should continue to be practiced at home. Classes are held in the Church basement and run every other week from 9:30 to 11:00. Be sure to check your schedule for the correct time of your child's class. Also check the Church bulletin and web-site weekly for updates. (Approx. 14 classes, plus special events and grade Masses.)

Sixth Grade – the focus will be on the Bible and the students will be presented with their own Bibles at Mass in the beginning of the year. They will study the Old and New Testaments and explore the Gospels. Classes are held at the teacher's homes or in the Church basement from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. or a time set by the teacher. They gather on Sunday or Monday evenings (possibility of one Sunday morning class) and should bring their bibles with them to every class. **Check with your student's teacher, the Church bulletin, and web-site weekly for updates to schedule.** Classes run in two, approximately six-week segments with a break in between. Grade Masses, special events and one community service project are also a part of their program.

YOUNG ADOLESCENT

Seventh Grade – the theme of Grade 7 is Jesus. Students study the life, values, and teachings of Jesus and are challenged to live a Christian lifestyle. Through Scripture, students will learn to appreciate the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation as signs of hope. Students are encouraged to develop Christian attitudes and behavior for themselves and others. Classes are held at the teacher's homes or in the Church basement from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. or a time set by the teacher. They gather on Sunday or Monday evenings (possibility of one Sunday morning class). **Check with your student's teacher, the Church bulletin, and web-site weekly for updates to schedule.** Classes run in two, approximately six-week segments with a break in between. Grade Masses, special events and one community service project are also a part of their program.

Eighth Grade – the theme of Grade 8 is the Church. Students survey the major historical periods of the Church in order to come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of their catholic heritage. Students will be encouraged to see how their own lives reflect the beliefs and commitment of the Church community by participating in the worshiping life of the Church through personal prayer, Mass and the sacraments, and living a Christian way of life. Students will learn that Jesus calls his followers to live lives of compassion, care, and concern for their fellow human beings, particularly those in need. Field trips and community service projects teach the students valuable lessons about helping others. Classes are held at the teacher's homes or in the Church basement from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. or a time set by the teacher. They gather on Sunday or Monday evenings (possibility of one Sunday morning class). **Check with your student's teacher, the Church bulletin, and web-site weekly for updates to schedule.** Classes run in two, approximately six-week segments with a break in between. Grade Masses, special events and at least one community service project are also a part of their program.

<i>Plan To Attend</i>					
SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.
1	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	13

OLDER ADOLESCENT – Student's need to take responsibility for contacting me or the teachers, and scheduling any make up classes, NOT parents.

(Please read the notice to 9th & 10th grade parents on the web-site)

Ninth and Tenth Grades – these classes are designed to prepare students for entering into the Confirmation program in the 11th grade so attendance is imperative. They need to begin taking some responsibility for their own schedules so they should be the ones communicating with their teachers. Make-up work is required for **any** missed classes and extra assignments and make up classes will be required for anyone missing more than one class. (See schedule for make-up class dates and times) Students should contact the make-up teacher to sign up for the class and to be sure the class is still being held (not enough students signed up) and find out what room they will be meeting in. Assignments not completed may delay receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation. Community service and Guest Speakers are also a part of this program. Classes are held at the teacher's homes or in the Church basement from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. or a time set by the teacher. They gather on Sunday or Monday evenings and ***rather than miss a class they should try to join in on another.*** **Students, check with your teacher, the Church bulletin, and web-site weekly for updates to schedule.** Classes run in two, six-week segments with a break in between.

CONFIRMATION CLASS – Student’s need to take responsibility for contacting me or the teachers, and scheduling any make up classes, NOT parents.

Eleventh & Twelfth Grade – this is the Confirmation class. It is **not** a graduation, but an ongoing conversion and development into a Christian way of life. There is no age at which we stop learning or discerning about ourselves, or our relationship to God and others. Our Confirmation class begins in the eleventh grade with interactive lessons and discussions designed to show students how to live as a follower of Jesus. They will continue this preparation as it leads up to the retreat and Confirmation in the fall of their senior year.

