

**2011 - 2012
FAMILY HANDBOOK FOR
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM**



**SS. PETER & PAUL PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER
36 NORTH ELLSWORTH #104
NAPERVILLE, ILLINOIS 60540**

*(630) 357-2436
(630) 357-2458 (FAX)*

*Attendance Hotline
630-355-1139*

S.S. Peter and Paul Parish

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CENTER

August 20011

This handbook is designed to assist in understanding the religious education program at SS. Peter and Paul Parish. It is the goal of all of the directors, office staff, catechists, leaders and all other volunteers to assist in the education of all of our parishioners. While the parish has educational programs that provide opportunities at every level, supporting parents in the education of the next generation of Catholics is an important aspect of catechesis. It is our job as ministers in the education of our young people augments and does not replace the duty of the parents.

"Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents".

--Catechism of the Catholic Church

We are grateful for the dedicated parishioners who have come forward to offer their talents to teach, assist, and safeguard our younger parishioners. We invite all of you to consider volunteering in one of the programs:

Catechists, Assistants, Substitutes, Hall Greeters, Office Helpers, Child Care Helpers, RCIA facilitators are always needed. We pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit for all of us—parish priests, deacons, staff, catechists, all other program volunteers and all families.

All families are asked to subscribe to RE Email to receive calendars and updates. Information will also be posted on the parish web site at www.sspeterandpaul.net. Please add your name or update your preferences to our e-mail directory through the parish web site. If you do not have access to email, you may come to the RE Office during regular hours and ask for your information. All emergency closing information will also be conveyed via RE Email, so please sign up now!

Protecting God's Children

The safety of your child from all aspects is most important to us. We promise to provide a safe environment.

As required by the Joliet Diocese, all volunteers and paid staff in our program have had background checks and have attended the mandated program, **Protecting God's Children**. During the school year, we will offer **Safe Environment/Safe Touch classes** for all children and youth in the program. You will be notified before these classes are held and your permission will be required for your child to attend.

Because all volunteers are required to comply, we strongly recommend that you complete the course and have the background check done for yourself, in case you decide to volunteer within the program.

Your **Family Handbook** contains information about classes, sacrament preparation, calendars and curriculum for all programs. Read this handbook, especially the portions which apply to any program in which your family is registered. Calendar changes and additional information will continue to be shared through the email programs and the parish bulletin.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STAFF

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Deacon Ron Brown | Director of Religious Education Director of Children's Ministry |
| Theresa Pratt | Associate Director of Religious Education Director of Early Childhood Ministry Director of Junior High Ministry |
| Shawn Denning-Ross | REACH - Special Needs RE for Children & Young Adults |
| Andrea Yarger | REACH - Special Needs RE for Adults |
| Peggy Partipilo | RE Office Manager |

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE HOURS

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Monday through Thursday | 9:00AM - 5:00PM |
| Friday | 9:00AM - 3:30PM |

To report an absence from class call 630-355-1139 and provide

Student's Name
Class day
Catechist's name
Reason for absence

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The parish Religious Education programs follow the guidelines of the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC, 1997), an official statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops for sharing the Catholic faith.

All programs are in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), a presentation of the truths of the Catholic Church. These include the teachings of Sacred Scripture, the Traditions of the Church, and the teachings of the magisterium of the Church.

The Religious Education Office of the Diocese of Joliet issues a policy handbook to coordinate the efforts of all parishes in the diocese. The GDC, the CCC and the diocesan policy handbook are available for review in the Religious Education Office.

Specific parish goals, guidelines and policies are established and reviewed by the Christian Education Commission, the Religious Education and Youth Ministry Boards. Please call the respective director for further information.

REGISTRATION

It is required that families are registered Members of SS. Peter & Paul Parish before being able to register in the program.

Families new to the program should download registration material from the parish website, complete the information and bring the documents to the Religious Education Office.

Families currently enrolled may register for the following year by mail each Spring.

