

Saint Oliver's  
Parish School of Religion

**PARENT HANDBOOK**



School Year 11-12

# St. Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church

**Main Office:** 770-979-2500

**Parish School of Religion:** 770-978-6751

**FAX:** 770-985-6590

**Rev. Jim Henault, M.S., Pastor**

[frjim@stolivers.com](mailto:frjim@stolivers.com)

## **P.S.R. Staff:**

- Jenifer Truitt, Coordinator (CRE)  
[jtruitt@stolivers.com](mailto:jtruitt@stolivers.com)
- Jennifer Tarnowski, MS Youth Minister (EDGE)  
[ms.edge@stolivers.com](mailto:ms.edge@stolivers.com)
- Lynn Ory, HS Youth Minister (Life Teen)  
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- Racheal Milotte, Associate HS Youth Minister
- Carol Kruskamp, Adult Faith Formation  
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- Margarita Madrid, Administrative Assistant  
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## **Parish School of Religion Office Hours:**

Tuesday – Friday, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The PSR office is open during all religious education class times. Individual staff hours vary. Should you wish to meet with a specific staff member, please call ahead to schedule an appointment.

### Communication (Right to Amend)

This handbook serves as a guide for the policies and programs offered by St. Oliver's Parish School of Religion. We are here to serve the community. The PSR program reserves the right to amend this handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified if any changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to share them with either your child's catechist, or a PSR Staff member. You may call, email, write, or stop by in person. Your input is valuable to us.

August 2011

Dear Parents,

We hope you will take time to carefully read the guidelines and policies outlined in this book. Our concern is for your child(ren) to encounter their faith in a safe and comfortable environment.

Catechesis is more than handing on religious instruction. It is a lifelong process of growing in faith. We realize that you, as parents, are the most important religious educators of your children. We need your help and support. There are many ways you can do this.

First and foremost, set the right example by attending Mass weekly.

Secondly, we are called by our baptismal promises to evangelize... so, you can answer that call by volunteering in the PSR program.

Next, continue your own personal religious education. St. Oliver's offers adult faith formation classes on a regular basis. If your child is enrolled in the program, you, the parent, should plan on attending classes of interest whenever possible. As adult learners, we cannot afford to sit back and not continue to learn about our faith. Rather, we are challenged to become lifelong learners.

How can you help be a good partner in your child's faith formation? Well...

- Become actively involved in the parish community.
- Worship as a family. Pray with your child.
- Discuss PSR classes with your child each week.
- Experience spiritual growth by continuing your own education.

We are here to support you in this important calling. Feel free to contact us at any time.

In His Love,

Jenifer Truitt, CRE  
Jennifer Tarnowski, MS Youth Minister  
Lynn Ory, HS Youth Minister  
Racheal Milotte, Associate HS Youth Minister  
Carol Kruskamp, Adult Education  
Margarita Madrid, Administrative Assistant

## Parish School of Religion Program Policies

1. Parish membership is required for religious education.
2. We follow the age requirements of the school system, making Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> the cut-off date for all grades.
3. Baptismal certificates are required for all children receiving the Sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation.
4. Fees: No tuition is charged to Active Parishioners (following Archdiocesan guidelines for the definition of an active stewardship family). Otherwise, tuition is based on grade level. Please contact Pat Bulger at 770-979-2500 for tuition information and/or to verify your status in the parish as active or not active.
5. Student registration begins in the spring for the following school year. Students are placed on a first-come, first-served basis. The PSR office is open limited hours during the summer for registration.
6. If the requested class is full, parents may choose to homeschool their children. Homeschool students must be registered with the PSR.
7. Parents are expected to attend faith development courses periodically throughout your child's religious education instruction. Classes are offered on a regular basis; follow the bulletin for dates and times.

### 2011-12 Class Days and Times:

**Sunday 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.:** Spanish Pre-K, Pre-K – 5<sup>th</sup>  
**6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.:** Life Night, Life Teen

**Tuesday 5:15 – 6:30 p.m.:** Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade

**Wednesday 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.:** EDGE (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)  
Pizza and Prayer, Life Teen

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

In the event of inclement weather, we may cancel classes. Please tune to television station WSB TV Channel 2 ABC for notification of closure.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

We expect all families to make a commitment to regular attendance at all classes and activities. Good attendance makes it possible to grasp religious concepts and to foster a sense of belonging in the parish community.