Classes are generally held once a month on Sunday evenings with one or two late Sunday morning classes in the winter, which usually total to about 6. These meetings can only be missed for emergency reasons or illness and make up will still be required. Times & dates may get changed if necessary, but advance notice will be given and reminders are sent home after each class. **PARENTS – please be sure your student keeps you updated, but students need to be responsible for their schedules and the communication with the teachers.** Make-up work is required for **any** class missed. Extra assignments and make-up classes will be given to anyone missing more than one class. There are also certain requirements for this class that you will be notified of in advance and we ask for your cooperation in completing them on time. We should not have to make repeated requests for any paperwork since ample time is given to complete everything. **Work that is not turned in or time that is not made up, may delay receiving the Sacrament.**

Class time is spent preparing the students for the Sacrament of Confirmation while exploring their willingness to make this spiritual journey toward a deeper union with God and what it means to be a true disciple of Jesus. This is a **very important** year and while we stress “student responsibility”, parental involvement is crucial. Students need to feel and understand that this sacrament is important to the entire family. There is one parent/student meeting that is a part of this program and must be attended by the student and at least **one** parent or guardian. A make-up meeting would have to be scheduled before the first Confirmation class if it is missed. There is also one “**Parent Only**” meeting scheduled in February.

Weekly worship at Mass, the Living Stations community service project, weekend retreat (*traditionally in September of senior year*) and special events are also a part of this program and are **not optional**. All Candidates for Confirmation must attend a retreat prior to Confirmation. Candidates and Sponsors must be at the Rehearsal on the night prior to Confirmation. (*Dates to be announced, but traditionally in October of Senior Year.*) **Students, check with your teacher, church bulletin, and web-site weekly for updates to the schedule.**



GENERAL INFORMATION

Schedules, events, parish happenings, community & diocesan events can be found in the weekly bulletin. Some information is also posted on the Douglas access channel. Periodic Religious Education Newsletters highlight many of the special events and volunteers in our program and parish community. Our web-site has also become a valuable resource. See the instruction page in handbook. www.saintdenischurch.com.

TARDINESS AND ABSENCES

There are not that many classes during the year and students should try to attend them all. ***Every grade is another important step in your student's faith formation.*** Make up work will be sent home for classes missed and failure to return the work may delay the receiving of Sacraments. Arriving late to class is disruptive to the student and the student's classroom. Classes only last 1 ½ hours, please try to be on time. Whenever a student is absent, please try to call the teacher. ***These teachers are volunteers*** and work hard to plan their classes for a certain number of students around already busy schedules. They will be able to put together any material that was missed for the student to make up. Prompt pick-up from class is also essential as these teachers have families of their own to get home to.

SUNDAY* AND MONDAY EVENING CLASSES** ***(SEE NEW PARKING POLICY IN HANDBOOK)

Grades 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10 may choose from classes on Sunday or Monday nights. ***Some grades may have a Sunday morning option.*** We will do our best to accommodate your request, but it ***cannot be guaranteed.*** We are working with volunteer teachers and have to be flexible with their availability. If your child cannot make their normally scheduled night one week, they are invited to join in on another class ***if there is room.*** We work hard trying to accommodate so many different schedules and forming classes for over 550 students and 55 plus teachers is no small task. We ask that you work with us by not requesting class changes unless absolutely necessary. Schedules are sent to the schools and town sports programs. They work with us to avoid scheduling conflicts. If a problem arises, or you become aware of a potential conflict, please call the rectory.

CANCELLATIONS

On days when classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, the following radio and television stations will make announcements. We will also announce it on the rectory answering machine. Teachers are notified personally, so you can also try to call them.

WTAG - AM 560
WCVB - Channel 5

WSRS - FM 96
WBZ - Channel 4 (weekends only)

Please be sure to tune in to one of these stations to find out if classes are cancelled. If schools got cancelled, but the weather improves, we may decide to hold the evening classes. Please be aware that teachers who hold classes in their homes may decide to cancel even if St. Denis hasn't. Contact your student's teacher to be sure!

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

All students **must** provide us with an emergency number on the registration form in the event that we can't reach you and need to contact someone else. We will always try to contact the parents first. It is essential that this information be kept up to date. Registration forms now contain areas for cell phone and e-mail information. **If there are any changes, the rectory should be notified immediately.**

(All information is kept confidential; for office use only.)

NUTRITION ***(SEE ADDITIONAL NOTICE)

Students should eat a nutritious meal and be well rested before class. Although many teachers or volunteer parents provide a snack, it ***is not*** required and shouldn't be considered the students' meal. ***Please don't send students into the classroom with their dinners. This is even more disrupting than arriving late.

