

Pastorate XXII
Religious Education Program



St. Robert Bellarmine
Patron of Catechists & Catechumens
Pray for us

Welcome to the Religious Education Program for Pastorate XXII!

It is wonderful to be back and to welcome everyone to another year in our religious education program. We hope you have all had an enjoyable and safe summer and look forward to growing in Christ with you and your family this year!

As you are well aware, communication will be vital throughout the year. Please check the parish website (www.pastoratexxii.org) and the parish bulletin regularly for announcements and information on the weekly classes, sacramental preparation sessions, and special events for your child. Make sure you are also signed up to receive special announcements and reminders with Flocknote or WhatsApp!

Pastorate XXII is unique in that we are a Community of Nations. Our largest group of parishioners are Hispanic from all over Central and South America; we have a small French-speaking community from Africa; we have members representing various countries in Europe and Asia; and of course, our English-speaking lay faithful. Each population has its own needs and desires when it comes to a religious education program. In these various communities and cultures, Pastorate XXII is very fortunate to have strong parishioners from each population who conscientiously desire a solid religious education program for their children.

Our *mission* in religious education is to collaborate with parents to form a new generation of Catholics who: know and love Jesus Christ, live as His disciples in the community of the Catholic Church, give witness of Christ's love to the world, and become disciple makers. Toward that end, we strive to offer a unified, solid, and engaging religious education program.

While our children and youth will receive important formation in the parish religious education program, the Church strongly encourages all parents to walk closely with their children as they grow in knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith.

- *“When they are given the dignity and role of fatherhood and motherhood, parents will eagerly carry out their duties of education, especially religious education, which devolves primarily on them.” (Vatican II – Gaudium et Spes no. 48)*
- *The Christian family is the first place for education in prayer. (CCC #2694)*
- *“The parish... is called to be a fraternal and welcoming family where Christians become aware of being the people of God. ...It must however, continue ‘to be the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechesis.’” (General Directory for Catechesis #257)*

With an aim to provide a faithful and engaging curriculum, religious education classes will be based on a common bilingual curriculum approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and provided for all children and youth in English.

Regular weekly religious education classes will begin the Wednesday after Catechetical Sunday (the third Sunday in September) and end on the last Wednesday in April. All classes will take place at St. James. (1204 St James Ct, Madison, WI 53715) There is additional homework and retreats for those seeking the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion. (This also includes parish children receiving their religious education classes at home.) Please be sure to check the bulletin and webpage for more information.

1 – 6 Religious Education Program

Children in grades 1 – 6 follow Our Sunday Visitor's *Vivos en Cristo* (Alive in Christ) bilingual text and meet from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm each Wednesday at St. James (1204 St James Ct, Madison, WI 53715). One lesson per month is taught during class, with the expectation that parents complete the remaining chapters in the unit at home with their children. Credit for the year will only be given if the workbook is completed.

Grade 7 Religious Education Program

Oftentimes, what has been found is that youth (primarily) come to class because their parents bring them, but they themselves don't want to be there because they don't see the Faith, sacraments, even Jesus relevant in their lives. It's hard to teach the Faith to someone who doesn't believe in a loving God... or even God for that matter!

Seventh graders will explore the bilingual curriculum from Loyola Press, *Llamados a ser católicos* (Called to be Catholic), supplemented with Scripture, as well as activities based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Youth will gather in small groups, with an initial focus on building relationships and trust. With this as a foundation, the youth and catechists can engage in sincere questions and conversation about the Faith, as well as the difficulties of living it out. Classes meet from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm each Wednesday at St. James (1204 St James Ct, Madison, WI 53715). In addition to their class time, youth are encouraged to participate in parish youth and service activities, which help them socially and personally as they form their identities.

Grades 8 – 12 Religious Education Program

Eighth-grade and high school youth spend two years in study and preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. They meet from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm each Wednesday at St. James (1204 St James Ct, Madison, WI 53715).

