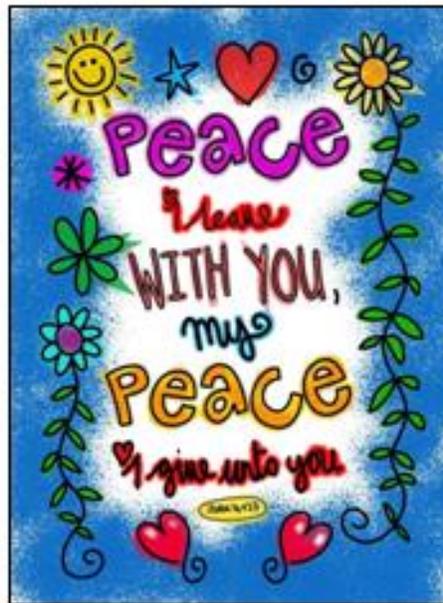


# Religious Education and Youth Ministry Handbook

Blessed Trinity and  
St. John Evangelist Parishes  
2016-2017



## Wednesday Night Contact Numbers

BT Office: 467-6282 SJE Office: 458-9931

Director of Religious Education

Emily Briggs

[emily@btsje.org](mailto:emily@btsje.org)

BT phone: 467-4616 x318

SJE phone: 458-9931

Director of Youth Ministry

Christopher Briggs

[chris@btsje.org](mailto:chris@btsje.org)

BT phone: 467-4616 x321

SJE phone: 452-9623 x221

**Prepared by the Joint Religious Education Committee and Joint Youth Ministry Committee of Blessed Trinity and St. John Evangelist Parishes in cooperation with the rules and guidelines of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee**

**Contents:**

Safe Environment Education Statement..... Pg. 2

Volunteers ..... Pg. 2

Curricula..... Pg. 3

Class Times & Locations..... Pg. 4

Sacraments..... Pg. 4

Discipline & Expectations ..... Pg.4-5

Policies..... Pg.5-7

Fellowship Opportunities..... Pg.7-9

Parent Acknowledgment Page..... Pg. 11

**Safe environment education**

“As a faith-filled people, we respect and value each and every individual, as we are created in the image and likeness of God. This is why the *Safeguarding All of God’s Family* program has been established. The Archdiocese of Milwaukee is committed to creating a safe environment where all of God’s family – children, their parents and relatives, parish and school personnel, volunteers, clergy and archdiocesan central office personnel – will be able to work, live, and play in an environment where healthy and responsible relationships prevail.” –Archdiocese of Milwaukee

All adults (18 years of age and older) who work closely with children, must complete Safe Environment Education training. This 3 hour course is offered throughout the year. The dates and location can be found on the Archdiocese website: <http://www.archmil.org/offices/safeguarding/Safeguarding-Events.htm>. Additionally, students enrolled in the Religious Education and Youth Ministry programs will learn about a topic relating to making safe and healthy choices in one of their classes annually (April for National Child Abuse Prevention Month).

**VOLUNTEERS**

We would love for you to volunteer in the Religious Education or Youth Ministry Programs. There are a great variety of ways to get involved, such as (grades you would be working with in parentheses): Catechist (k-8); small group leader (9-11); substitute catechist/small group leader (all grades); hall monitor (1-8); Lodge supervisor (5-8); high school dinner preparer (9-11); and more. If you have a high school student wanting to get involved, we welcome and appreciate catechist assistants in the younger grades. If you are unsure to the extent you would like to be involved in the program, contact the Director of Religious Education or Director of Youth Ministry, and we would be happy to help you find a role that is a great fit for you!

## ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

This year we are excited to announce new curricula for grades k-8. This year we will be using Loyola Press: Finding God for grades 1-6 and Pflaum Publishing Group: Pflaum Gospel Weeklies: What the Church Believes and Teaches for grades 7 & 8. For kindergarten, we will be continuing RCL Benziger: Stories of God's Love. All are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and help build a comprehensive understanding of our Catholic faith. In addition, catechists supplement with crafts, service projects, and media to enhance learning.