MASS / READINGS

If your child is selected to do a reading or petition at their Grade Mass they will be provided with a copy at least one week in advance. **Please be sure they practice at home** and are seated in the front pew by **8:20 a.m.** We include instructions during that time to help them to feel more comfortable. Gift bearers should arrive no later than **8:25** and should sit in the second pew. Father will announce their names when it is their turn. Their teacher or I will be seated with them throughout the Mass. If they volunteered, but cannot be there, please contact the teacher as soon as possible.

RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is offered each week on Saturday, a half-hour before Mass. We also offer it at special times to all of our students (grades 2 – 12), teachers and their families during Advent and Lent. Please check your schedules for the dates and times. “Reconciliation” means coming together again. By receiving this wonderful Sacrament, we are offered a chance to reestablish or deepen our relationship with God. The church teaches that everyone should receive the sacrament at least once every year.

PARENT/CHURCH PARTNERSHIP

Families come in all shapes and sizes. But whatever the configuration, it is in the family that we learn our first lessons of life. Parents and guardians are encouraged to become involved with your child’s Religious Education. There are many ways to achieve this by volunteering some of your time to the program, discussions at home, reviewing any materials from the lessons that your child brings home, family prayer, receiving the Holy Sacraments (Eucharist and Reconciliation) and most importantly, **weekly worship at Mass**. All of this will send the message to your child that you are interested and feel that practicing your faith is an important part of your life. (Resource books and other materials are available to borrow at your request). ***Whatever we do in our parish religious education program can only supplement what is happening at home.*** God invites us into a personal relationship of love, but it is up to us to respond. When we say “Yes” we begin a journey of faith that lasts a lifetime. Becoming an active member of your parish will bring you and your child closer to God and your community.

Please check the volunteer opportunity list and the Parish Resource Directory for the many different ways in which you can help. All of us together help to make the program and the parish successful.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community service is an important part of the student’s Religious Education experience and the type of service they will be involved with is age appropriate. There are educational field trips in some grades and opportunities for students to use their time and talents helping various organizations and people in need. You will be notified of any events in which your child is expected to participate. Parents are invited to join in as well!

CODE OF CONDUCT *******(SEE NEW POLICY)

RESPECT

St. Denis Religious Education students at all times will:

- † Treat others in a civil, respectful, and courteous manner.
- † Respect and do not break, damage or deface any Church property.
- † Respect the personal property of others.
- † Be honest in their words and deeds and use respectful language.
- † Behave in a way that does not disrupt learning.
- † Behave in a quiet, respectful manner in Church.
- † Turn off all electronic devices, and put cell phones in the basket upon entering class. *****students who are caught with a cell phone or any other device during class, will have it taken away and returned to parents at pick-up time*****
- † Remove hats while inside.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SITUATIONS

The St. Denis Religious Education program is composed of volunteer parents and parishioners. They will do what they can to provide assistance to those children facing special needs, such as creating a “safe” classroom environment, but if a student’s situation is severe, parents may need to stay with them in the classroom or choose the home schooling option.

FOOD ALLERGIES

1. Student’s may bring in their own snack and control the areas they touch by bringing in disinfectant wipes.
2. Parents may pick students up 15 minutes early to avoid snack time altogether.
3. Parents may choose to home school the student with the guidance and support of the religious education coordinator.

If the student’s allergy requires them to carry an EpiPen, the student or parent would need to be responsible for administering it, not the teacher.

LEARNING OR PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

We do not always have extra volunteers who can stay one-on-one with a student. If your student requires this type of individual attention, you may need to find someone who can help your child, or you can stay yourself. Anyone 16 years or older who volunteers to work with children, would need to complete a C.O.R.I. review and Safe Training course.

If your child has a special situation that you need us to consider, please contact the rectory in advance so we can discuss the options available.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING AND CURRICULUM

In the wake of the 2002 crisis, the bishops signed a *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*. To fulfill that pledge, the Office of Healing and Prevention at the Diocese of Worcester requires that “all those working with minors or associated with minors or who have the potential to be associated with minors must have a CORI check, Safe Environment Training and sign the Code of Conduct for the Diocese of Worcester.”

In addition, Article 12 of the *Charter* also calls for Safe Environment Education for all children in our parishes, and Safe Environment Education for all parents.