As previously mentioned, often what has been found is that youth (primarily) come to class because their parents bring them, but they themselves don't want to be there because they don't see the Faith, sacraments, or Jesus relevant in their lives. If the youth don't have a personal relationship with Jesus, much if not all that is taught will be immediately dismissed and forgotten. Therefore, during their Confirmation formation youth partake in small groups of 8 youth maximum per catechist. The initial focus of the group is to get acquainted with each other, as well as how to read the Bible. Before any doctrine is

intentionally taught, catechists strive to develop an atmosphere of trust and vulnerability, thereby fostering encounters with Jesus through Scripture and discussion.

Our Confirmation program is intended to help our young people grow in all four aspects of the Christian Life that the Catechism describes as “pillars”: the Creed (doctrine), sacraments, the 10 Commandments (the moral life), and Christian prayer. In addition, retreats and youth activities are incorporated into the Confirmation program to help the youth deepen their faith and respond to Christ’s call to be the “light of the world.” (Mt 5:14-16)”

During the first year of formation, the youth spend time: examining the human desire for happiness and its various levels; reading Scripture and discussing salvation history; learning about and deepening their prayer life; exploring the Sacraments and reflecting on the importance of living a sacramental life; and discussing the dignity of every human being through an introduction of Theology of the Body.

In the second year of Confirmation preparation, the youth partake in both formational and social activities. Youth attend monthly classes learning and discussing the sacrament of Confirmation and what it means to be confirmed. The first three sessions focus our Baptismal promises. The latter three focus on the Sacrament of Confirmation, what happens when one is confirmed, the rite of Confirmation, as well as living a sacramental life following Confirmation. Parents attend the first three sessions, and sponsors (or parents) attend the remaining sessions. Youth are interviewed after sessions 3 and 6 to determine their disposition and desire for the Sacrament. Weeks in which formation is not offered, the youth participate in pastorate community and youth ministry activities. Pastorate XXII is using Lifeteen for its Youth Ministry Program.

Sacramental Preparation

Sacramental preparation for children and youth wishing to receive the sacrament of Baptism (ages seven and older) consists of Thursday evening classes from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm at St. James (1204 St James Ct, Madison, WI 53715). Baptismal classes begin the Thursday after general religious education classes start and end mid-May.

In addition to being actively enrolled in the religious education program for their grade, those preparing for Reconciliation and First Communion need to participate in immediate preparation for each sacrament during the second year of formation. This preparation takes shape in the form of additional homework taught provided by the pastorate but taught by parents at home, as well as a day retreat for each sacrament. Each child/youth will pass through an assessment to help discern their readiness and proper disposition. First Confessions are usually made in November. Special preparation and family catechesis for the Eucharist is held in the spring semester of the second year, following the same format as Reconciliation. First Communions generally take place during the Easter Season.

- *Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. They ground the common vocation of all Christ's disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world. They confer the graces needed for the life according to the Spirit during this life as pilgrims on the march towards the homeland. (CCC #1533)*

Baptism

- Children seven (7) years or older seeking to be baptized are required to participate in a special yearlong formation class.
- Parents with an older child to be baptized are required to participate in a parallel class.
- Preparation for godparents may also be required prior to the Sacrament being conferred.

First Reconciliation

- First Reconciliation is celebrated with baptized children in the second grade (or later) prior to making their First Communion.
- Children seeking their First Reconciliation need to be actively enrolled in religious education in Pastorate XXII for two consecutive years or be receiving formal religious education, approved by the USCCB, at home. (<http://www.usccb.org/about/evangelization-and-catechesis/subcommittee-on-catechism/upload/Current-Conformity-List.pdf>)
- To receive the sacrament of First Reconciliation, parents and children are required to participate in the parish's family catechesis program and retreat on Reconciliation.
- Each child/youth will pass through an assessment (either written or in interview form) prior to the reception of the sacrament.
- First Reconciliation is generally celebrated during the fall semester.
- Please be attentive to pastorate communications for more details.

