

**Sheil Catholic Center  
Sheil School of Religion  
Parent/Student Handbook  
October 2019 – May 2020**

**WELCOME!**

Dear Sheil School of Religion Families,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! We are glad you and your family are here and we look forward to working together to nurture our wonderfully unique Sheil community. We do so by providing religious guidance to our children while offering our Northwestern students a ministry that allows them to be an example of faith to another generation.

Sheil's dynamic and spiritually rich community is no accident. What we all value about Sheil takes tremendous work and planning and the commitment, time and energy of many people. The Sheil School of Religion (SSR) is no different. In order for this ministry to be successful for the student teachers and for our children to learn and grow in their faith, we need the support of ***everyone*** involved. Specifically, we look to each family to do the following:

- ***Attend 9:30 am mass prior to class.*** With the exception of our kindergartners, the SSR class schedule is designed to allow families to attend mass together prior to class each Sunday. The Children's Liturgy may be available during the 9:30 mass for younger school age children, if that is of interest to your family. Celebrating mass together is a wonderful part of nurturing our children's spiritual growth.
- ***Attend class each week.*** Regular attendance is paramount to the growth of your child in their Catholic faith and the Sheil School of Religion. The expectation is that children will attend class each week, with a minimum attendance threshold of 60% for the school year.

Our teachers work very hard preparing for class and look forward to working with your children; therefore, they become discouraged when attendance is low. Also, we want to ensure children follow the curriculum for the full year. There are only 24 1-hour sessions throughout the school year, so it is imperative that children do their best to attend. Certainly, illness and occasional family conflicts necessitate missing class.

When a child will be absent from class, we ask that parents:

- **Call or email the teacher prior to class** (or in the case of illness, as soon as possible) letting them know about the student's absence.
  - **Work with their child at home to make up the missed lesson.** We ask that parents plan to help their children make up their work and return completed assignments to teachers. With prior notice, teachers can provide lesson materials before a missed class or they can provide the materials when you return to class.
  - **Bring in a bulletin to demonstrate your participation in mass** Attending mass is a wonderful way to connect with God and the community. We understand there may be conflicts that prevent your child from attending class, but we feel there must be an emphasis and commitment to attend mass regularly on the weekend. The goal is for each child to attend mass at least 90% of the weekends during the 2019-20 school year.
- **Participate in service activities.** Service Days are an important part of the program for all SSR students. The winter service project takes place after class on December 2<sup>nd</sup> and the spring project will occur in March or April. It is important that all students attend and participate in these service activities as they offer a wonderful opportunity for children to implement what they are learning into action in service of others.
- **Attend and participate in sacramental activities.** For students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades, additional activities of service and class attendance are required to help them prepare for the sacraments. Please review page 6 of this Handbook for the specific requirements for each sacrament.
- **Volunteer.** SSR is a growing religious education program. Unlike other area religious education programs, we rely 100% on parent and student volunteers. *Each SSR family is required to have at least one parent sign up for one or more of the volunteer activities described on pages 3 and 4 in this Handbook.* Your particular interest was indicated on the registration form and the person in charge of that function will contact you. If you would like further information on the details of the volunteer responsibilities, please contact any of the Program Committee members listed on page 5 of this Handbook.

We look forward to getting to know and working with all of you this year. Many thanks for your support of the Sheil School of Religion and for sharing your

wonderful children with us.

Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can be of assistance to your family.

Have a wonderful year!

Peace,

Sheil School of Religion Director

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## **CLASS SCHEDULE 2019-2020**

Class dates for this year's program are set forth in the 2019-2020 SSR Calendar accompanying the email in which you received this Handbook. Class times are set forth below, depending upon grade level.

- 9:30 – 10:30 am - PreK/K: Class will be located on the Sheil lower level  
*Children's Liturgy of the Word during 9:30am mass  
Gospel for grades 1-8 (if available)*
- 10:45-11:45 am - Grades 1- 8: Location posted on first day of class

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

To ensure the spiritual development, enjoyment and safety of all students, the following basic rules must be followed by all children:

- Show respect to fellow students and teachers
- Refrain from using foul language
- Refrain from causing bodily harm to other students and teachers
- Show respect for class supplies and facilities
- Assist teachers in cleaning up at the end of class
- No cell phones, tablets or other electronic devices

Parents will be contacted and asked to attend class if any of these rules are not observed. Students will be asked to leave the program if behavior problems are deemed chronic.