In an effort to comply with Article 12 of the Charter for the *Protection of Children and young People*, every year we will present the latest Safe Environment Educational information from Worcester to our First Grade parents. A DVD containing a special message from the Bishop along with a booklet titled “About Child Abuse” will be presented at the end of the first parent meeting.

More detailed information about Safe Environment Education can be found within this handbook, on our web-site and in the pamphlet display in the church. Parents must sign the section of the agreement form that they have read the information about the Safe Environment Education.

The protection of children entrusted to our care has always been of paramount importance and we thank you for sharing in this vital ministry in the Church and helping to put the needs of the children first.

ST. DENIS CHURCH HALL RULES AND REGULATIONS

With so many people using the church hall, it is imperative that we all share in the responsibility of keeping it clean. We need to teach our students the importance of respecting church property, picking up after themselves and also having respect for the people who have to clean and maintain the church.

1. Classes generally run for only 1½ hrs. Students should not have to make multiple trips to the restrooms in that amount of time. It is very distracting, especially to the classroom nearest the restroom.
2. Use the trash receptacles. Do not stuff paper towels into the toilets or urinals!
3. There is absolutely “NO SMOKING” anywhere inside the church.
4. If you drop anything (snacks, papers, pencils, etc.) on the floor, pick it up. Don't leave a mess for someone else to take care of.
5. DO NOT tear tablecloths and break pencils. These items cost money and should not have to be replaced so frequently.
6. Only authorized adults are allowed to touch the room dividers. These are easily broken if not moved carefully.
7. Students need permission to be on the stage. If you are helping your teacher, be careful with all equipment. Ask for assistance if you don't know how to use the copy machine and be careful with the pencil sharpeners. We have had to replace several after a short amount of time because people are burning them out.
8. Students, DO NOT open and close the curtains on the stage or pull on them. There is no reason to go near the curtains if you use the side doors to the stage.
9. If you help your teacher with their box, please put it back in the section for their grade with the ***names facing out***. These boxes can also be quite heavy so ask someone to help you carry it. Sometimes there are notices for the teacher on top of their box. Be careful that these papers don't fall off.

We do not have a full time janitor. This parish belongs to all of us and we need to take pride in its appearance. Please be sure to take the extra few minutes to follow the rules that are outlined on this page.

Thank you for caring.

**Keep Our
Church**



BEAUTIFUL

PARENT / STUDENT AGREEMENT

*****Parents: Please sign in all three areas*****

**I have read the procedures and expectations with my child / children and we will observe and respect the policies set forth in this handbook.*

FIRST PARENT SIGNATURE

Date

Student # 1 Signature

Date

Student # 2 Signature

Date

Student # 3 Signature

Date

Student # 4 Signature

Date

Student # 5 Signature

Date

**I have read the enclosed information about the SAFE curriculum from the Diocese of Worcester and understand where I can find more detailed information to learn more.*

SECOND PARENT SIGNATURE

Date

**There are times when we would like to take pictures of the students during special projects, class pictures, or shows and display them in the church or include them with the project to bring home. Please sign the correct line indicating whether you will or will not give permission for your student to be photographed.*

THIRD PARENT SIGNATURE

Yes, I give you permission to photograph my child. _____

No, I do not wish to have my child photographed. _____

*****Please complete both sides of this form, remove from the packet, and bring it with you to the first class or meeting. Volunteers will collect them for all of the teachers and blank forms will be available for you to fill out if you should forget to bring yours with you. All forms need to be completed and returned that first day with all three areas signed. Thank you for your cooperation and for any time you can give to our program.**

*****OVER**

†SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION†

Each sacrament is an encounter with Christ that strengthens and nourishes our faith.

Preparation for and reception of a sacrament is based on readiness and desire, not on age or grade. Although here at St. Denis we do celebrate the sacraments in particular grades, much depends on the individual's readiness. Each grade is another step towards preparing a candidate for a sacrament and deepening their faith.

Anyone who has missed receiving any of the sacraments may enroll in our delayed sacramental program. Please contact the rectory for further information.



†First Eucharist – is generally celebrated at age 7 or 8 in grade 2. Candidates must have a good understanding about the importance of receiving The Eucharist and also about the life of Jesus. Students enrolled in Catholic schools are expected to receive this Sacrament with their parish community. Parent meetings and retreats must be attended and these children are also invited to join in on any of our classes throughout the year.



