

**SAINT ALPHONSUS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
210 EAST LOGAN STREET
LEMONT, IL 60439**

DIRECTOR

Mr. Kevin J. Cody

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Mrs. Pam Nugent

PHONE

(630) 257-2371

E-MAIL

kody-stals@comcast.net
st_als_re_office@comcast.net

ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Alan Micco ~Chairman Mr. Kevin Cody Mrs. Kathy Burke
Mr. Keith Polk Mrs. Deborah Kornacker Ms. Lauren Kornacker
Vacancy

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. 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 & parents.

[Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2226]

"... ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

Jesus invites us to knock, ask and find.

We journey as a community: beginning with the family and expanding to a life of shared faith, worship and service to others.

We accompany our children on their journeys so that they too will know, love and trust God.

We witness the growth and development of our children as they learn to trust God through Jesus whom they recognize in everyday life.

Faith is a deepening relationship that can't be found in any book. It is more than a set of truths, teachings or doctrines. Biblical stories, liturgy, prayer, and the example of dedicated people form a belief system that nurtures and nourishes faith.

Together, parents and catechists share faith, inspire its growth in our children, and discover growth in ourselves. Together, we seek, we knock, and we ask.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Parent,

As director, I am grateful for the privilege of working with you parents in bringing your children to a closer relationship with God. You show your children the importance of religious instruction by enrolling them in our programs. Your children also see that prayer and worship are an essential part of their spiritual lives by attending Mass together. It is encouraging to see so many take their Christian parental responsibilities seriously.

I would also like to thank our catechists and assistants and all who share their enthusiasm in spreading the Gospel message to our children and youth.

The administration of religious education for such a large number of children requires the skills and talents of many. I appreciate the dedicated assistance of Pam Nugent in the RE Office and the valuable advice of our Religious Education Advisory Board who has worked diligently to assess and make improvements to our program. Over the past year, we focused on our Junior High program. We determined that we wanted to move to a learning process that was more interactive and that encouraged the young people to take more responsibility for their learning. We selected textbook series that incorporate these styles of catechesis. In my interviews with parents new to our program, I've learned that the most common concern for parents is that we assist them in providing their children with a good Christian moral foundation. Consequently, we decided to focus on the topic of morality for the 7th Grade-level. We will use the same textbook series in the 8th Grade level to lead our candidates for Confirmation into deeper relationship with Christ and his Church. To further engage our young people in this process we would like to hold a couple of "youth nights" that would bring 7th and 8th graders together for evenings of presentation, discussion and activities around certain themes. To do this we will need enough volunteers to plan and facilitate the events. We thank our Junior High core catechists, Diane Kaye and Bob Ognar for assisting our catechist teams with this new initiative.

Another significant change for this year is extending the sessions from 75 minutes to 90 minutes, resulting in the need for fewer sessions (from 24 to 20) to meet the Archdiocesan guideline of 30-hours of formation. The extra 15 minutes allows us to schedule sessions around the Masses better, and to finish craft projects before they walk out the door. With fewer sessions, we were able to delay the start of the program and allow families to settle into the school year.

Our 5th and 8th Graders took ACRE Surveys last Spring. The board is in the process of analyzing these standardized national surveys to determine our program's strengths & weaknesses as we continue our efforts to improve.

As a parish, we will be celebrating our 140th Anniversary in 2007. We will take time during the course of this year to reflect on our history as a faith community, as well as on who we are as a parish and where we want to go. The USCCB theme and the Chicago Catechetical Conference themes this year are both "Who Do You Say That I Am?" It is an appropriate theme for our parish when we alter it a bit to ask, Who do we say that we are? The question applies to all areas of parish life and ministry, including each of us asking ourselves, who do I say that I am as a Catholic, a parent, and a parishioner of St. Alphonsus. We can be more effective when we have a clear understanding of what we are called to be and do.

Please know that I am grateful to you, our catechists and staff for all that is done to provide a solid education in our Catholic Faith for our children. May God continue to bless us in teaching the Gospel message and fulfilling God's command to teach all nations

Kevin J. Cody, DRE
Director

CATECHETICAL STAFF

Track A

ST. ALPHONSUS RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM CATECHETICAL STAFF – 2006/2007

Track A

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Name</u>
1	Melanie Terrazas Shelley Lambert
2	Kathy Burke Michelle Tauer Gerri Yanku
3	Ruth Schumacher Darlene Brady
4	Reggie Stateman Heather Roe
5	Colleen Kaye
6	John & Karin Gory
7	Diane Kaye
8	Mark Fisch

Track B

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Name</u>
1	Kandi Perkey) Annie Fox
2	Cindy Kelly Daniella Paulius2
3	Judy Radomski Suzanne Smiles
4	Rosalie Haubner Stephanie Brackett
5	Kathi & David Butler
6	Ruta Dowiarz Gerry Novotny
7	Cathy Kuba Toni Leibforth
8	Barb Colaianne

Track C

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Name</u>
--------------	-------------