#### **Elementary Attendance Policy:**

**If a child is absent**, parents must contact the child's catechist for any missed assignments. If your child completes work missed during an absence and **turns the work into the PSR office**, the absence will be **excused**.

Under Archdiocesan guidelines, students must attend 80% of classes (no more than 5 unexcused absences) to receive credit for successfully completing the year.

**EDGE and Life Teen Attendance Policies will be discussed at the annual parent meetings.**

**NOTE: Religious education classes are NOT a substitute for Mass.** Regular attendance at Mass is essential to the process of forming faith. We urge families to join in the celebration of the Eucharist regularly.

### **CLASS DROP-OFF and PICK-UP POLICY**

**Elementary:** For safety and security, we require that all parents/guardians elementary parents park in the parking lot and walk your child to their meeting area. You must also come to the classroom to collect your child at the end of class. Let us know in writing if anyone other than a parent is allowed to pick up your child, and also if there is anyone who is NOT allowed to pick up the child.

**Middle school (EDGE) and Life Teen** students are permitted to enter and exit the building unescorted at the discretion of the parents and teachers.

For pick-up, please be respectful of dismissal times. If you are running late, call 770-979-2500 or 770-978-6751 as soon as you can and we will allow the child to wait in the RE, Youth Ministry, or main office until you arrive.

### **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

It is our policy to discipline with love and understanding. If a student's behavior warrants disciplinary action, we will address the problem under the general guidelines below. If the problem persists, a parent will be called in. If there is no improvement, the child will be expected to participate through the homeschool program. Teachers are not babysitters, nor are they required to be professional educators. They are volunteers, and are not expected to handle serious and ongoing discipline problems.

Discipline plan:

- At the first incident, the student will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior.
- After the second incident, the student will be sent to the office for a discussion with the director about appropriate behavior.
- After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the student will be removed from class and the parent or guardian will be contacted.
- If the student's behavior continues to disrupt learning, it may be necessary for the child to participate through the homeschool program.

### **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Treat all individuals with dignity and respect.
- Please dress appropriately for learning situations.
- No running or skating (heelies) in the building.
- Please do not chew gum during class time.
- Please do not bring toys to PSR classes.
- No cell phones or other electronic devices during classes.

- Any vandalism to church property will result in immediate consequences at the discretion of the administration, including possible expulsion from the program.

### **Fire Safety**

In the event of a fire alarm, all catechists and students will evacuate the building. Students are to remain with their classes outside of and away from the building. No one is permitted to re-enter the building until given the all-clear by fire safety personnel or a parish staff member. Evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms.

### **Tornado Warning**

In the event of a tornado warning during class, the students will be moved to the Life Teen room or the preschool hallway and instructed to “duck and cover” until the all-clear is given.

### **Health Concerns and Medications**

If a student becomes sick during PSR sessions, he/she will be brought to the office and a parent will be contacted immediately. Please be sure you have a cell or other emergency phone number on file with our office. Catechists and other staff members of the PSR cannot dispense any medication to students during classes. A confidential appointment can be made with the program administrator to discuss special medical needs. Arrangements can be made if there is a specific need to make a policy exception. Only prescription medication in the original container would be accepted or administered under any circumstances.

### **Child Abuse**

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will follow diocesan policy on such matters. All catechists and volunteers have been background screened according to Archdiocesan guidelines. These guidelines may be found by visiting [www.archatl.com](http://www.archatl.com). (See also the “You Matter” section in this handbook).

### **Retreats and other off-site activities**

A student permission form must be signed for any activity that takes place off the St. Oliver’s property. We also require a medical release form on file for each student who attends a function away from the parish. A new medical form must be filled out each year.

### **Our Mission**

We, as a faith community, are called to evangelize and catechize the young people of St. Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church. Catechesis is essential to every liturgical and sacramental action of faith. It is our mission to spread the good news of Jesus Christ through prayer, study, and action.

### **You Matter**

Under the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young people, Article 12, parishes in our diocese must implement the “You Matter” training program for children and teens. This program consists of coloring books for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, activity books for 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and the “You Matter” video for teens. The program deals with personal safety issues concerning children and young people for the prevention of child abuse.

