

Sheil Catholic Center at Northwestern University School of Religion 2026-2027 Handbook

WELCOME!

Dear Sheil School of Religion Families,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 school year! We are glad you and your family are part of the Sheil School of Religion (SSR), and we look forward to working together to nurture our wonderfully unique Sheil community. SSR provides religious education to our PreK-8th grade children and offers our Northwestern students an opportunity to learn first-hand about Catholic catechesis and to be an example of faith to a younger generation.

Sheil's dynamic and spiritually rich community is no accident. The Sheil community takes the commitment, time, and energy of many people to maintain. The Sheil School of Religion is no different. In order for this ministry to be successful for the student teachers and for our children, we need the support of **everyone** involved. Specifically, we look to each family to do the following:

- **Attend Mass and class from 9:30am-11:30am.** While this might seem like a long time, the first hour of class is participation in Mass. Celebrating Mass is a necessary part of nurturing our children's spiritual growth. We expect both students and their families along with the SSR teachers to attend this Mass. The goal is for each child to attend Mass at least 90% of the weekends during the 2026-2027 school year. After Mass, students will gather for class. The expectation is that students will attend class each week, with a minimum attendance threshold of 75% 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. Certainly, illness and occasional family schedule conflicts necessitate missing class.

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

Text 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.

- **Participate in Family Sessions and service activities.** Family Sessions and Service activities are an important part of the program for all SSR students. It is important that all students attend and participate in service activities as

they offer a wonderful opportunity for children to be of service to others. Organizing and assisting with service activities is a great opportunity for parents to be involved in SSR.

- ***Attend and participate in sacramental activities.*** For students receiving sacraments, additional parent meetings, service activities, and class attendance are required to help them prepare for the sacraments.
- ***Volunteer.*** Each SSR family is required to have at least one parent sign up for one or more of the volunteer activities on the SSR Registration Form. If you would like further information on the details of the volunteer responsibilities, please contact Christine Percheski.

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.

Peace,

Sheil School of Religion Parent Director
Christine Percheski, c-percheski@northwestern.edu, 609.240.9212

Sheil School of Religion Staff Liaison
Martina Ricca, martina.ricca@northwestern.edu, 847 328 4648 ext 16

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

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

- Above all, show respect for fellow students and teachers.
- Keep yourself and other people safe.
- Refrain from using foul language.
- Use class supplies and facilities appropriately.
- Assist teachers in cleaning up at the end of class.
- Do not use or bring cell phones, tablets, or other electronic devices to Mass or class.

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.

TUITION

The religious education program at Sheil is totally self-funded. Your tuition covers all books and curriculum materials, art supplies, sacramental expenses, year-end and holiday gifts for the teachers, and occasional capital purchases, such as storage shelving, etc. We run the program with an all-volunteer staff including teachers and parents, and we are able to offer the program for a low fee. Please contact **Martina Ricca** with any questions (martina.ricca@northwestern.edu) or if the fee is a hardship for your family.

COMMUNICATION

Ongoing communication between teachers, SSR leadership, 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 **Christine Percheski** at c-percheski@northwestern.edu

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.

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

SSR CALENDAR AND CLASS SCHEDULE, 2025-2026

Class dates for this year's program are listed below

Mass for students, families, and teachers: 9:30am

Class meetings: Immediately following 9:30 Mass to 11:30 am

Date	Liturgical Week	SSR Content	NU/Sheil Event
4-Oct	27th Sunday of OT	1st Class/Parent Orientation	
18-Oct	29th Sunday of OT	2nd Class	
25-Oct	30th Sunday of OT	Family Session	NU Family Weekend
1-Nov	Solemnity of All Saints	3rd Class	
8-Nov	32nd Sunday of OT	4th Class	
15-Nov	33rd Sunday of OT	5th Class	
22-Nov	Solemnity of Christ the King	Family Session	Undergraduate Retreat
6-Dec	2nd Sunday of Advent	Family Session	Fall Exams
10-Jan	Baptism of the Lord	6th Class	
17-Jan	2nd Sunday of OT	Family Session	MLK Weekend
24-Jan	3rd Sunday of OT	7th Class	
31-Jan	4th Sunday of OT	8th Class	
7-Feb	5th Sunday of OT	9th Class	
14-Feb	1st Sunday of Lent	NO CLASS	
21-Feb	2nd Sunday of Lent	10th Class	
28-Feb	3rd Sunday of Lent	11th Class	
7-Mar	4th Sunday of Lent	12th Class	
14-Mar	5th Sunday of Lent	Family Session	Winter Exams
4-Apr	Divine Mercy Sunday	13th Class	
11-Apr	3rd Sunday of Easter	14th Class	
18-Apr	4th Sunday of Easter	15th Class/First Reconciliation	Adelante Gala 4/17
25-Apr	5th Sunday of Easter	Family Session	
2-May	6th Sunday of Easter	16th Class/First Communion	
16-May	Pentecost Sunday	17th Class	
23-May	Trinity Sunday	Closing Session	

Confirmation: We are still awaiting final word on the date but will notify the necessary families as soon as possible. For families with students in Confirmation 1 or 2, please save the date for March 31 from 4:30-9pm for the mandatory Confirmation Retreat.