†First Reconciliation – We received a letter from Bishop McManus in June 2004 concerning this sacrament. In keeping with the Code of Canon Law the Bishop would like us to ensure that the first communion of children is always “preceded by sacramental confession and absolution.” (Canon 914, RS #87) We will therefore, provide age appropriate instruction for this sacrament during the 2nd grade. All candidates will understand the importance of the sacrament and the gifts that it offers. Students enrolled in Catholic schools are expected to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time with their parish community. Parent meetings must be attended and these children are also invited to join in on any of our classes through out the year.

†Confirmation – preparation for this sacrament begins in **grade 9** and continues through **grade 10**. These classes are to be attended by anyone wishing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Any time that is missed must be made up. The only exceptions are students who are enrolled in Catholic schools. **All** students (including those in Catholic schools) **must** attend the **11th grade** Confirmation classes, participate in the community service projects, and attend the weekend retreat in order to be confirmed in the fall of their senior year. Any time that is missed must be made up.



CLASSES RESUME

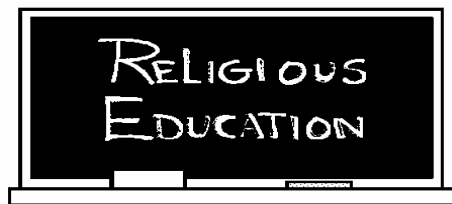
All registered families should have received a Religious Education Handbook and a customized, family schedule for Religious Education classes. If you misplace this, there are copies on the stage. You may also obtain this information and more from our web-site at www.saintdenischurch.com. A special request would need to be made for another customized, family schedule.

*Please be sure to attend the parent/student/teacher meetings for each of your students. New policies from the Diocese of Worcester will be discussed and teachers and parents should use this time to discuss any concerns and exchange contact information. *These teachers are volunteers and need your support! Please take a moment to meet them!*

****NEW INFORMATION****

****Please return your PINK parent/student agreement form to the teacher at the first meeting. Blank forms are in the new addition or on our web-site for anyone who misplaces theirs. All forms are due at the first class since they need to be kept on file through out the year. Volunteers will be collecting them before students begin and parents will be contacted to bring in any forgotten forms.****

The bulletin boards in the church and rectory, the Church bulletin, and our web-site should be checked regularly as resources for program information.



www.saintdenischurch.com

PK – K – parents bring students to the Rectory basement with your agreement forms at 8:20 on **September 25th**, Pick up at 9:20.

1A, 2nd, 3rd – students & parents meet in Church following the 8:30 Mass on **September 18th** for class assignments. Parents are asked to escort their student to class with the teacher for a brief introduction and to turn in forms. Pick up at 11:00.

1B, 4th & 5th – students & parents meet in Church following the 8:30 Mass on **September 11th** for class assignments. Parents are asked to escort their student to class with the teacher for a brief introduction and to turn in forms. Pick up at 11:00.

6th, 7th & 8th – 6th Grade students will receive their bibles at the 8:30 Mass on **September 25th**. 6th, 7th & 8th students & parents meet in the Church on **October 2nd at 6:00 p.m.** for class assignments and meeting with your student's teacher. Bring your completed agreement forms to this meeting. Classes begin **October 16th or 17th**.

9th & 10th – Students & parents meet in the Church on **October 16th at 6:00 p.m.** for class assignments and meeting with your student's teacher. Bring your completed agreement forms to this meeting. Classes begin on **October 23rd or 24th**.

11th – students & parents will have a brief meeting in the **Church** on **October 23rd** at **11:15 a.m.** to discuss expectations and turn in forms. You will meet the teachers and receive packets explaining the Confirmation requirements throughout the year. Confirmation classes begin on **November 20th at 6:00 p.m. in the Church Hall.** ***Note: some are A.M. classes and some are P.M. Follow the schedule!**

*****If you still haven't registered, please go to the new addition and someone will assist you and work to place your child in a class. If you still owe money, registration forms or baptismal certificates, someone will help with that as well.**

CONTINUED...

ST. DENIS

Mission Statement

"The Religious Education Program of St. Denis seeks to assist families in passing on our faith by providing children, youth, and adults with the knowledge, experiences and skills needed to become true and faithful disciples of Jesus. We enthusiastically support the ministries, which will help to build up our community and proclaim the Kingdom of God."

