

HOLY NAME OF JESUS PARISH

POLICY ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN

General principles

- 1) At your children's baptism, you, as parents, accepted the **responsibility to educate** them in the practice of the faith, and to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us. You were even asked, "Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?" This responsibility cannot be renounced, and remains both your duty and your right as parents.
- 2) Now that religion is no longer taught in the schools, the Church seeks to assist you in the carrying out of these responsibilities by offering the *Faith First* program.

Specific policies

- 1) *Faith First* is offered from Kindergarten to Grade 6, and runs roughly the length of the school year.
- 2) At our parish, First Confession and First Holy Communion are **normally** received in grade 3, and Confirmation **normally** in grade 6, **provided** the child has completed at least two years of *Faith First* prior to **each** sacrament.

However, some children receive these sacraments later for one reason or another. What is most important is that the children are properly prepared, and no pressure should be felt to make sure it happens in the right year.

- 3) The Catholic faith is not just knowledge, it is about a relationship with God in which our human families, with all their joys and sorrows, come together to form the family of God. And so **Mass attendance each Sunday (or Saturday evening at 5:00) is required by all children enrolled in *Faith First* and by their parents.** Attendance will be taken by stamping the appropriate page of the children's Sunday missal, which we provide. Many families grow to see Mass as a highpoint of their week, where they can grow in love of God and neighbour, and meet other families supportive of their Catholic values.
- 4) You are responsible for guiding your child in the discussion and completion of their **workbook** according to the schedule we provide
- 5) Attendance by the children at all **children's sessions**, including the special sacramental preparation sessions, which are held at the church during the year, is required.

- 6) You are required to attend all **parents' sessions** held at the church each year.
- 7) It goes without saying that **punctuality** at all sessions and at Sunday Mass helps everyone and teaches the children courtesy and respect.
- 8) Parents of children with **special needs** may be required to assist the catechists during the children's sessions, as we cannot guarantee having volunteers with adequate specialized training
- 9) The **fee** is payable at registration time. If you require a special arrangement, please contact the PCL.
- 10) We wish the *Faith First* program to be offered in a climate of general respect for all concerned: children, parents, and coordinators. We expect the same level of **commitment** as you give to school, sports programs and other important activities in your child's life. Parents are always free to withdraw their child and prepare for and celebrate the sacraments elsewhere.

We, in turn, reserve the right to ask a family to withdraw their child if the requirements are not being fulfilled or for another serious rea

Parent statement

I have read this Policy Statement, and agree to comply with its conditions. I understand that if attendance at Mass, at the children's or parents' sessions, or if the child's preparation is judged to be inadequate by the Directors of Religious Education, my child(ren) may be asked to delay his/her reception of the sacraments. I have signed my agreement to these conditions on the registration form kept on file at the parish office.

Have you seen the Faith First religious education program website? It's complete and fun, and worth getting to know during the summer: www.faithfirst.com and www.beydisciples.com

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