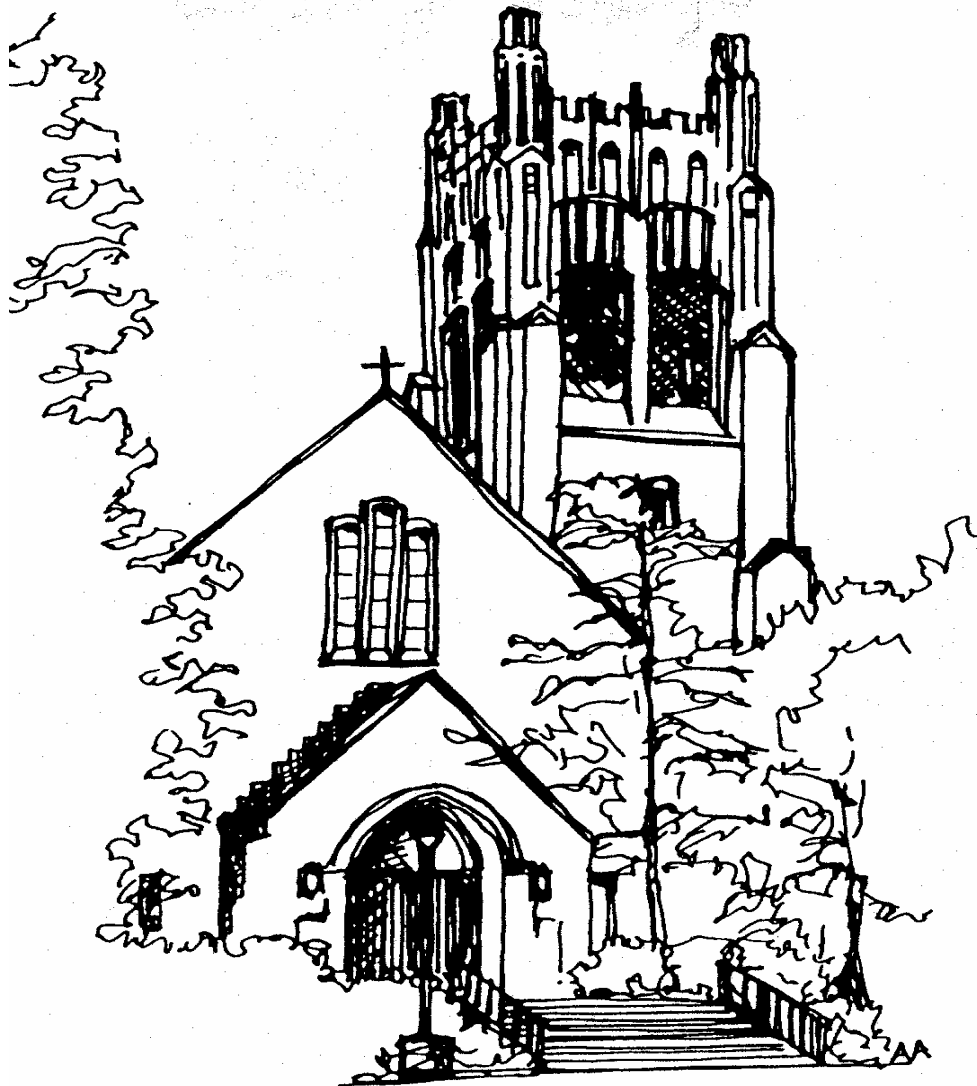


Saint Margaret Mary Church
Omaha, Nebraska
Religious Education Program
2010-2011



Parents' Handbook

You Are the Church in Your Home

A family is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us and acts in the world. The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a *Domestic Church or Church of the Home*.

As families, you carry out the mission of the Church of the Home in ordinary ways when:

You believe in God and that God cares about you, in good times and bad. You love and value others. Children form a picture of God from the love they experience among their relatives and godparents.

You foster intimacy. To share oneself and be accepted within a family is indispensable to forming a close relationship with the Lord.

You evangelize by professing faith in God, acting in accord with gospel values and setting an example of Christian living for your children and for others.

You educate, especially by example. Sometimes children listen and learn; sometimes they teach you. Your wisdom and theirs come from the same Spirit.

You pray together, thanking God for blessings, reaching for strength, asking for guidance in crisis and doubt.

You serve one another, sacrificing your own wants for the other's good. Your "deaths" and "risings" become compelling signs of Jesus' own life, death, and resurrection.

You forgive and seek reconciliation. When you do so, family members come to believe that, no matter what, they are still loved by you and by God.

You celebrate life, whether for birthdays, weddings, births, deaths, first day of school or graduation, new jobs, old friends, family reunions, surprise visits, holy days and holidays. You come together when tragedy strikes or in joyful celebration of the sacraments. As you gather for a meal, you break bread and share stories, becoming more fully the community of love Jesus calls us to be.

You welcome the stranger, the lonely one, the grieving person into your home. You give drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry. The gospel assures us that when we do this, they are strangers no more, but Christ.

You act justly in your community when you treat others with respect, stand against discrimination and racism, and work to overcome hunger, poverty, homelessness, illiteracy.