Baptismal Certificates are required when the child first enters the program.

FAMILY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

According to the promises made at a child's baptism, the parents are the primary teachers of the faith for their children. The parish program exists to assist the parents in carrying out this responsibility, especially in preparation for the reception of a sacrament.

Parents are responsible for training their children in the practice of the faith. As the domestic church, the Parents must provide a foundation for their child's Religious Education by:

- Teaching your child how to pray
- Attending Mass with your child every Saturday evening or Sunday
- Instilling a love for the Faith
- Being a model of active Christian service in the parish

We also ask that families be supportive of programs in the following ways:

- Attend a "Protecting God's Children" Class (1 class only)
- VOLUNTEER to assist in your child's program
- Instill habits of prompt and regular attendance
- Insure that necessary materials (books, Bibles, etc.) are brought to each session
- Maintain standards of good taste in dress for class and church (no short shorts, halter tops or T-shirts with inappropriate language)
- Attend all meetings and special liturgies

POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend every session, arrive on time and remain in class until dismissed.

Excessive absences in a given semester will result in delay of the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation or advancement to the next level.

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DISMISSAL is distracting to the educational process and will not be permitted on a regular basis for sports or other activities. If a sport or other extracurricular activities will interfere in the regular attendance of your child at Religious Education classes, serious consideration should be given before enrollment.

Children are never allowed to leave class early, even with a parent, unless an early dismissal form is completed in the office before pick up. This is required to ensure your child's protection. A parent must check in with the Hall Monitor who will retrieve the child from the classroom and bring him/her to the parent.

Identification will always be required to ensure that we are releasing a child to a parent. Children will not be released to anyone other than a parent unless arrangements are made in advance with the Office.

For the safety of your children, there are no exceptions to this rule!!

Level 1 and 2 students are never permitted to leave the classroom on their own and must be signed out by a parent or older sibling.

COMMUNICATION

It is essential that we keep lines of communication open with all of our families. Communication is handled in several ways:

Electronically

We use Constant Contact as our primary communication tool. If you are not registered, please visit the religious education page and enter your_email address in the box provided and check Interest Categories based upon your child's grade level or Sacraments being received.

One Call Now phone system

To keep you up to date on last minute changes or cancellation of class due to inclement weather, you may be contacted by phone using the *One Call Now* phone system.

Notes from the Catechist

The catechist may use notes, e-mail or phone calls whenever possible or as needed.

Bulletin Announcements

The parish weekly bulletin will contain important information regarding special events, special notices and sacramental information.

Evaluations

Evaluations for students in Grades 1-8 will be mailed home twice each year in January and at the end of the school year.

DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

The Religious Education Staff is accountable as well as responsible to parents to provide an environment in which the catechetical process can take place.

The catechist's presence and the establishment of group guidelines work to assure that catechists will be better able to share the Good News. Discipline shall be developed in a positive manner. It is imperative that a Christian and cooperative attitude prevail for effective faith sharing to take place.

Any student causing a disturbance in class after correction by the Catechist will be escorted to the office to meet with the director. Any repeat violations will result in the parents being called to bring the child home. Children with repeat behavioral issues will not be allowed to return to class until the parents and director have discussed the issue. If serious behavior problems continue to occur, alternative arrangements will have to be made for the education of the child.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

SPECIAL NEEDS

Any special illness or needs your child may have, including learning disabilities, attention deficit (ADD / ADHD), a recent death or separation, health problems such as diabetes, allergies to food, epilepsy, hearing or visual impairments, etc. must be noted at the time of registration or at the time the issue is discovered so that we can better serve your child. The registration form has a special place to note this, or you may call your child's Program Director to discuss this further.

MEDICATION

Medication is not dispensed by Religious Education Staff or catechists. If children require medication or an Epi-Pen, parents must have a permission form signed by the doctor and a written plan for administration on file with the R.E. Office.