## **Curriculum**

**St. Oliver's PreK – 5<sup>th</sup>** grade religious education program utilizes the Pflaum Gospel Weeklies faith formation program. The doctrine taught in the PGWs is lectionary based, following the weekly Gospel, and is taken from the Four Pillars of the Church, as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. These teachings are developmentally presented to enable students to understand that what we believe, how we worship, how we pray, and how we serve our community does make a difference.

St. Oliver's has a policy and program for those who desire to teach religious education to their children at home for grades K - 8. After registering for the program, parents are given the same materials supplied in our regular PSR program. The requirements for participation in this program include attending regularly scheduled meetings and turning all completed work in to the PSR office.

For more information, contact Jenifer Truitt at 770-978-6751x 27 or email at [jtruitt@stolivers.com](mailto:jtruitt@stolivers.com)

## **OAKS – “St. Oliver's Awesome Kids”**

OAKS is a club for students in third through fifth grade. Students gather monthly for fellowship and fun with their peers. Meetings are usually held on Friday evenings. Watch the bulletin for dates.

## **EDGE (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade)**

Middle school students are expected to attend Wednesday evening EDGE classes. The EDGE is a Catholic middle school youth ministry for early adolescents in grades six, seven, and eight. The EDGE is designed to meet the educational, spiritual, emotional, and social needs of young adolescents. It is modeled more like the Life Teen program than the traditional classes. Goals of the EDGE include:

- Foster a transforming spiritual experience of Jesus through the liturgy, allowing early adolescents to have a profound experience of the Word of God and the Eucharist.
- Assist middle school youngsters in gaining an understanding and appreciation for what the Catholic Church teaches and believes.
- Incorporate the Catholic Church's vision of social justice and peace into their spiritual life.
- Develop an identity in middle school youth and in the EDGE ministry as being a vital and visual presence within the parish.

For more information, contact Jennifer Tarnowski at 770-978-6751 x 26 or email [ms.edge@stolivers.com](mailto:ms.edge@stolivers.com)

## **Life Teen – High School Students**

Teens in grades 9 – 12 are expected to continue their religious formation by attending Life Night and/or Pizza and Prayer regularly.

- The Life Teen program calls teens into a deeper and fuller relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Teens experience the love of Jesus through community, God's word and the Eucharist.
- Teens are challenged to live the gospel in their daily lives and encounters.
- Participation in various service and fundraising activities are available throughout the year, including summer.
- For more information about the national Life Teen program, visit [www.lifeteen.com](http://www.lifeteen.com)

Pizza and Prayer: Wednesday, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Life Teen Liturgy: Sunday, 5:00 p.m.

Life Night: Sunday, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Lynn Ory at 770-978-6751 ext. 43 OR email [youthministry@stolivers.com](mailto:youthministry@stolivers.com) .

## **Sacrament Preparation Guidelines**

Sacrament classes for First Eucharist and Confirmation are offered each year in a separate preparation program in addition to weekly PSR classes. This is in keeping with guidelines issued by the Archdiocese of Atlanta.

### **Reconciliation and First Eucharist**

- Students must participate in a weekly religious education class, homeschool religious education, or be enrolled in a Catholic school.
- Students must be in at least 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
- Students must have at least one year of religious education prior to enrolling in the sacrament preparation class. *Traditionally First Eucharist is received in second grade. To do this, student must have successfully completed a first grade religious education program.*
- Students in sixth grade or higher must make an appointment with the Carol Kruskamp, Adult Faith Formation coordinator, to discuss their program.
- Mandatory parent and student classes are held on a monthly basis. Strict attendance policies are explained and must be observed. Failure to meet attendance requirements will likely result in dismissal from the program until the following year.

### **Confirmation**

- Students must have attended religious education class, Catholic school, or have been homeschooled in religious education for at least two years prior to Confirmation preparation.
- Confirmation preparation begins in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, at which time students will receive the preparation requirements.
- Immediate preparation begins in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and finishes with reception of the sacrament in Spring of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Parents and students are required to attend regularly scheduled meetings. In addition, there will be mandatory parent/sponsor meetings.
- Class session calendars will be provided.
- Service hours and participation in parish activities will also be required.
- One retreat experience is required in both 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade.