

ST. MARIA GORETTI CATHOLIC CHURCH

PARISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

The Community of St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church affirms the following statements (as set forth in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [CCC]), regarding the relationship among parents, children, the local parish, and the responsibility of religious education:

- The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church* (CCC #2204).
- Parents must regard their children as *children of God* and respect them as *human persons*. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they educate their children to fulfill God's law (CCC #2222).
- Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of *evangelizing their children* (CCC #2225).
- *Education in the faith* by parents should begin in the child's earliest years (CCC #2226).
- 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 (CCC #2226).

Pursuant to the statements above, the Community of St. Maria Goretti Church adopts the following policy regarding the Religious Education of children within the parish:

1. Parents hold the primary responsibility for, and are the primary source of, the Religious Education of their children.
2. St. Maria Goretti Church is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of the Catholic families in the parish; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents within the SMG community.
3. Regardless of the parent's choice of school for the academic education of their children (Catholic, private, public, home-school), parents have an obligation to tie the Religious Education of their children into the formal Religious Education program of the parish (i.e., SMG School or Parish Religious Education program).

The basis for this obligation is as follows:

- Through the Catholic School or Parish Religious Education program children experience the ecclesial nature of the life of faith within the Catholic community. Maintaining a direct and formal connection with Parish Religious Education fosters within the child a consciousness of their place within the greater Mystical Body of the Church.
- Through the Catholic School or Parish Religious Education program children experience the gifts and talents of the fuller membership of the Body of Christ, of which they are an integral part.
- Through the Catholic School or Parish Religious Education program children offer their own gifts and talents to the members of the Body of Christ, the Church, of which they are an integral part.

The Community of St. Maria Goretti Church adopts the following policy regarding the Sacramental preparation of children within the parish:

Candidates for Sacraments should be registered members of the Parish before beginning preparation for the Sacrament. Please contact the Parish Office to verify your registration. Children, age 7 and over, who have not been baptized may need special instruction in the RCIC preparation. Please contact the Director of Religious Education.

Baptism- Infant Baptism Classes are held once a month, on the third Saturday at 10AM in the Parish Conference Room. Baptisms are held on Saturday, after the 4:30 PM Mass, and on Sunday after the 10:30 AM Mass. There are no baptisms during the Lenten Season.

Baptismal sponsors must be 16 years of age or older. At least one sponsor must be Catholic and have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. If the Catholic sponsor does not belong to St. Maria Goretti, a letter is needed from their parish priest stating that they are an active and practicing Catholic.

First Communion - Formal preparation for First Communion is a **two-year process**, usually culminating in reception of the Sacrament in May of their 2nd school year. Children need to be enrolled in Parish Religious Education classes or have attended a Catholic school for both 1st and 2nd grades. Children starting after 1st grade will need to complete two years of preparation. A **recent copy** of the candidate's baptismal certificate is required. Please contact the Director of Religious Education.

Reconciliation - done in conjunction with preparation for First Communion.

Confirmation - Preparation for Confirmation is a **two-year process**, which can begin during the 9th grade or after. Teens need to be enrolled in Confirmation Preparation Classes. For those beginning preparation in the 9th grade, reception of the Sacrament usually occurs in the spring of 10th grade. Candidates will participate in a retreat and community service. A **recent copy** of the candidate's baptismal certificate is required. Please contact the Director of Religious Education.

Sponsors for Confirmation must be 16 years of age or older, Catholic, and have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. If the sponsor does not belong to St. Maria Goretti, a letter is needed from their parish priest stating that they are an active and practicing Catholic.

Marriage – Couples wishing to initiate this process should make an appointment with the priest and should allow a **6-month to 1 year preparation period** for this Sacrament. Wedding dates cannot be scheduled until this process has been initiated.

Anointing of the Sick – Please contact the parish office so a visit by the priest can be arranged as soon as possible.

Religious Vocations – Please contact the parish priest to help answer any questions you may have.