Classroom VISITORS AND LATE PICK UP

All visitors must come to the RE Office to sign in and receive a hall pass. Arrangements must be made both with the Catechist and RE Office *in advance* of the visit. Unregistered children will not be permitted in the classroom without special pre-arranged permission from the director.

Any children who are not picked up from the parish campus within 10 minutes of dismissal time will be escorted to the RE Office. We will ask children who are not picked up in a timely fashion to wait in the Ministry Center Building for their continued safety

If you are detained for any reason, please call the office immediately to alert us to the fact that you may be delayed in picking up your child.

SUPERVISION

Class times are noted below. NO SUPERVISION IS PROVIDED BEFORE OR AFTER THESE TIMES. Parents are expected to pick up Early Childhood, First and Second graders from their rooms or **INFORM THE CATECHIST IN WRITING WHEN AN OLDER SIBLING OR OTHER ADULT IS DESIGNATED TO DO THIS.** A parent who is delayed should come to the Religious Education Office to sign out and pick up their child. Students may not enter a class until a catechist or another designated adult is Present.

| | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sunday Morning (EC) | 9:15AM until 10:30AM |
| Tuesday Afternoon | 4:00Pm until 5:15PM |
| Wednesday Afternoon | 4:15PM until 5:30PM |
| Wednesday Evening (JH) | 7:15PM until 8:30PM |
| Saturday Morning | 9:00AM until 10:15AM |

TRAFFIC SAFETY

When dropping off or picking up for any program, it is absolutely forbidden to **ALLOW YOUR PASSENGERS TO CROSS IN FRONT OF OR BEHIND YOUR VEHICLE OR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET.** Crossing is to be made **AT CORNERS ONLY!**

VISITORS

All visitors to the buildings must report to the RE office and show a picture ID to receive a visitor's pass. Guest visitor arrangements should be made with the director well in advance of the date of visit.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FIRE & TORNADO

Catechists have instructions for emergency procedures when programs are held on the premises. Catechists are required to review and explain these to their groups. The RE Office has an emergency weather radio to monitor dangerous weather conditions.

SNOW & OTHER PROBLEMS

DO NOT call the Parish Office or Religious Education Office for information about program closings. You will receive a phone call, as well as an E-mail from S.S. Peter & Paul Religious Education if classes are cancelled. Notification will be made as soon as possible prior to the start of class.

The following stations are designated to announce emergency closings:

AM RADIO: WGN (720) WBBM (78)

TV: FOX (32) CLTV CBS (2) NBC (5) ABC(7) WGN (9)

INTERNET: www.emergencyclosings.com (you can sign up here to receive an email notification from the website)

OR CALL 1-847-238-1234

Program Descriptions

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS FOR PRESCHOOL (3'S & 4'S & KINDERGARTEN)

Our program introduces the child to God and His gifts, making him/her more aware of the surrounding world. The child is also introduced to the Mass through Liturgy lessons and prayer experiences. Music time is regularly scheduled as part of a large group activity.

Children are eligible for these programs if they are age 3, 4, or 5 by September 1st or entering Kindergarten. All children must be potty trained.

Classes are held in the Social Hall located in the lower level of the Ministry Center.

Children are in groups of 8 -10 and of mixed ages with one catechist and one assistant

Class time is from 9:15 am - 10:30 am. Your child must be signed in and out of the area each week. Again, this is for the safety of your child. Please do not send your child in with a young sibling (under age 10).

Early Childhood does not meet every Sunday. Please consult the calendar on the Religious Education Web page for specific meeting dates.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

First Level

THEME: Introduction to the Holy Trinity through presentations on God the Father, the life of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God's plan of salvation and our part in that plan, especially in the Church. Acquaints children with Mary, angels, and the saints. Children learn basic prayers.

AIM: To introduce first-grade students to the Church's faith regarding the Triune God, the life of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the life of prayer, with a special emphasis on growing to know, love, and serve God in faithfulness.

