

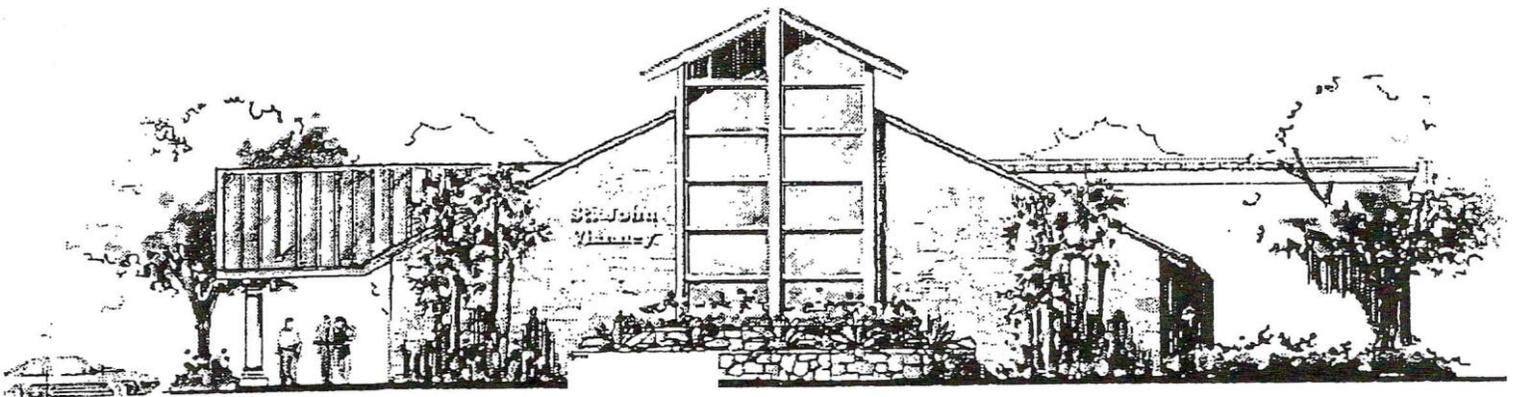
Handbook
for
St. John Vianney Parish
Religious Education



Father Peter Miti, Pastor

SJV Mission Statement

St. John Vianney Parish, a Christian Community in the Roman Catholic tradition, motivated by the love of God, provides opportunities in worship, education, ministry and outreach for its parishioners and community at large.



Welcoming Parish Mission Statement

Our mission is welcoming everyone, sharing the Good News, reaching out to those in need, celebrating the love of God.

Dear Parents and Catechists,

As a parish family, we recognize the importance of religious education for our children. Parents, of course, are the primary educators of their children in the faith. This is the responsibility you promised to fulfill upon bringing your child to the Church for baptism. This parish community supports your efforts through our religious education program and the liturgical life of our Church. Our Church teaches that there are three principal ways that parents fulfill their role as Catholic parents.

- 1) By being faithful disciples of Christ, thus being witnesses to their child of how to live a Christian life. This necessarily includes participating in Mass EVERY Sunday, daily prayer at home, Scripture reading at home, being hospitable to others and reaching out to those in need.*
- 2) Noticing and using moments in everyday life as teachable moments that show God is involved in our lives and has a plan for us- times such as a birth or death, an argument or reconciliation, a beautiful sunset, or a situation that requires a choice between good and bad.*
- 3) Supporting formal, classroom religious education by being involved as a parent as much as possible, assuring attendance by your child, and discussing and using what is learned in the classroom when you are in the home setting.*

This handbook will help inform you about our Religious Education Program - how our program is organized and administered, the schedules and meetings for your child and you, and ways you can be involved at church and at home. We are blessed to have dedicated volunteer teachers (catechists) who give their time on Sunday morning to share their knowledge of the faith with our children. Please cooperate with our teachers and show them your appreciation.

We want the best for the children of our parish, including a developing, lived faith experience in everyday life and in the classroom. We pray that our children and their families will continue to grow in the knowledge and love of God and his Church and that their faith will help them in everyday life to love God and neighbor.

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we share our faith with our children!