**Kindergarten:** This weekly leaflet focuses on Bible stories, Liturgical Seasons, Holy days, and Feast days to build a foundation in understanding our Catholic faith for our youngest students.

**The Finding God series is a spiral curriculum, meaning that each year children develop a deeper understanding of recurring themes. These themes (organized into 5 units) are: God; Jesus; the Sacraments; the Church; and Morality. Each grade takes a different take on the theme and has a focus which is listed below.**

**Grade 1:** God is Our Creator      **Grade 2:** Reconciliation and Eucharist

**Grade 3:** Community      **Grade 4:** Moral Life

**Grade 5:** Sacraments of Initiation      **Grade 6:** History and Salvation

**Grades 7 & 8:** This series is leaflet style and dated so that each week is linked to that Sunday's Gospels as well as current events. In addition to the leaflet, each lesson has students locate a part of the Catechism of the Catholic Church to connect to what our Church specifically teaches.

## HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The high school curriculum makes use of a variety of resources to create a comprehensive and thorough curriculum, most notably drawing on *Chosen* from Ascension Press and *Confirmed in a Faithful Community* from St. Mary's Press. With an emphasis on small groups, classes engage the students in topics focused on exploring their place in the church and in the world while preparing them for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**Grade 9:** focuses on the saints and what it means to be a holy person.

**Grade 10:** focuses on exploring holiness in the students' personal lives and daily experience as they go through year one of Confirmation Prep.

**Grade 11:** focuses on the Sacrament of Confirmation, what it means and how it affects us throughout our lives in year two of the sacramental prep.

### **CLASS TIMES & LOCATIONS**

**Kindergarten:** Sundays at St. John Evangelist during the 9 am Mass.

**Elementary (grades 1-6):** Offered at two different times/locations: Wednesday afternoons: 4:00-5:00 pm at St. John Evangelist or

Wednesday evenings: 5:45-6:45 pm at Blessed Trinity.

Members of both parishes are allowed to choose either time.

**Middle school classes (grades 7-8):** Wednesday nights 7:00-8:00 pm at Blessed Trinity

**Grades 9 & 10:** Wednesday nights 7:15-8:30 pm at St. John Evangelist.

**Grade 11:** Students join the other high school students the first Wednesday of each month at St. John Evangelist from 7:15-8:30 pm and meet separately on Sunday nights twice a month from 7:15-8:30 pm at Blessed Trinity to continue their Confirmation preparation.

### **SACRAMENTS**

#### **First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (Communion)**

Sacramental preparation begins in second grade. Special information about meetings and events will be sent to the families involved. A First Eucharist retreat will occur in spring. Archdiocesan policy expects children to be in religious education classes at least one year prior to the year of preparing for the sacrament.

#### **Confirmation**

Confirmation preparation occurs over two years, beginning in tenth grade and completing in eleventh grade. There is a Confirmation retreat in the spring of the second year of preparation. Preparation is completed in eleventh grade but the sacrament is received in the fall of grade 12.

### **DISCIPLINE & EXPECTATIONS**

Our desire to share faith in a positive community environment. The basic expectations we have for students are responsibility, respect, and regard for safety. These expectations are shared with students at the beginning of the year, however, we greatly appreciate parents support.

**Disciplinary Procedure:** To ensure a fun and safe environment for all, issues will be handled as follows:

**Step 1:** Child will receive a warning from the adult. **Step 2:** Additional warning depending on behavior, otherwise to step 3. **Step 3:** The child will have a time out in the office or independent work in hallway. **Step 4:** We will call home and child will be sent home.

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**POLICIES**

The Faith Formation Program at our Parishes is structured on the policies of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Below are the more pertinent policies:

**Absentees:** Attendance is expected at all sessions of our Religious Education (RE) program. If your child/children will be absent from class, we ask that you call the RE office to notify us. If we do not hear from you, a call will be made to your home to verify that your child is absent. High school students who miss more than two classes in a year will be given make up assignments for additional missed classes to make sure they are still on track with their sacramental preparation.