Second Level (Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist)

THEME: Preparation for the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, with the law of God and salvation history as background. The lessons emphasize God's mercy and love. The curriculum covers Creation, the Covenant with Moses, the Ten Commandments, Redemption, forgiveness of sins, and the Mass.

AIM: To prepare second-grade students for the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion and to help them appreciate God's love for them shown in these two sacraments. Students will learn how to receive the Sacrament of Penance, the order of the Mass, and the basics of prayer.

Third Level

THEME: God's plan of salvation, from Creation to the Incarnation and Redemption, to the birth of the Church at Pentecost and our life in the Church. Special emphasis is placed on the importance of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist, and the Mass.

AIM: To teach third-grade students that they belong to God's chosen people and that grace enables each child to be united with God and have an important role in God's family, the Church. Also, to encourage prayer, love for God's law, and frequent reception of the sacraments.

Fourth Level

THEME: God's plan to save his people from sin (salvation history), how we participate in that plan, and the many ways God helps us in our pilgrimage on earth to heaven through his Word, his law, and his Church.

AIM: To help-fourth grade students understand their purpose and goal in life, and to see God's plan in history and society to lead us all to heaven, our true eternal home.

Fifth Level

THEME: A thorough study of the articles of the Creed as the basic elements of our Catholic Faith, with a special emphasis on careful understanding of definitions through the words of the Gospels, the prophets, and the prayers of the Church.

AIM: To help fifth-grade students acquire a solid knowledge of God and his Church through understanding the Creed we profess, and distinguishing the truths of our Faith from errors that lead away from the love of God.

Sixth Level

THEME: An overview for a Christian life of love: the law of God, especially in the Ten Commandments, and the presence of Jesus in the Holy Mass. The interaction of the challenges of God's law and his gifts of grace that help us fulfill his law in preparation for the particular and general judgments.

AIM: To help sixth-grade students learn to love and deeply live the law as Christ did, to cherish the Mass as our greatest prayer to God, and especially to revere and adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The Junior High Religious Education program is designed to promote positive adolescent development and growth in discipleship and Catholic identity within a youth-friendly community. This is accomplished through catechesis/worship, community service and socialization. Junior High also includes preparation for and reception of the sacrament of confirmation

Confirmation Prep Year I

THEME: Beginning with an understanding of God's loving gift of the revelation of himself through creation, the prophets, the Incarnation, and the Church, grace is understood as central to our relationship with

God. It unites us with him allows us to share in his eternal life. The lessons place special emphasis on the role of grace in developing the virtues, and especially on the transmission of grace through the seven sacraments.

AIM: To help seventh-grade students treasure the sacraments as indispensable elements of a full Christian life of love and truth. To deepen an understanding of grace, how it is given, and its relation to practicing the virtues. To appreciate the gifts of faith and reason.

Confirmation Prep Year II (Sacrament of Confirmation)

THEME: The history of the Church - its founding by Christ, its birth and life in the Holy Spirit; the marks of the one, true Church; the Fathers and Doctors of the Church; the saints and the