First Communion

- Children wishing to receive their First Holy Communion must be at least in the second grade and actively enrolled in religious education in Pastorate XXII for two consecutive years or be receiving formal religious education, approved by the USCCB, at home.
(<http://www.usccb.org/about/evangelization-and-catechesis/subcommittee-on-catechism/upload/Current-Conformity-List.pdf>)
- Children making their First Communion must have already received the sacrament of First Reconciliation.
- To receive the sacrament of Communion, parents and children are required to participate in the parish's family catechesis program and retreat on the Eucharist.
- Each child/youth will pass through an assessment (either written or in interview form) prior to the reception of the sacrament.
- There will be a rehearsal for First Communion.
- First Communion Masses are generally celebrated in both English and Spanish during the Easter season.
- If a child/youth is unable to receive the Sacrament at the scheduled time, arrangements can be made for him/her to receive the Sacrament at a later date.
- In order for their children to receive their First Communion, parents are asked to provide their children's birth and baptismal certificates prior to the reception of this sacrament.
- Please be attentive to pastorate communications for more details.

Confirmation

- Preparation for Confirmation begins in the 8th grade.
 - Youth desiring to receive the sacrament of Confirmation are expected to receive two years of consecutive catechetical preparation prior to the reception of this sacrament.
 - Youth need to apply in order enter into proximate preparation for Confirmation(Confirmation Year Two), youth need to be actively seeking to live/living a sacramental life.
 - The sacrament of Confirmation is generally celebrated in the spring following completion of the Confirmation program.
 - If a youth is unable to receive the Sacrament at the scheduled time, arrangements can be made for him/her to receive the Sacrament with another pastorate at a later date.
 - Parents are asked to provide their child's birth, Baptismal, and First Communion certificates in the beginning of the second year of formation.
 - Youth are expected to actively participate in classes and activities.
 - Each youth will pass through an assessment (either written or in interview form) prior to reception of the sacrament.
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- *"Great is the mystery of the faith!" The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles' Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part Two), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Part Three). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.*

 - *For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy. (CCC #2558)*

General Religious Education Policies & Procedures for Pastorate XXII

Communication:

Information on religious education and sacramental preparation will be shared with students and parents via a variety of methods including: this handbook, the parish website (www.pastoratexxii.org), WhatsApp communications, Facebook, bulletin, class communications, as well as emails or texts via Flocknote, and/or phone calls and letters from catechists, the Director of Discipleship and office staff.

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's catechist and/or the Director of Discipleship regarding the progress of their child in class. If there is a matter of serious concern, it will be brought to parental attention immediately. If you have any comments, questions or concerns, we ask that you bring them to the attention of your child's catechist and/or the Director of Discipleship at (608) 257-5000.

Attendance & Homework:

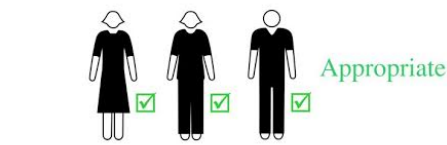
Attendance to religious education and sacramental preparation classes is very important for your child's spiritual and moral development. It is essential that your child attends class regularly and punctually in order to enter into a greater understanding of and relationship with God.

We ask that parents take great consideration in planning activities around scheduled class times. **Absences should be limited to three per year, unless health or family situations warrant otherwise. We ask that parents call in the absences of their children at (608) 257-5000 prior to class time.** A voice message may be left indicating the parent's name, the child's name, his/her grade, and the reason for the absence. If no phone call is received to explain an absence, it will be considered unexcused. **If there are three unexcused absences during the year, a determination will be made whether or not the child receives credit for the year.**

Some catechists assign homework that children and youth should either do on his/her own or as a family. As parents, you are privileged with the role as primary educator in the faith. Upon registering, you signed a commitment form that you would be a role model and teacher of the faith. Your cooperation and the reinforcement of the study and practice of the faith at home are of utmost importance. Children and youth easily see the hypocrisy behind a parent forcing his/her child to do something that they themselves don't practice or deem important. Please make sure you are part of passing on the faith to your children. If you face some sort of obstacle in this area, please contact the Director of Religious Education to help you resolve this issue.