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HANDBOOK

IMPORTANT NEW POLICIES

ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

PLEASE take a moment to go over the sections of our handbook that pertain to your student. *There are some important changes and new policies from last year.* Information is printed on both sides, and you should keep this handbook on file, as it will be a source of information as the program progresses.

Sign the parent/student agreement and bring it with you to the first meeting.

This must be handed in before student's start class.

ABOUT THE SCHEDULE

The schedule you have received is customized for your family. The only grade(s) listed are for your student(s). Please refer to this schedule throughout the year and check the church bulletin weekly for any changes or updates. Circumstances do come up that cause us to make revisions, and notices about changes will be posted on our web site - www.saintdenischurch.com, and sent home with students.

The dates, times, and type of event (class, mass, see notes for more abbreviations) are listed in the middle of the schedule followed by the grade # that your student is in. Dates are underlined and in bold print on the calendar portion of the schedule. ***NOTES** at the bottom of the schedule are important and should be highlighted on your calendar at home so they won't be missed.

1st Grade -Your child will be listed as 1A or 1B and will either attend the same weeks as grades 2 & 3 or grades 4 & 5. Please be sure to check the schedule and bulletin for the correct weeks.

Grades 6th - 10th teachers have some flexibility with the schedule, so parents should verify exact dates, times and locations of classes with them. The days and times they are available to teach *may* differ from the main schedule which only list classes on Sunday nights. Generally classes meet on either Sunday or Monday evenings from 6:00 - 7:30, however, there are some Sunday morning classes for these grades. You should highlight your schedule at home accordingly. A meeting for parents and students to get their class assignments and meet their teachers is on your schedule.

Grades 9th & 10th - this program is considered preparation for entering the Confirmation class in 11th grade. Students are expected to take responsibility for attending all classes and events and need to attend scheduled make up classes for anything that is missed. Specific information pertaining to these grades will be handed out during the parent/student meeting.

11th Grade - Our Confirmation class generally meets once a month on **Sunday AM or Sunday PM**. (Follow schedule carefully!) A Confirmation Packet containing important information about the program will be handed out during the parent/student meeting.

~ Please attend meetings for your grade to help avoid miscommunications or misunderstandings as the year progresses. ~

REGISTRATION DATES FOR 2012/ 2013

With 540 students and over 50 teachers in our program, it is necessary to hold early registrations. It has also proven to be more convenient for families to hold registrations while classes are still in session. These registration dates, however, need to be coordinated with Holy Week, Easter, School Vacations and First Communions. We spend a lot of time over the summer months working on schedules, updating computer information, ordering books, purchasing supplies, distributing all of these books & supplies, recruiting & training teachers, substitutes & volunteers, forming and organizing over 40 classes and more. All of this depends on **how many students** are enrolled in the program.

This past registration has been our most successful one yet with so many of you sending your forms back or bringing them by during the scheduled registration times. It really helped to eliminate a lot of extra work for us and we appreciate that you made it a priority and got it completed. **THANK YOU!**

This year we will once again mail out this information on March 1st and ask that **everyone** please take a moment to verify the information and return the form and payment back to us through the mail, collection basket at Mass or bring to one of the registration dates listed below. **It takes only minutes** to register, but saves us a great deal of time when we can enter all of the information into the computer at the same time. **Registering on time also eliminates the need for extra mailings and phone calls.** If you are unable to return this information back to us on time, please contact the rectory before the last registration date.

*** Any registration received after **July 1st, 2012** will be subject to a \$15.00 late fee. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. It is greatly appreciated.



Religious Education Registration dates and times for 2012/2013 school year:

3/24 & 3/25/12, following all Masses.

3/31 & 4/1/12, following all Masses.

Please mark these dates on your calendar. They are also listed under "notes" on the bottom of the schedule.)

***First time registrations are not subject to late fee.

ATTENTION

ALL 9TH & 10TH GRADE PARENTS & STUDENTS

Our 9th & 10th grade program is considered preparation for entering the Confirmation class in 11th grade. Students are expected to take responsibility for attending all classes and events. We run both Sunday and Monday evening classes and try to include a Sunday morning class as well so if your student cannot make their scheduled class one week they may be able to join one of the other classes. Students will be provided with a list of all 9th & 10th grade teacher's phone numbers and they should be the ones to contact them if they need to switch or miss a class, not parents.