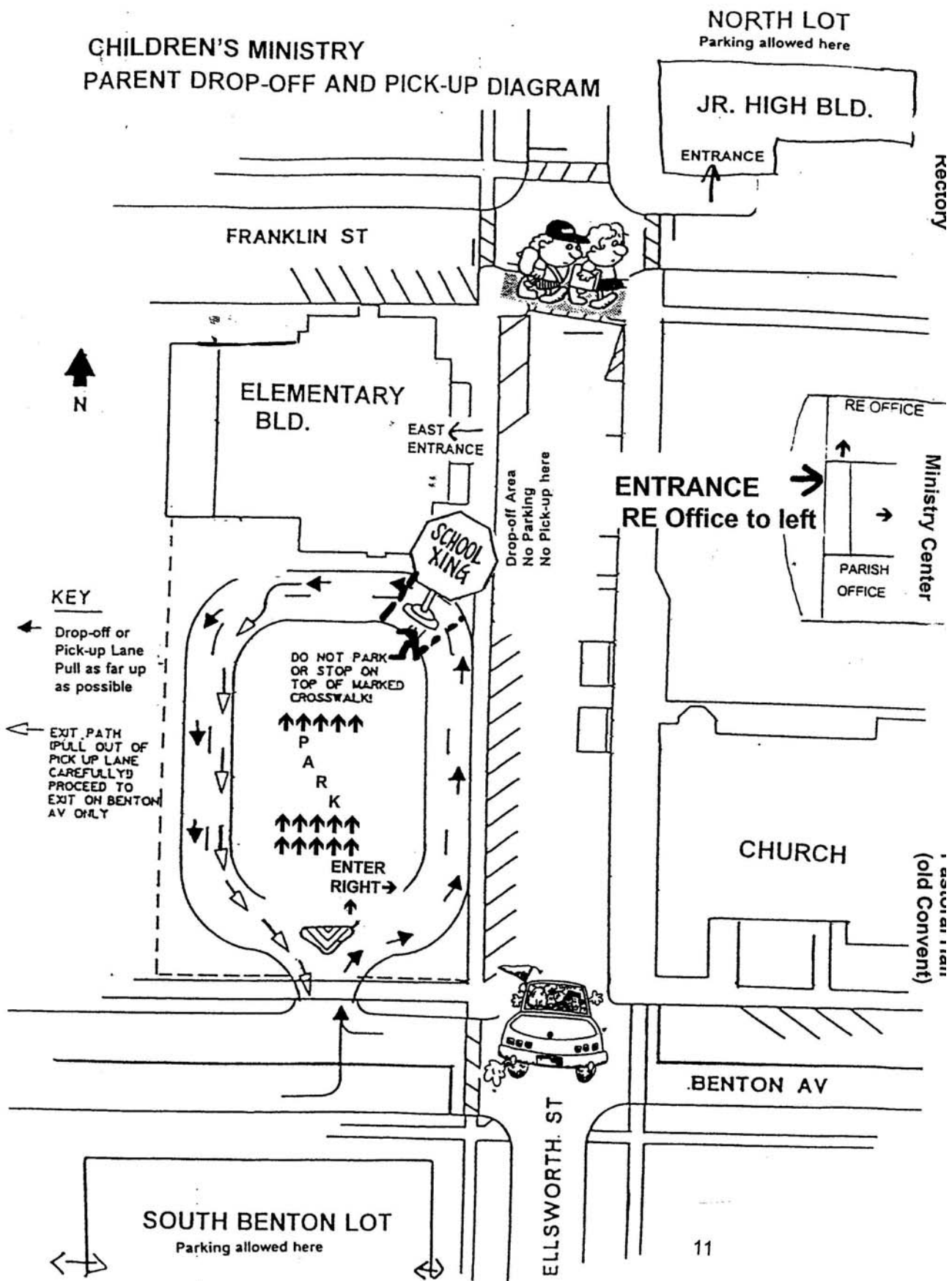
role of the religious communities in Church history. The structure and hierarchy of the Church as Jesus planned. The role of the Magisterium, the clergy, the religious and the laity, and our own vocations in relation to the world in which we live.

AIM: To help eighth-grade students know and love the Church as Christ's Body, to better understand the nature of their life in the Church, and respond to the teaching of the Magisterium as the sure voice of Jesus, so that they may be strengthened in their lives in the Church and be able to live lives of Christian holiness within the world more fully.

SERVICE

Service to parish and/or community is required of all junior high students. A list of acceptable service opportunities will be made available to all students at the beginning of the year. A minimum of 12 service hours must be completed *each year* during Confirmation Prep I and Confirmation Prep II.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PARENT DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP DIAGRAM



TRAFFIC SAFETY GUIDELINES

In order to provide for safe and organized drop-off and pick-up of children, Children's Ministry is using the plan shown below. Please read these diagrams and procedures carefully. **Safety of every child is a priority!** Tuesday and Wednesday sessions generate dangerous traffic conditions. Respect Traffic Patrol volunteers, all signs and no parking places. You will be ticketed if parked illegally. Do not permit your child to cross in the middle of the street at any time.