- 1 Gail Nacker
Angela Crutchfield
- 2 Marge Pinkowski
Cereana Manalli
- 3 Brian Sullivan
Judy Techman
- 4 KC Wollenburg
Colleen Leahy
- 5 Sr. Anne Marie Knawa
Jennifer Roe
- 6 Debra Furlong
- 7 Terri Theodore
Bridget Theodore
- 8 Bob Ognar

Core Catechists

1st – Gail Nacker 5th – Kathi Butler
2nd – Cindy Kelly 6th – Karin Gory
3rd – Ruth Schumacher 7th – Diane Kaye
4th – Debbie Kornacker 8th – Bob Ognar

COMMON POLICIES

ASSESSMENTS

Quizzes should be given throughout the year to provide feedback to the catechists. A final written assessment on the grade-level core objectives will be given during the 18th session. You will be provided with a study guide to work with your child. If your child performs poorly on the assessment, then his/her catechist will review the questions orally with your child to determine the level of understanding. Cases where it is evident that a student does not have adequate understanding of content for their grade-level will be reported to the DRE. The DRE will contact the student's parents to determine a further course of action. Twice during the course of the program year you will receive the catechist's assessment of your child's participation and learning. You will be invited to participate in this process. The reports can be picked up from the catechists or from the Office of Religious Education.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to successful performance. Both school and home have the responsibility to encourage regularity of attendance. It is parents' responsibility to report absences to the Religious Education office at 257-2371. The parents of children missing from class will be called to verify that the children are safe at home, and to remind them of class being held at that time. Missed work must be completed. A student who has more than **4** absences will have to make up the missed work, as well as attend the missed session on another track. The student's readiness to go on to the next grade level will be assessed by the catechist, director, and pastor.

CLASS SESSIONS

Meeting Times

- *Track A*—begins at 9:45am on Sundays with dismissal at 11:15am.
- *Track B*---begins at 4:30pm on Mondays with dismissal at 6:00pm
- *Track C* – begins at 6:00pm on Wednesdays with dismissal at 7:30pm.

Please Note: Refer to the 2006-07 Schedule of Classes for exact dates of classes.

Classrooms

Grades 6, 7, and 8 meet in the Parish Center using the Walnut Street entrance. All other grades meet in the school building.

BIBLES

Fourth grade children are required to purchase a Bible. There are two kinds of Bibles available for purchase from the Religious Education Office. One is the Catholic Youth Study Bible, which includes illustrations, maps, notes, origins of Catholic Traditions, etc., for \$20.00. We also have the basic NAB Bible for \$5.00. Students new to our program in grades 5-8 should purchase a Bible if they do not already have one.

CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

If inclement weather or other emergency situations require that classes be canceled, you will be notified by your youngest child's catechist. If you are in doubt, call your child's catechist or the Office of Religious Education for a recorded message.

COMMUNICATION

There should always be an open line of communication among parents, catechists, and administration. Catechists are asked to keep parents apprised of what is going on in class. We want to create a partnership between the classroom catechist and you (the at-home catechists). Your child's catechist will provide you with a summary of what is going on in class and what you are attempting to accomplish after each session. The Director should always be made aware of parental concerns or student needs.

DISCIPLINE

Good conduct, cooperation, attention and courtesy are expected during class time. Sometimes children fail to live up to their own and adults' expectations. If students become unmanageable and are disruptive to the class, they will be sent to the office in the school. The parent(s) will be notified. After the third incident, we will request a meeting with the parent(s), and home instruction will be considered.

The essence of Christian discipline is self-discipline. Children learn that the observance of rules is a safeguard to their liberties, and not a curbing of them. We ask your cooperation in maintaining an efficient and consistent form of discipline from the outset, so that the steps above need not be taken.

EARLY DISMISSAL

When a child is required by the parent to leave class early, **a note must be sent to the office**. Children are not allowed to leave the building unescorted while classes are in session. We ask that the parent request early dismissal for important situations only because it is disruptive to the class, as well as to the child's education.

FIELD TRIPS OR RETREATS

If a class plans a field trip or retreat, parents will be notified and written permission will be requested. Students will not be allowed to participate in these trips without written parental consent, and they will be given an alternative equitable assignment.

HOMEWORK

Homework is not mandatory. However, since religious education is essentially indoctrination into a way of life, and parents have the primary responsibility for guiding their children's lives, it is important that parents review with their children what they are learning.

LITURGY OF THE MASS

“As members of the Christian community, all are called to participate actively in the liturgical prayer of the Church. Religious Education therefore must involve the student in his/her faith community and in that community's liturgy. Liturgy itself educates, it teaches, it forms community, and it forms the individual. It makes possible worship of God.” (NCCB, “Basic Teachings for Catholic Religious Education”). The Mass is the focus of our public worship of God and the focus of our parish worshipping community. Families have committed in writing to regularly attend Mass as part of our RE program. Once a month, one of our RE grades will sponsor an 8:30 Mass. Children of the sponsoring grade will experience various roles of liturgical ministry (greeters, ushers, lectors, dressing the altar, bringing up the gifts, etc.)

