



91 N. Park Street
Dahlonega, GA 30533
www.stlukercc.org

**PARISH SCHOOL OF
RELIGION
(PSR)
—for—
Grades Pre-K through 10
First Reconciliation/
First Communion / Confirmation
Sundays, 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.**

**2023- 2024
POLICIES
&
INFORMATION**



Dear Parents,

By enrolling your child in the St. Luke Parish School of Religion, you are taking an important step forward in the truth that the family is the domestic church. Pope St. John Paul II said the seeds of our faith are planted in the family. Your moral responsibility as parents is to see that your children are trained in the faith and teachings of the Church. In sum, your role is to get your children to heaven. The clergy and lay instructors never replace your role, nor relieve you of this high calling you have received. Parents must oversee the spiritual growth of their child in the area of faith and morals.

Frequent reception of the sacraments by Sunday Mass (and daily Mass where possible) and frequent confession are cornerstones of a healthy spiritual life. Along with daily prayer and reading scripture, they keep our interior life going. These practices show with our actions where our hearts lie - in the passing things of this world, or in the God who loves us, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

An old cliché says, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Pope St. John Paul II remarked that an image that stood out in his youth was getting up in the middle of the night and seeing his father on his knees praying (his mother had died years before). The saint said that experience of his youth was his first seminary. Once again, my dear parents, God’s plan is that you take care very well of the faith of your family. The one thing necessary is making disciples of Christ. Our children are also the future of the Church. Let’s give our next generation of Catholics the tools necessary to know and defend their faith and become saints.

I extend my priestly blessing to you all, and with warm regards,

Fr. Matt

Policies

MISSION STATEMENT

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states, “Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility¹ and privilege of *evangelizing their children* (2225).” It is the mission and purpose of the PSR program to serve the parishioners of St. Luke by assisting and empowering parents in carrying out this awesome responsibility. **The work of the staff and volunteers of St. Luke’s PSR is to assist you, not replace you.**

MASS ATTENDANCE & FAMILY PRAYER

Mass attendance is the essential and central part of passing on the faith. **St. Luke’s Parish School of Religion complements, but does not replace, your children’s participation at the Sunday liturgy with their family.** Praying and worshipping together as a family will serve well to solidify what is taught in our PSR classes. We encourage and support your commitment to make sure your children attend Mass as well as classes and Wednesday night programs. Discuss with your family how you will schedule attending Sunday Mass as a family and also faithfully attend Religious Education classes and Wednesday night programs.

¹ All faith formation offered at the parish is grounded in the Catholic faith; without it, the parish is unable to achieve its mission. All catechists, other volunteers, and parents or legal guardians are therefore expected to demonstrate support for the parish’s mission by respecting the teachings of the Catholic faith and not contradicting or criticizing them publicly, in words or actions, including through online social media venues.

It is important to understand that over the course of the parish’s faith formation program all participants and volunteers are exposed to teachings that include the Catholic Church’s understanding of marriage as a union exclusively between a man and a woman, that sexual relationships outside of marriage are contrary to Catholic Church teaching, and that sexual identity is grounded in being created as male or female in the image of God. While St. Luke the Evangelist is committed to ensuring that all tenets of the Catholic faith are shared and discussed with respect, compassion, and sensitivity, especially with those who may struggle with them, the parish expects all catechists and parents/guardians to demonstrate support for these and all the teachings of the Roman Catholic faith in a manner consistent with the obligations they freely enter into when they volunteer or enroll.

FEES

Fees collected for PSR classes are for materials and supplies and are a one-time only fee (no other money is collected throughout the school year.) Scholarships and payment plans are available. These accommodations need to be discussed with and approved by Fr. Matt.

HOME STUDY

The Archdiocese of Atlanta allows for religious education to occur in a Catholic school, a parish school of religion, or a home school. If you are interested in more information regarding the home school option, just ask Kelley.

STUDENT ARRIVAL

Children Pre-K through 5th Grade must be escorted to their classrooms by a parent or guardian. Parents are encouraged to escort their children from 6th through 8th, but it is not required. **Students MUST be in class and seated by 9:15 a.m. each Sunday.** Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class and turned into the office at that time. In addition to the disruptive nature of late arrivals, children arriving late may not be recorded as present.

STUDENT DISMISSAL

To ensure the safety of our children, we must require that a parent/guardian of children Pre-K through 5th grade park their cars and come into the building to pick up their children. No Pre-K through 5th grade child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult. Classes end at 10:30 a.m. Please be here on time to pick up your child so the catechists can attend Mass.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Life as a Christian is a commitment to live by the example of Jesus Christ. This commitment includes each student’s acceptance of responsibility for his or her conduct and actions, and each student’s commitment to respect the rights of others. Students are expected to: (1) attend class regularly; (2) participate in activities and discussion; (3) respect their teachers; and (4) respect each other.

DISCIPLINE

Normal discipline problems will be handled by the catechist. If a problem becomes persistent, the student will be sent to the director. A continuing problem may necessitate a call to parents or a request that a parent attend class with the child or face removal from the program. Disciplinary infractions include, but are not limited to: abusive language, fighting, vandalism, disrespect to the teacher or other students, stealing, or leaving the building.

DRESS

Sunday dress is to be expected. Males or females dressed immodestly will not be tolerated. Violation or infraction may result in your child being pulled from the class or from the sacramental occasion.

WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, classes may be canceled. If we need to cancel classes, a group text will be sent to all enrolled families (if a number has been provided). Also, if in doubt, check the parish website at www.stlukercc.org.

ATTENDANCE

Please make every effort to have your child attend class unless there are exceptional circumstances. In order to maintain enrollment for your child, the following attendance requirements must be met:

1. *Your child may not have more than 5 unexcused absences or he/she will be considered withdrawn from the program*
 2. *Your child must attend a minimum of 75% of scheduled classes to receive credit for the year.*
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PSR Curriculums

➤ Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Pre-K and Kindergarten)

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a program based on the belief that young children already have a relationship with God by virtue of their Baptism. The Holy Spirit works through the catechists to nurture this love of God in these children. Catechists utilize the Montessori method to present Scripture and the sacraments to children. Through wondering questions and hands-on material, the children dive deep into the meanings of the Scriptures and prayers. These presentations they can repeat on their own during their work time in a specially-prepared environment called an atrium. Check out www.cgsusa.org.

➤ Word of Life (1st through 6th grade)

This catechetical program is a collaboration between the Augustine Institute and Ignatius Press. In an effort to help children, teachers, parents, and families discover their authentic Catholic identity to reinvigorate fruitful participation in the

Church's life and mission, Word of Life utilizes what they call Four Golden Catechetical Threads:

1. **Salvation History:** Revealing God's presence and plan throughout history and our place in that plan.
2. **Christian Anthropology:** The true human story that answers the questions about our real identity, why we are here, and who are we called to be.
3. **Heroic Virtue & Character Formation:** By cooperating with God's grace and the supernatural virtues, we find our true dignity and purpose and are able to live with heroic virtue and character.
4. **Learning Through Discipleship:** Catechesis that shows why the faith matters and nurtures a deepening integration of the faith in daily life through Christian discipleship.

This curriculum not only provide faithful teaching, but also equips students to be able to explain why the faith is relevant in our modern culture. Check out www.wordofliferies.org.

➤ Faith & Life Series (7th and 8th grade)

Grade 7: The Life of Grace

Grace is our link with God, His gift to us to bring us to Himself and his eternal life, with an emphasis on transmission of grace through the seven sacraments. Also discussed is the role of grace in developing the virtues.

Grade 8: Our Life in the Church

The history of the Church- its founding by Christ, its birth in the Holy Spirit, the marks of the one, true Church, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the saints and the role of the religious and laity up to the present. The structure of the Church Jesus planned, the role of the Magisterium, the clergy, the religious and the laity and our own vocations

Confirmation Prep Classes

Our 9th & 10th graders will be meeting on Sundays from 9:15-10:30 a.m. for their 2-year preparation of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Resources for the class include texts such as *Chosen* a Confirmation preparation program from Ascension – the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *Beginning Apologetics 1: How to Explain & Defend the Catholic Faith*. The hope is that teens encounter and grow in relationship with Christ, deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, and be equipped to go forth and share the Good News.

The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. CCC 27

Post-Confirmation. . . What Now??

We urge those teens who have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation to either deepen their faith by attending our Adult Education class in the Parish Hall during Sunday morning class time or put their faith into practice by assisting in a classroom.

Middle & High School Youth Groups

Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. – John 1:38-39

Teens are invited to join us at youth group. It is an opportunity to be able to come together in community with other teens of the parish with the hope that teens will grow and deepen in fellowship, their faith, and their relationship with Christ. Our High School Youth Group begins Wednesday, August 9th and our Middle School Youth Group’s Kick-Off event will be Wednesday, September 20th. Please contact Victoria Thompson, our Youth Minister with any questions you may have and keep abreast of events through our weekly parish bulletin, Sunday Mass announcements, and e-mails.

Sacraments

FIRST PENANCE & FIRST COMMUNION

Preparation for these Sacraments is a 2-year cycle, typically beginning in the 1st grade, with First Communion to be received at the end of the 2nd grade year. Preparation will be during the regular 1st & 2nd Grade Religious Education Classes at St. Luke’s. There is a 21 class MINIMUM attendance requirement for the required prior year (typically the 1st grade year). Also, Baptism is needed at least 3 months prior to the reception of First Penance.

Parents will attend *four* special sessions for these Sacraments. **Attendance at these Parents’ Meetings is mandatory if your child will be receiving these sacraments during this school year.**

Meeting #1: Sunday, Oct. 1st 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Meeting #2: Sunday, Dec. 3rd 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Meeting #3: Sunday, Feb. 25th 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

Meeting #4: Sunday, March 24th 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

* **Sun., Jan. 28, 2024 at 9:45 a.m.:** First Penance

* **Thurs., May 9, 2024 at 6 p.m.:** First Communion Rehearsal

* **Sat., May 11, 2024 at 10 a.m.:** First Communion Mass

Please direct any inquiries or concerns to Kelley Peffer at kpeffer@stlukercc.org or (706) 864-4779, ext. 7004.

CONFIRMATION

Preparation for this Sacrament of Confirmation requires attendance in a Catholic school, a parish religious education program, or a home school religious education program for at least 2 YEARS prior to reception of the sacrament.

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, students are to be confirmed in the 10th grade. Please contact Victoria Thompson, our Youth Minister, at vthompson@stlukercc.org or (706) 864-4779, ext. 7002 for additional questions.