## **PARENTAL VOLUNTEER OPTIONS**

*At least one parent from each family must select one or more of the volunteer activities listed below and indicate the selection on the registration form. If no selection is made, you will be assigned by the Program Committee to an activity in need of volunteers.*

**Class Parent** – A parent volunteer (or two) is assigned to each grade level classroom. These volunteers provide administrative support to the class and keep in touch with the student teachers to ensure that the class is running smoothly each Sunday. If the teachers are not available on a particular week and a substitute cannot be found from our student teacher substitute list, the parent aide helps recruit a parent to help in the class that week. Class parents also touch base with the Service Coordinator regularly to see what support they

might provide.

**Service** – Service volunteers assist the Service Coordinator and student teaching teams in organizing and monitoring service projects for each class. This position is an especially important opportunity for 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents, since the Confirmation Candidates have a service project requirement for the sacrament.

**Sheil/Lunt Hall Monitoring** – Parents are responsible for monitoring SSR classes (grades 1-8) at Sheil and Lunt Hall. A schedule will be distributed via email to volunteers and posted at Sheil in the lower level. Each building monitor must check in each classroom and ensure at least one teacher is present at the beginning of class time. Monitors will stay in the building for the duration of class and help students or teachers if the need arises.

**Sacramental Preparation Committee** – Parents are responsible for coordinating materials and special events related to First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation.

### **TUITION**

The religious education program at Sheil is totally self-funded. Your tuition covers all books and curriculum materials, art supplies, books used throughout the year to supplement the program, sacramental expenses, year-end and holiday gifts for the teachers and occasional capital purchases such as storage shelving, TV/CD/DVDs, etc. As stated earlier, we run the program with an all-volunteer staff including teachers and parents, and are able to offer the program for a low fee.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Ongoing communication between teachers, program committee members and parents is essential to a successful program and positive experience for all. We will send all of our communication through email, so please be sure we have the best email address to contact you. If your email changes throughout the year, please contact our Neil Piacenti by email at [npiacenti@aol.com](mailto:npiacenti@aol.com). Parents are encouraged to discuss questions and concerns with any member of the Program Committee listed below.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Associates must be registered with Sheil Catholic Center for at least 12 months prior to enrolling their child in the Sheil School of Religion. Exceptions may be made for families who have moved to Evanston in the 12 months prior to enrollment.

Students/Faculty/Staff of Northwestern University will not be subject to this condition and may enroll their child at any time.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION CLASS REQUIREMENTS**

### Grade 8 - Confirmation

1. Must have a copy of baptismal certificate on file at Sheil.
2. Must attend classes throughout the year and make up any missed classes.
3. Must attend all classes from January – March 2020.
4. Must attend the Confirmation class retreat (Feb 8<sup>th</sup>).
5. Must volunteer for 20 hours of community service performed between October 2019 and May 2020. Details of the requirement will be discussed with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

**\*\*\* Confirmation is Saturday, February 29th at St. Mary's**

### Grades 2 - First Reconciliation

1. Must have a copy of baptismal certificate on file at Sheil.
2. Must attend classes throughout the year and make up any missed classes.
3. Must attend all classes in January and February 2020.

**\*\*\* Reconciliation is Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at Sheil**

### Grade 2 - First Communion

1. Must have a copy of baptismal certificate on file at Sheil.
2. Must attend classes throughout the year and make up any missed classes.
3. Must attend regularly attend classes between January and April 2020.
4. Must attend the banner and bread making sessions (TBA).

**\*\*\* First Communion is Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am  
Mass**

## ***Confirmation of Handbook Receipt and Review***

Please take a few moments to review this Handbook and go over the key commitments with your child or children.

Please then confirm that you have received and reviewed the **2019-2020 SSR Handbook**. Simply print out this page of the Handbook, complete the bottom portion and put the completed form in the SSR mailbox near the office in the northeast corner of the Sheil commons or return it to your child's teacher.

Many thanks!!!!

SSR Co-Directors

Neil Piacenti ~ [npiacenti@aol.com](mailto:npiacenti@aol.com)

Bridgett Piacenti ~ [bpiacenti@aol.com](mailto:bpiacenti@aol.com)

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Yes, I have received and reviewed the 2019-2020 Sheil School of Religion Handbook and have reviewed the key commitments with my child or children.

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Parent Signature

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Child's Signature & Grade

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Child's Signature & Grade

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Child's Signature & Grade

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Child's Signature & Grade

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Child's Signature & Grade

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Child's Signature & Grade

**Thank you!!!**