Appropriate Dress:

Clothe Yourself with Modesty! **Vístanse con Modestia**



Thank you for your understanding / Gracias por su comprensión

All clothing worn by the children and youth should be age and temperature-specific. Furthermore, as noted by the accompanying chart, clothing should be modest and fit well. It is important that parents and catechists work together to help instill the virtue of modesty in the children and youth, and the value thereof, especially given the contrary message sent by the current culture. Children and youth are not respectful of the dress code will be asked to change.

Traffic Flow (Drop Off & Pick Up Procedure):

Punctuality is key. Please be on time when dropping off and picking your child up from class, as late arrivals can be disruptive to class. Parents should pick up their children (in grades 1-3) from their area of instruction.

Custody Issues:

In the case of separation or divorce, it is the assumption of the Religious Education Department of Pastorate XXII that both parents have been awarded equal rights regarding access to their child. If there are special circumstances regarding your situation (sole custody, limited access, or restraining orders) these must be communicated with copies of court/police documents to the Director of Religious Education.

Events, Activities, Retreats and Trips:

On occasion, off-campus events, activities, retreats, and trips may be incorporated into the religious education curriculum. In order for youth to attend such events, parental permission is needed, and youth must be supervised by at least two of the following: a program coordinator, catechist, or designated adult.

Health Concerns and Medication:

The catechists and religious education representatives of Pastorate XXII are not allowed to dispense medication to children or youth. If, for special circumstances, you feel there is a need to make an exception to this rule, please notify the Director of Discipleship to obtain an authorization form.

Snacks and Allergies:

Snacks are discouraged during class times due to disruptions, messiness, and food allergies. If your child has a food allergy, please notify the Director of Discipleship. If, under the discretion of the catechist, snacks are allowed for a birthday or special event, parents are asked to provide something that is peanut/nut/peanut oil-free and individually wrapped, as well as something that is easy to clean up.

Cancellation of Classes:

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen circumstances, classes may be dismissed early or cancelled. If Madison area schools are cancelled due to poor weather, we will automatically cancel our classes. Whether classes are cancelled or to be dismissed early, we will take the following steps to inform parents:

1. We will call, text or email as many parents of students as possible
2. We will place a voice message on our answering system

For *all* religious education classes, parents are responsible for being informed on class cancellations as well as determining whether or not road conditions are safe for travel. If there is a concern over road conditions, parents should not bring their child to class. Should weather deteriorate during classes, we ask parents to use their discretion in arriving early to pick up their child. In the case of tornados, flash floods, fire, etc. emergency procedures will be followed as determined by the situation.

Religious Education Discipline Procedures for Pastorate XXII

Discipline and Intent of Consequences:

The word “discipline” means to teach or to educate. It is with this understanding that we use this term when referring to teaching a child or youth about the consequences of his/her actions. Consequences are never used to punish. The intent with all consequences is 1) to help the child or youth in question realize that certain behaviors bring about certain consequences, and 2) to ensure a safe and peaceful learning environment for all children and youth in class.

- First Infraction: upon a first infraction, a verbal warning will be issued. Depending on the gravity of the infraction, the Director of Religious Education and/or program representative may be informed or asked to be present in the classroom.
- Second Infraction: the child or youth will be taken to the program representative’s office for a conference. Parents will be informed of the situation and behavior and will be asked to observe their child in the following week’s class.
- Third Infraction: the child or youth will be taken to the program representative’s office. Parents will be called to meet about programming alternatives for their child’s/youth’s religious education.