PARENT PARKING AREAS

Parking and leaving your parked vehicle is permitted in the far South Lot (corner of Benton and Ellsworth and center of the North Lot (Next to the Elementary Building)).

DROPPING OFF STUDENTS

Elementary Building: Enter Church Lot from Benton St. Using the circles, drop off students as close to the front door as possible. Watch for walking students. Students will enter from the Ellsworth St. entrance only. If you walk your child into the building, park in the center of the Church Lot, facing north.

Junior High Building: Drop off driving north on Ellsworth, by stopping in the no parking area of Ellsworth. If you are driving south, students must cross with Traffic Patrol at the corner, **NOT** in the middle of the street!

Ministry Center Building: Catechists, parents and students will use main entrance.

PICKING UP STUDENTS

All First & Second Grade RE students must be SIGNED OUT & PICKED UP in their classrooms by a parent, older sibling or other designated adult. Therefore these parents must park in the center of the Church Lot and not in the pick-up/drop-off lanes.

All traffic enters and exits the lot from Benton St. only.

Parking is allowed in the center of the lot: all parking is gang style parking for parents who must enter building and for catechists who park there.

Pick-up/drop-off circle Lanes: Drivers in these lanes cannot exit their vehicles. Stay in vehicle, pull up as far as possible all the way around to accommodate all the cars; Students load from the right passenger side of all these lanes. Pay attention to parking safety crew who will direct you when to move. Pull out carefully always watching for children. Exiting the lot is done only by making a right hand turn onto Benton St. Please pay attention to the parking lot attendants.

*YOUR COOPERATION IN FOLLOWING THESE PROCEDURES WILL PROVIDE FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN. PLEASE BE PATIENT, CAUTIOUS AND COURTEOUS TO YOUR FELLOW PARISHIONERS AND VOLUNTEERS. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** PLEASE CALL IF YOU CAN HELP WITH TRAFFIC PATROL DURING ARRIVAL OR DISMISSAL TIMES, EVEN FOR PART OF THE YEAR.*

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS

BAPTISM for older students must be discussed with the Director of Religious Education.

Preparation for **FIRST EUCHARIST (HOLY COMMUNION)** normally occurs in Level Two. Students enrolling in the program who have not received their first communion and are beyond the second grade in public school, will be required to enroll in their regular class for one year preceding placement in a sacrament class. The sacrament is received in the spring of Second Grade or the Middle Grade Sacrament class. Parents are required to attend meetings and participate in their child's preparation.

RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) is prepared for and celebrated in the first semester of Second Grade or a Middle Grade class. Children who have made their First Communion without preparation for Reconciliation will join the middle grade Sacrament class or speak with the Director. Parents are required to attend sacramental informational meetings and participate in their child's preparation.

CONFIRMATION - Confirmation is conferred in Level 8. Prerequisite for this sacrament during 8th grade requires regular attendance for one year prior to being placed in a sacramental class. Those preferring to be confirmed at a later time must contact the Director.

Unless otherwise requested by the parent, all 8th graders who fulfill the requirements of the Confirmation preparation program will receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of their 8th grade year. Parents are required to attend sacramental informational meetings and participate in their child's preparation

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

REACH: SPECIAL EDUCATION

SS. Peter and Paul addresses the rights and needs of all persons with disabilities to develop their human, moral and spiritual qualities. Blind, deaf, mentally and physically challenged are invited to share faith and bring others peace and joy. Whenever possible, children with special needs are included in the regular programs. Children and adults with special needs will find the REACH programs are structured to the needs of individuals with emphasis on preparation for Liturgy and the sacraments. The Knights of Columbus financially supports these programs.

Children's REACH follows the Children's Ministry Saturday calendar while Adult REACH meets on alternate Wednesday evenings.