The discussions held in class cannot be duplicated and they are an invaluable way for the students to learn about their faith as well as to build a community tie with each other that is so important as they enter the Confirmation class in the 11th grade. If a class must be missed, it is the student's responsibility to obtain any make-up papers from their teacher, complete and return them by the next scheduled class or event. If multiple classes are missed, students are required to attend and sign in at make-up classes (dates already on the schedule) and possibly extra Church events as well. If you know that there are going to be several classes missed, the teacher or I should be notified in advance so that other arrangements can be made. We want to work with you, but you are responsible to keep the lines of communication open. Thanks to all of you who took the responsibility to work with us last year and make this happen.

While we understand the many demands placed on families each day as they work to coordinate all of their schedules, we also understand that the student's spiritual development deserves equal attention. We have tried to keep the number and length of classes down and generally there are only 5 - 6 meetings per session. We don't feel that this is a monumental commitment and we are willing to work with anyone who is having trouble with schedules. The students only need to show a willingness and desire to work with us as well.

The time spent preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation should be taken seriously. This Sacrament is not a graduation, but an ongoing conversion and development into a Christian way of life. It is one more step on our spiritual journey toward a deeper union with God. There is no age at which we stop learning or discerning about ourselves, or our relationship to God and others.

We work hard at St. Denis to coordinate a program of this size and there are requirements that the students are expected to meet, just as there are with school, sports and anything else that you are committed to. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding and look forward to another year as we learn together the messages of Jesus Christ.

God Bless

DISMISSAL & PARKING POLICY*(please read!)
GRADES PK - 5

Due to the number of students enrolled in our program, it became necessary to implement a dismissal procedure. We apologize for any inconveniences, but student safety is our priority. Please respect and adhere to the following:

1. Please be on time when picking up your student. These teachers are volunteers with their own families to get home to. Be assured, however, that someone will remain with students if you are running a bit late.
2. No parking on Caswell Court or Manchaug Road. There are many people walking to and from the rectory and church parking lots and it is difficult to see around cars that are parked along the roads, especially in bad weather.
3. No parking along the back driveway to the rectory or along the side of the rectory parking lot and garage. This driveway also needs to be kept open for people who are trying to pull in and out of the rectory parking lot. It also becomes very dangerous in the winter.
4. Parents must send a note to the teacher if someone else is picking up their student. Teachers will ask for identification if they do not know who is picking up the student.

There is more than enough space to accommodate all cars in our parking lots.

The basement of the rectory gets extremely crowded during pick up and drop off times, so we ask that you wait outside (dress accordingly for weather) until the teacher either brings students out to you or is ready to have you come in.

PK & Kindergarten - class is dismissed at 9:20. Please be on time because we have 1st grade classes arriving at 9:30.

1A & 1B - drop off is at 9:30. Please do not bring your child in earlier than that because PK & Kindergarten finish at 9:20 and need those 10 minutes to get their students dismissed. This can sometimes take a little bit longer in the winter with all of the hats, coats & mittens, so we ask for your patience and understanding. First grade is dismissed at 11:00.

2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th - class begins at 9:30 and ends at 11:00. Please wait in the new addition until someone announces that classes are dismissed. Please be aware that Mass may still be going on. Doors open at 11:00 for pick up.

GRADES 6 - 11 *

6th, 7th, 8th, 9th & 10th - for classes held in the church hall on ***Sunday nights**, students should be **dropped off** in front, but cars need to keep moving so the others behind them can drop off as well. If you need to wait for any reason, please park in the lot and **not** in front of the church. For **pick up**, students will be escorted out by the teachers to their designated parking lot. (*See back for more details along with enclosed dismissal diagram) Follow signs to correct lot for your grade. *Monday night classes - same policy as always.*

11th - Confirmation classes held in the church hall. Parking is available in the lots for students who are driving.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

***Please review this policy with your student every year**

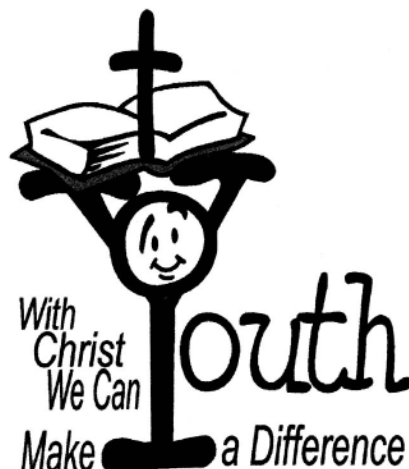
We have had some terrific classes and wonderful students, and overall we are very proud of the respect they have shown our teachers. Unfortunately, we have experienced some problems with excessive disruptive behavior and disrespect from a few students. This cannot be tolerated, so we have implemented a 1 - 2 - 3 discipline policy for grades 6 - 11.