Sincerely in Christ,

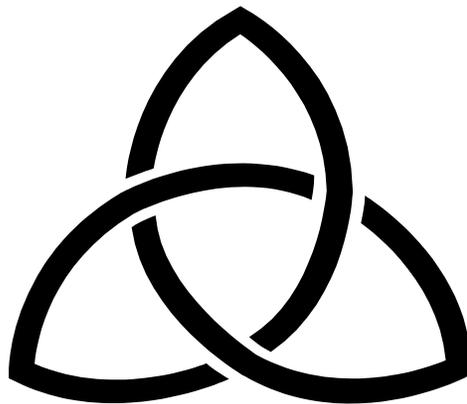


Fr. Peter Miti, Pastor

Religious Education in Our Parish Community

In keeping with the Mission Statement of St. John Vianney Parish, all those who are called to serve in the catechetical ministry of the Church work together to carry out these specific objectives:

1. To teach the message of God's love to adults, youth, and children within the parish community; to educate adults, youth and children in the basic teachings of the Catholic Church;
2. To inspire and to motivate a **living faith** which leads to a deeper understanding of the message of Jesus Christ and a greater desire to follow Him;
3. To prepare for and to celebrate the sacramental life of the Church;
4. To lead people to holiness through prayer, worship and apostolic service;
5. To build the parish community of faith by strengthening the faith life of those who are already committed; by reaching out to those who are hungering for God; and by providing opportunities for continuing spiritual formation for all;
6. To give witness to the Gospel by loving and compassionate service to others.



Role of the Parents in the Religious Education of the Child

Parents have the first responsibility for the religious education of their children. Graced and gifted by God to fulfill this responsibility, they have the right and duty to create a home where prayer and good example are experienced daily. Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. Family members help one another to grow in faith by their authentic living of a Christian life according to the Gospel.

In partnership with the parish catechists, parents share in and support the formal parish program of religious education in these ways:

- ✠ Keeping alive the rich tradition of family prayer in the home; teaching your child/ children to pray in many ways;
- ✠ Witnessing the importance of Sunday Mass by weekly attendance;
- ✠ Taking an active role in preparing your child/ children for the celebration of the sacraments;
- ✠ Discussing the weekly religion lesson with your child/ children;
- ✠ Encouraging your child/children to perform acts of kindness within the family, at school, in the parish, and around the neighborhood;
- ✠ Guiding your child/ children to make moral decisions, to think critically, distinguishing right from wrong;
- ✠ Celebrating the feasts and seasons of the Church year in meaningful ways;
- ✠ Teaching by word and example that the parish community is a welcoming sign of God's presence, love and reconciliation;
- ✠ Making certain that your child/ children know the parish church is a special place, the home of the whole parish family.

The Role of the Pastor

✠ As teacher of the Word, minister of the sacraments and spiritual leader of the parish community, the Pastor has a significant and indispensable role in catechetical ministry. Daily he leads people to Christ by explaining the scriptures, celebrating the sacraments, preaching the Word, praying with the people and serving those in need.

At the practical level of cooperative planning, implementing, and evaluating the parish program of religious education, the Pastor fulfills these responsibilities by:

1. Interviewing and hiring qualified and competent catechetical leaders;
2. Inspiring, motivating and supporting those involved in parish catechetical ministry;
3. In the presence of the parish community, commissioning directors, coordinators, youth ministers, catechists, youth leaders, and all those who share roles in parish religious education;
4. Giving a priority to the faith formation of adults, youth and children and reflecting this in the annual budgeting process;
5. Involving parents in programs of preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation;
6. Encouraging youth and young adults to take an active role in parish life;
7. Guiding children in their faith growth and development and participation in the sacramental life of the Church;
8. Providing opportunities for the spiritual formation of families within the parish community.

Administration of the Parish Program of Religious Education

The parish program of religious education, under the direction of the Pastor, is administered and supervised by the parish Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE).

Role of the Parish Coordinator of Religious Education

- ✚ The CRE is a part time member of the parish staff possessing a strong Catholic faith, teaching experience, the willingness to serve the parish community, and appropriate educational background and diocesan certification.
- ✚ The CRE is responsible for the Intermediate, High School, Adult, Sacramental and School religious education programs; and supervision of the Elementary Education program which is under the direction of the Elementary Education Coordinator.
- ✚ The CRE is responsible for recruiting, training and evaluating the teachers, aides and volunteers; serving as a resource person to teachers carrying out parish and diocesan guidelines; providing in-service as needed.
- ✚ The CRE is responsible for facilitating the Safe Environment Program.
- ✚ Financial responsibilities include preparation of an annual budget, submission of income, payments of invoices in a timely manner and fiscal responsibility for the operation of the Religious Education Office.