**Arrival/Departure:** Generally, we ask students not to be dropped off more than 5 minutes before class. If weather is bad, students will be allowed into the entrance area to wait until class time. No student is allowed in the classroom unless the catechist or another adult is present. The following are exceptions:

4:00 pm Grades 1-6 Classes at St. John Evangelist: Due to the early timeframe of this class, we are aware that many students walk directly from school. **If** your child must come early for this reason, we have a room designated with activities in classroom 5. Otherwise, please drop your child off no more than 5 minutes before class.

5:45 pm Grades 1-6 Classes at Blessed Trinity: For grades 1-4, we ask that the arrival/departure plan be honored. Grades 5 and older are considered part of the middle school optional activities at The Lodge. The Lodge is open and supervised from 4:45-6:45 pm each evening we have class. Parental permission is required. See pg. 7 for more information.

7:00 pm Middle School classes at Blessed Trinity: For class, we still ask that students do not enter the classroom early or until a catechist is present. However, The Lodge is opened and supervised from 4:45-6:45 pm each evening we have class. See pg. 7 for more information. Parental permission is required. Fellowship of Christian Athletes is offered from 6:45-7:00 pm in the gym (pg. 7).

**Cancellation:** If the public schools are closed due to bad weather, there will be no RE classes. If bad weather develops after school, RE and YM staff will determine if classes are to be held that evening. Closings will be communicated through e-mail, phone call (only if e-mail is not provided), and local news channel's school/program delays and cancellations.

**Communication:** Grades 1-6 will use take home folders for announcements and class work. Please check the folder weekly and encourage your child to take responsibility by bringing the take home folder to class. Be sure to check the weekly newsletter from the Director of RE that is sent through email. RED (Religious Education Diary) also offers highlights and pictures each month on what is going on in the RE program on the website: [btsje.org/re/red](http://btsje.org/re/red).

**Communication Devices:** Cell phones, i-pods, toys and other such items are not allowed to be used in the classroom as they can be disruptive. Please have your child silence and put away his/her phone at the beginning of class.

**Parking Lot Safety:** Please follow traffic patterns designated by the parish for the safety of all children. Encourage your child/children to walk through the parking areas and be alert for moving vehicles. Parents are welcome to escort their child/children across the parking areas.

**Permission Slips:** Some activities provided by the parish require special permission slips for that specific event. Below is a guide to when you can expect a permission slip to be required, and when it will not be. This policy is set by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. If you have questions, please feel free to ask the Director of Religious Education or the Director of Youth Ministry.

Permission slips must be obtained for the following events and activities: events occurring off parish property, overnight activities, and youth activities outside of the scope of class and/or Mass where parents are not present.

Permission slips are not required for the following events and activities: activities on parish property within the scope of class and/or Mass; activities when parents are present on parish property; and programs engaging the community but not inviting people into the parish buildings.

Though permission slips are not required in these situations, all reasonable efforts will be made to inform parents of the events/activities in advance.

**Snacks:** On occasion, catechists or small group leaders may choose to bring snacks for their students. Allergies and special considerations as mentioned on the registration form are passed on to the catechists or small group leaders at the beginning of the year.

### **FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

A well-rounded religious education and youth ministry program invites students and families to connect with the parish community beyond the classes. Opportunities for fellowship emphasize the importance of the greater parish community and allow learning and growing in the faith to continue at all times. Below are a few of the opportunities that we provide for students and families to participate in throughout the year. A full and continually updated list of activities can be found on the parish website: [www.btsje.org](http://www.btsje.org). Parental permission is required for all events, for more information on permission slips and Safe Environment Education, please see the Policies section of the handbook.

**Youth Ministry Nights at The Lodge:** Every Wednesday, prior to RE classes, The Lodge at Blessed Trinity is open for students grades 5 through 8. Located in the rectory at Blessed Trinity, The Lodge is a youth and young adult center serving both of our parishes. Students are invited to come hang out, play games, and watch movies, under adult supervision. Pizza and beverages are available at a small cost; and on occasion, families volunteer to provide free dinners for the students. The Lodge is open each week from 4:45-6:45 pm. Students are walked over to class when The Lodge closes.

**Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA):** FCA meets in the Blessed Trinity gym from 6:45-7:00 pm on class days. Open to grades 7-8, it is an opportunity for students to burn off some energy by playing games in the gym prior to class.

**Sunday Night Liturgy:** Sunday Night Liturgy is a youth oriented evening Mass celebrated once a month. As a typical Sunday Mass, all are invited to participated, but the liturgical ministries are run by middle and high school volunteers and the music and homily reflect the younger audience. Food and fellowship is offered in the church hall after Mass. This year our Sunday Night Liturgies will be at 6:00 pm on the second Sunday of each month at Blessed Trinity.

**Religious Education Family Fun Days:** These optional events for children and their parents are designed to have fun and fellowship with those in our parish communities:

⇒ **Sunday, October 2, 2016 from noon-2:30 pm (SJE):** *Welcome Back Family Picnic:* Join us on the church lawn (or church hall if inclement weather) for yard games and a barbeque. We will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, beverages and games, you bring a dish to pass, a blanket, and your favorite yard game.

⇒ **Saturday October 15, anytime between 9:30-11:30 am (BT):** *Family Fall Festival:* Join Religious Education, Catholic Life Center, and Youth Ministry at the Catholic Life Center as it will have different Halloween themed activities. Carnival games, goodie bags, cookie decorating and more for younger children. Obstacle course and fun games in the gym for middle school students. All those that wear a costume will receive a prize!!

⇒ **Sunday, December 11, 2016, noon-2:30 pm (SJE):** *Liturgical New Year Celebration:* Celebrate a Happy New Year (a Liturgical New Year that is). Opportunity for families to learn about the Church calendar along with lunch, games, and fellowship.

⇒ **Tuesday, February 28, 2017, 5:30-7:30 pm (BT):** *Mardi Gras Family Faith Festival:* Join Religious Education and Youth Ministry, as we celebrate Mardi Gras. Featuring a pancake dinner (in honor of shrove Tuesday or “Pancake Day”), we provide the pancakes, you bring the toppings. Followed by Lenten learning stations (age appropriate activities for adults and students) and games.

⇒ **Sunday, April 9, 2017, 12:00-2:30 pm (SJE):** *Palm Sunday Family Fun Day:* Join Religious Education and Youth Ministry as we get ready for Easter with crafts, lunch and games.

**Middle School Monthly Programs:** Once a month, during the school year, programming is provided for students in grades 5 through 8. Activities vary each month and alternate between St. John Evangelist and Blessed Trinity. The RE Family Fun Days described on page 8 are included in this as each of them includes activities specifically planned for middle school students. A schedule of the additional events is below. Separate parental permission will be required for each of the following events:

⇒ **Sunday, November 6, 2016, 3:00-7:00 pm (BT):** *Football Party:* Gather at The Lodge for pizza, snacks and a Green Bay victory!

⇒ **Sunday, January 8, 2017, 12:00-2:00 pm (BT):** *Christmas Cookie Decorating:* Join us in celebrating the last few days of the Christmas Season with Christmas movies and cookie decorating.

⇒ **March 2017, Date: TBD (Location: TBD):** *Middle School Lock-in:* Every year, the Sheboygan County Organization of Religious Educators (SCORE), hosts an overnight lock-in for students in grades 6 through 8. The lock-in is held in the spring of each year and Sheboygan County parishes alternate hosting the event. More information will be provided as the date approaches.

⇒ **Saturday, May 6, 2017, noon – 2:00 pm (SJE):** *End of Year Bash:* Celebrate the close of another fun year of Religious Ed with a end of year party. Food, fun and games for middle school students and their families.

**Vacation Bible School (VBS):** Vacation Bible School is a week-long adventure with crafts, games, fellowship, and learning about the Catholic faith. The week is open to students going into grades 1-6 and is offered in the summer of 2017 (date TBD). Blessed Trinity and St. John Evangelist alternate hosting this event.



**Please Sign and Return  
the Following Page**



YOUR WORD  
IS A LAMP  
TO MY FEET  
AND A LIGHT  
TO MY PATH.

psalm 119.105