MEDICATION

Except in extraordinary circumstances, which must be approved by the director of the program, personnel within the Religious Education Program will not maintain, supervise the taking of, or administer medication.

PARENTAL CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES

A parent who has a question or concern regarding a situation involving a student is urged to follow these procedures:

1. Contact the student's catechist to discuss the situation and work with the catechist to arrive at possible solutions.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the catechist, the parent should then request a conference with the Director of Religious Education. After discussing the situation with both parties, the Director will act as a facilitator, making every effort to resolve the problem and initiate reconciliation between the two parties.
3. If resolution and reconciliation have not been achieved after discussion with the catechist and the Director, and the parent still feels the issue has not been addressed, the pastor may be asked to assist in the resolution and reconciliation of the problem.

Every effort should be made to resolve questions, concerns, and problems at the earliest possible stage in a manner appropriate for Christians.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In sending your child to the St. Alphonsus Religious Education Program, you are asked to contribute to, accept, and support the philosophy, goals and objectives of the program. Every parent, catechist, and Office of Religious Education make a written commitment to the program so that there is a clear understanding of the expectations between all parties working together in the program. [See the Commitment of Mutual Agreements form for specific commitments.]

The faith life of St. Alphonsus will grow only as the faith life of each family is enlightened and enriched by the gospel message of Jesus and each family lives out this reality as best it can. The family that lives in relationship with God becomes a living expression of the Gospel. Growth in spirituality by a parent or parents overflows into lived family life. Growing in faith takes on a new meaning when a family claims time for prayer, worship, faith sharing, symbol making and ritual.

REGISTRATION POLICY

Application packets for the 2007/08 program year will be given to your youngest child on the 2nd to last day of class. We ask you to fill out and return your application at the last session. Tuition and fees aren't due until the first session in September. If you are financially unable to make payment at that time, submit the completed application with a request for late payment or pay plan. An early registration discount can be realized if the admission application is received prior to the deadline stated on the application.

Assignment to the three tracks will be on a first-come-first-serve basis in the event of significant disparities between the sizes of the classes.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

The mission of the REAB is to support the Director of Religious Education in the development and integration of effective religious education practices. Through research, evaluation and recommendations, the Advisory Board meets monthly to assist the Director in ensuring our students receive the highest caliber of educational opportunities, spiritual growth and quality care in a loving and Christian based environment.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

Reconciliation and Eucharist

In Reconciliation, we have an opportunity for healing and righting our relationship with God and with each other. In the Eucharist, Jesus invites us to join Him in this meal with the Christian community.

The child must be baptized in order to receive the sacraments. A copy of the Baptismal Certificate must be provided even if the child was baptized here at St. Alphonsus. The child must have a basic understanding of the person and mission of Jesus, a desire to receive the Eucharist, and an ability to know the difference between ordinary bread and the Eucharist. Parents are responsible to have their child regularly attend first and second grade religious education classes and weekend Masses, as well as attend all parent meetings themselves, where possible.

Confirmation

The candidates are called to express commitment to the Catholic faith, to reaffirm the promises of Baptism, and to realize that faith development is a life-long process. They must be knowledgeable about the basic teachings of the Church, have a personal desire to receive the sacrament, participate fully in the program through regular attendance, and participate in service projects and all class activities, including the retreat. Parents are reminded of the importance they play in fostering a religious attitude in their children through their own values, religious practices, and encouragement.

SERVICE PROJECTS: Grade-level

To teach our children the meaning of Christian service, catechists for each grade (1-7) decide on a service project for their students to participate in. If a child does not participate with classmates in the project, then he or she should engage in his or her own service project under the supervision a parent. A report on the project should be presented to the catechist or the class.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Worship with the parish community each week at Saturday or Sunday Eucharist.
- Attend each grade level in grades 1-8 for ongoing faith formation.
- Attention and regular participation in class. This is necessary in order to learn the required doctrine, scriptures, liturgical knowledge, and prayers, as well as to being receptive to the presence of Jesus Christ in their lives. Students must demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts being taught at each grade level in order to proceed to the next level. These concepts are included in this handbook to assist parents in their role as at-home catechists.
- If absent, arrangements should be made to complete missed classwork at home.
- They are expected to respect the materials in the classroom and church property.

SUPERVISION

We are responsible for the children only during the regularly scheduled class sessions. We do not accept responsibility for those children dropped off early, not picked up promptly, or who are part of a car pool. We do ask teachers through third grade to hold their students in the classroom until parents or older siblings come into the building and pick them up.

VISITORS

Students are permitted to bring guests to class, provided a note from the host parent accompanies the student to class. This note should indicate that the guest has your permission to be at the class. We trust that you will notify the guest's parent that this has been part of their child's visit with your family. Visitors without such permission will not be allowed in the classroom. Parents, of course, are welcome to visit their child's class at any time.