Role of the Elementary Education Coordinator

- ✚ The Elementary Education Coordinator is a part time member of the parish staff possessing a strong Catholic faith and willingness to serve the parish community.
- ✚ Coordinates the Elementary Education program for grades pre-k through 6th grade and Sacramental preparation for Reconciliation and First Eucharist.
- ✚ Coordinates Liturgy of the Word for Children.

Role of the Parish Catechists

As ministers within the parish community, catechists have the obligation to catechize according to the teaching authority of the Church and to carry out parish and diocesan policies and guidelines. In so doing, as representatives of the Church, they are instruments of God's love and signs of the Spirit's presence.

1. Catechists are expected to be prayerful, practicing examples of the living faith.
2. Catechists are expected to prepare well for each religion class.
3. Catechists are required to know and to observe the **Guidelines for Today's Catechists**. (cf. Appendix,i)
4. Catechists are required to keep accurate records concerning student attendance, tardiness, performance and behavior.
5. Catechists are encouraged to take advantage of in-service opportunities offered at the parish and at the diocesan level. Efforts should be directed towards certification.
6. Catechists are required to attend the diocesan classes on:
 - a) Religious Education and the Law
 - b) Creating and Maintaining a Safe Environment

It is expected that the Catechist will read the documents on these topics. Catechists are required to sign the compliance form verifying that they understand the materials, have completed the classes, and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct Policy.

7. Catechists are to carry out the student behavior code:
 - a) Children are expected to act in a Christian manner, respecting each person and all property.
 - b) Children are to cooperate and participate in class activities.
 - c) In the event of disruptive behavior these steps are to be followed:
 - 1) The catechist talks to the child privately.
 - 2) If disruptive behavior continues, the catechist reports to the parish Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE). The catechist and Coordinator may call in the parent(s) for a conference.
 - 3) In cases of serious disruptive behavior, the child may be asked to leave the program. In this instance the Pastor, the parents and the Coordinator of Religious Education mutually decide the best course of action to be taken for the continued faith and growth of the child.
8. Catechists are supervised and evaluated by the parish Coordinator of Religious Education.

Children's Programs

Liturgy of the Word for Children for PreK-4th Grade

During the 9:00 a.m. Mass on Sundays that class is scheduled, the children are led to the parish basement for about fifteen to twenty minutes to hear the Sunday readings from the Lectionary for Children.



Elementary Programs:

Children in grades Pre-K - 8 meet on the scheduled Sundays of the month from 10:15am – 11:30am in the parish/ school facilities. Classes are held from September through May. A calendar is provided for each family at the beginning of the year.

Parental Involvement:

Parents share responsibility for the child's religious education in these ways:

- ✚ participating in the parish Mass EVERY Sunday with the child;
- ✚ bringing the child to religion class each week on time;
- ✚ taking time for family prayer;
- ✚ teaching the child ways to pray and keeping alive the traditional prayers (e.g. Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostles Creed, Acts of Faith, Hope and Love, Act of Contrition, responses at Mass, and the Rosary);
- ✚ taking an active role in the parish community;
- ✚ showing interest in the child's religious education.

Parents are also invited to participate in formal adult education classes and in parish and diocesan programs. These sessions are announced in the parish bulletin.

Baptism:

Parents must be registered in the parish and attend three preparation classes. Classes are held in February, April, June, September and November. Please call the Parish Office for more information and registration forms.

Reconciliation (Confession):

The sacrament of Reconciliation is available to all on Saturday from 8:30am-9:00am, or by appointment and at the parish communal Penance Service during the seasons of Advent and Lent.

First Penance/ Reconciliation:

Baptized children who are in the second grade and have faithfully attended religious education classes for two years will celebrate the Sacrament prior to receiving First Eucharist. In preparation for this event, parents are required to attend two evening sessions and to pray and work with the child at home. This should be a gradual, prayerful, and joy filled anticipation of the sacrament of God's loving forgiveness.

First Eucharist (Holy Communion):

Baptized children in grade two who have celebrated the sacrament of Reconciliation will receive their First Eucharist at the end of the school year. Parents are required to attend an additional session and to share their faith life at home in preparation for this day.

Older children (grade 3-9), who have been baptized may be received into the program of special sacramental preparation and will receive their sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist at the same time as grade two.

Children seven years old and above who have not been baptized participate in the RCIA program.



Youth Ministry

High School Students from grade 9-12 meet on the scheduled Sundays of the month after the 11:00am mass. A schedule is given to each student at the beginning of the year. Special events are also planned which are announced by email, flyer or in the parish bulletin.

Liturgy:

Youth are expected to participate at the Sunday Eucharistic celebration of the parish. They are encouraged to attend the 11:00am Mass on Sundays that class is scheduled.

Confirmation:

Preparation for Confirmation is a two-year process in which the candidates pray, learn, share, worship and serve together.

The four elements of the program are:

- ✠ **Instruction** - a minimum of 36-48 hours in prescribed areas.
- ✠ **Retreats**- There are two one day retreats for Year I and a week-end retreat for Year II.
- ✠ **Christian Service** - Candidates are required to participate in experiences designed to develop an attitude of Christian service in the on-going service of the parish.
- ✠ **Community** - Participation with other candidates and integration into parish life and activities.

Peer Leadership Team:

Youth who have been confirmed share their faith, gifts, time and talents with others of their own age. They teach classes, facilitate retreats, plan liturgy and praise and worship, and attend Windward vicariate activities.

Concerning Child Abuse (Safe Environment Program)

The Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops requires dioceses and eparchies to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, volunteers and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children and young people.

The children's education program consists of age-appropriate lessons built upon the Church's teaching that "the human body shares in the dignity of the image of God" (CCC364). That dignity leads us to foster in every person the belief and awareness that as a person of God they are deserving of love and respect. Because dignity is a gift given by God at birth, abuse of all kind is harmful to that dignity.

Children being among the most vulnerable require us to protect that dignity. Thus, consistent with diocesan policy, St. John Vianney Parish will conduct safe environment training as part of the religious education curriculum.

If you choose not to have your child(ren) participate in the Safe Environment Training Program please fill out the form supplied by the Department of Religious Education.



Parish Policies and Procedures

Admission and Fees:

All families enrolling their child or children in the religious education programs are required to register in the parish. Completed parish registration forms may be returned to the parish office which is open Monday through Friday, 8:30am - 4:00pm and Saturday 8:30am – 12:30pm or placed in the offering boxes on Sunday.

The program fee is \$40 for one child, \$ 65 for two children and \$ 90 for three or more. If any family cannot make the payment, arrangements can be made with the Coordinator. No child will be turned away because of an inability to pay.

Attendance:

It is important to have everyone present as much as possible. Since the teaching time is limited, children are expected to attend all classes and to be on time.

If a child is ill or cannot attend a class, parents (guardians) are requested to write a note to be presented to the catechist on the following Sunday. Three unexcused absences will be followed by a telephone call from the Coordinator of Religious Education to discuss future participation in the program.

Emergency Procedures:

In case of an emergency in the class, the Coordinator of Religious Education is immediately notified of the situation. The catechist remains in the class. The Coordinator notifies the parents or emergency contact person designated on the registration form. If no one can be reached, the Coordinator may have to call 911 for assistance.

Photo Release:

I/we give permission to have his/her picture and/or class work posted on the St. John Vianney Parish website, in the bulletin and in connection with publicity for St. John Vianney Parish and the Diocese of Honolulu knowing that at no time will my child's full name be printed by his/her photo.

I/we and the child/children named herein hereby release St. John Vianney Parish, the Diocese of Honolulu, and their personnel and volunteers of any and all liability of every nature, kind and description or other claims or demands as a result of injuries, hurt or damage sustained by the student arising from, or in connection with, the student's participation.

PARENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This is to acknowledge that I/we have received the St. John Vianney Parish Handbook for Religious Education. We understand and agree to cooperate with the parish policies set forth in the handbook.

Signed(Parent/Guardian) (Print Name) Date

Signed(Parent/Guardian) (Print Name) Date

Print Student Name Grade

*Please sign and return form to St. John Vianney Religious Education Department.