If a student becomes excessively disruptive or disrespectful we will move their seat if necessary and they will be asked to stop. **That's 1.** If it continues they will be taken aside by their teacher or Mrs. Archambault and given a final warning. **That's 2.** If it still continues we will call parents and ask that they pick their student up. **That's 3.**

Parents will need to set up a meeting with student, parent, teacher and Mrs. Archambault before they are allowed to come back to class. We do not expect that we will ever have to get to #3, but this past year we did find it necessary to implement #2 with some of our students.

Grades PK - 5: the 1 - 2 - 3 discipline policy will be handled according to the age of the student by changing the seating arrangement, implementing time outs or sending a note home to parents if it becomes necessary.

**Please discuss this policy with your student every year before classes begin and remind them that our teachers volunteer their time and deserve respect. Students should not be carrying on other conversations while the teacher is talking and trying to teach. Appropriate language should be used at all times and students should treat others the way they would want others to treat them. All we ask is that they come to class with an open mind and heart and be respectful of our volunteer teachers and each other.*



WELCOME BACK!

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND REMINDERS

www.saintdenischurch.com

Check your Grade Schedules and Special Events calendar for complete listings.

Have you completed your registration form and sent in the registration fee?

(Reminders will be handed out at the first class if we are still missing anything.)

These forms and fees help us keep our files up to date and purchase the needed books and supplies.

ALL GRADES – Community Service Projects and more...

Jesus teaches us to help and serve others. Community Service is a wonderful way to help students learn that important message and focus on others for a time. ***Please make sure that your student participates in the Community Service that their class is responsible for.*** Parents and family members are also encouraged to get involved as well and join us in these worthwhile events. ***Service to others should not be a one time event and it really is better to give than to receive!***

August – School supply donations being accepted at the church to help Douglas families in need. **9th & 10th grade** community service project.

September 18th – Teacher Mass @ 8:30 (support for our teachers by attending this Mass)

October 15th – Crop Walk 9:00 Northbridge – **8th grade** project, but everyone is invited to participate. (Help raise money for the Douglas Food Pantry) * ***Get your sponsors early following all Masses on 9/11 & 9/18.***

November 19th & 20th – Support the only Religious Education program fundraiser by baking or purchasing Holiday baked goods hosted by our **7th Grade** class.

February 5th – “Souper” Bowl Sunday. Join our **8th Grade** community service project and help re-stock the Douglas Food Pantry.

February 22nd – Lent begins and our **6th Grade** Rice Bowl project also begins. (Support our students and participate in this worthwhile charitable event.)

March 16th – Living Stations of the Cross (a dynamic presentation by our Confirmation Students that no one should miss!) **11th grade** service.

March 31st & April 1st – Passion Play – watch or participate in this dramatic re-enactment of Jesus’ Passion. Part of our **9th & 10th grade** community service.

April 4th – Learn more about our religious roots by attending the Seder Supper, served by our **9th & 10th grade** students.

April 5th – April 8th – Holy Week (Holiest season in the church. All should attend.)

April 8th – Happy Easter! Our **7th grade** students will host an Easter Egg hunt for our children in Grades 3 and younger.

May 13th – May Procession & Happy Mother’s Day (celebrate Mary, Mother of God)

Through-out the year our **9th & 10th grade** students will be making and selling rosary beads to help purchase school supplies for students in need. These beads make wonderful gifts and are available for immediate sale or they can be special ordered several times during the year. For more detailed information go to the Rosary page on our web-site.

Food donations are accepted all year for the Douglas Food Pantry located in the rectory basement. Our **8th grade** is responsible for this community service project and in addition to the Crop Walk and “Souper” Bowl they also help put together food baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

GOING GREEN FOR GOD

St. Denis Church is doing their part to help save the environment by recycling paper. Join us by bringing your papers from home to the paper retriever in the back parking lot. Please follow the procedures of what can and cannot be recycled.

Community Service hours are also available for students who need it for school. If you would like to help with any of our projects, please contact the rectory for further information.