



Catechesis and the Proclamation of the Word

St. Francis of Assisi
Parish School of Religion
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A Firm Foundation

The religious education program is based upon a firm foundation made up of three essential elements:

- 1) **Doctrine** - the beliefs of a people as explained by the Catholic Church that have been handed down through the generations and gathered into the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
- 2) **Scripture** – the story of a people passed from generation to generation that is contained in the Bible and lived in the lives of the saints and people of faith who have shown us how to live as Christians.
- 3) **Liturgical Year** – the liturgies of a people celebrated throughout the church year as Catholic Christians re-live the story of our salvation and honor the saints and holy times we share as a people through the seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Ordinary Time.

Doctrines are drawn from the four pillars of faith as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Creed, Sacraments and Worship, Morality, and Christian Prayer. All of these important teachings are developmentally presented to help the children recognize that what we believe, how we worship, how we live, and how we pray make a difference in our lives.

Catechists are supported in their efforts by members of the Pastoral Staff who provide encouragement, education, in-service, expertise and liturgical roles.

Our priests are available on a regular basis for Eucharistic Celebrations, Sacrament of Reconciliation, classroom presentations, liturgical and para-liturgical services, blessings and rituals which support the faith life of the staff and children.

The Parish School of Religion is an integral part of the faith formation/ religious education program of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church.

The parish staff, catechists and assistants work with the families of children attending public and independent schools to provide opportunities for children to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, to grow spiritually and to learn about their Catholic Faith.

Approximately 250 of our parish children in grades one through eight attend the P.S.R. Program.

Classes for **Grades 1 through 7** are held on Tuesday evenings from mid-September to mid-May from 6:30 to 7:45 pm.
Classes for **Grade 8** are held on Sunday evenings from 6:00 Mass to 8:15 pm.

Catechists and Assistants for each class are parish volunteers who:

- treasure their own faith,
- actively live out their religion,
- love children and young teens,
- want to be involved in the parish,
- desire to respond to the baptismal call to pass on their faith and the Word of God to a new generation.

Catechists and Assistants are:



young adults,
married couples,
high school teens,
senior citizens,
parents of SFA School students
and parents of PSR children.



PSR: A Partnership with Parents

"Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children. They have a unique responsibility as the first catechists. They catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by their love for the faith. One way that parents communicate Christian values and attitudes to their children is by loving each other within the context of a Christian marriage and their love for Christ and His Church. Their participation in the life of the parish, above all in the Sunday Eucharist, their willingness to evangelize and serve others and their dedication to daily prayer demonstrate the authenticity of their own profession of faith. The catechesis given by parents within the family precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis."

Exposure to religious education once a week does not sufficiently nourish the faith life of the child.

Classes are designed to supplement the lived experience of religion and faith in the home:

- the family's daily prayer,
 - weekly Mass attendance,
 - religious traditions and rituals,
 - participation in the sacraments,
 - the witness of Christian behavior,
 - involvement in the church community,
 - open dialogue about God's place in our lives,
 - outreach and service to God's most vulnerable people,
- these impact the child's sense of God and understanding of faith.**

When the parents and parish work together, religion becomes a lived reality!



Building Community

A healthy sense of community among the PSR families and with the school families plus a stronger sense of belonging to the larger parish community of St. Francis is a program goal.

Opportunities for PSR and school children to interact are offered through sacramental preparation programs, sports, youth offerings and special projects or programs during liturgical seasons. Classrooms, equipment, bibles, religious books, CDs, DVDs, videos and resources are shared by all. PSR families come together in September to celebrate liturgy with the parish community. They are encouraged to lend their presence and support to all the wonderful programs and events of the parish.

Social Outreach

Each year, during Advent and Lent, the children focus on a project which will help the poor and neglected among God's people in our local, church and world communities.

In recent years, PSR students have donated money, food, clothing, household items and personal products for the Saints Mary and Joseph Home for the Elderly Poor, Mike Wittman Ozanam Center, East Side Catholic Shelter, Harvest for Hunger and our own ChrisT Fund. They have made significant contributions to the diocesan mission team in El Salvador and victims of natural disasters in Central America, New Orleans, Chile, Haiti and Japan.