You affirm life as a precious gift from God. You oppose whatever destroys life, such as abortion, euthanasia, unjust war, capital punishment, neighborhood and domestic violence, poverty and racism. Within your family, you make peace.

You raise up vocations to the priesthood and religious life. This is especially fostered through family prayer, involvement in parish life, and by the way you speak of priests, sisters, brothers, and permanent deacons.

September, 2010

Dear Parents,

Community is one of the main ways we experience Christ's presence in our lives. It is important that our Parish children in the Religious Education Program understand those Christian values that are the basis of who we are as people of faith and followers of Christ. Therefore, I ask that you discuss the "*Classroom Rules*" section on Page 16 with your child/ren so that they are reminded by you what is expected of them while here in the Program, i.e., that they "do what Jesus would do."

It is important for **safety reasons** that everyone understand the arrival and dismissal procedures as well as those for emergencies. Students and parents need to discuss meeting places at dismissal. Please read the Weekly Memo for important information of special Masses, parent nights, and faith formation.

Because all of SMM children are encouraged to participate in our **athletic programs**, we have included the Parish Athletic Handbook in the second half of this Parent Handbook. I ask that you take time to read each of the handbooks and discuss them with your child(ren).

This St. Margaret Mary Religious Education Handbook is provided for informational purposes only and does not constitute a contractual agreement between St. Margaret Mary Religious Education Program and any students or any parent of any student.

This will be your family's handbook for the duration of your religious education years unless a major revision is completed. Please keep this copy!

Sincerely,

Linda Stryker
Director of Religious Education

SAINT MARGARET MARY
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OFFICE
(northwest side of School Building)
123 North 61st Street
Omaha, NE 68132

Religious Education
helps to build a
strong foundation

Parish Offices:	6116 Dodge St. Omaha, NE 68132 (402) 558-2255
Parish Priests (Parish Office):	Rev. Greg Baxter Rev. Jeff Mollner Rev. Paul Hoelsing (in residence) Rev. Joseph Taphorn (in residence)
Director of Religious Education: Religious Ed Administrative Assistant:	Mrs. Linda Stryker Mrs. Devah Tritz 558-9119 lstryker@smmomaha.org dtritz@smmomaha.org
Religious Education Grades 1-8 Sessions held:	St. Margaret Mary School Building Wednesday, 6:30 - 7:45 p.m.
Special Needs Religious Ed Sessions Held for Ages 6-18:	St. Margaret Mary School Building Wednesday, 6:30 - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday School – Ages 3-4-5 Coordinator: Sessions Held:	St. Margaret Mary School Building Mrs. Jennifer Varner Sunday, 10:20-11:30 a.m.
Youth Minister (Parish Office): Youth Ministry Assistant:	Mrs. Jennifer Varner Mr. Marty Smith
Music Minister (Parish Office):	Mrs. Peg Lacy

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PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the basic directions necessary to ensure good organization and order within our parish community. It is the sincere desire of each member of our faculty to work with you toward accomplishing the important task of forming our students into mature, responsible Catholics.

Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and the building of community. Community is central to educational ministry both as necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church must therefore be directed to forming persons in community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny but also to the destinies of the many communities in which he lives.

From To Teach As Jesus Did

GOALS

Spiritually

1. To provide an atmosphere where the child can grow in his/her relationship with God and with others.
2. To provide a religious education program that instructs and forms the students in Catholic teachings and traditions.

Intellectually

1. To provide a religious education program that will meet the academic, creative and personal needs of each individual.
2. To maintain an atmosphere of learning where the child can develop and achieve his/her potential while contributing to the good of the community.

Emotionally

1. To insure that each and every person will be treated as Jesus would treat them, with courtesy and respect - as a sacrament of God.
2. To foster within each child a good self-image by helping him/her to recognize their own self-worth.



WELCOME!

I. ENROLLMENT IN THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT

Parents are asked to enroll in the spring for fall. Late registration occurs in August.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are asked to be active participants in the Religious Education Program. Values taught at school and lived at home will give the student an understanding of his/her Catholic life. The Church speaks of the family as “the domestic Church.” It is here that children first experience God through the loving care of their parents. The family’s regular celebration of Mass and the Sacraments, along with daily prayer and practiced Christian values and beliefs are the foundation on which the Religious Education Program is built.

Here are some ways to teach our faith at home:

- Incorporate meaningful religious rituals, e.g. light a candle during mealtimes.
- Discuss any work brought home.
- Celebrate the seasons of Advent and Lent, which offer special opportunities to bring families together by celebrating the Church year.
- Practice making the Sign of the Cross on your child’s forehead before he/she leaves for school, placing your child under God’s protection each day.
- Say morning prayers and night prayers with your child to reinforce the concept that we live each day with and for God.
- Read with your child a short passage from the Scripture each day and share how God’s Word applies to our daily life.
- Parental volunteer participation in the Religious Education Program demonstrates your values and priorities regarding religious education for your children.
- Use of the Stewardship envelopes where the child can link service rendered through the gift of their time, talent or treasure to the parish community and Sunday worship.

Each family is asked to lend a hand to their child’s RE Program by signing up to assist with one event or task each year. Parental volunteer participation in the Religious Education Program demonstrates their parents’ values and priorities regarding religious education for your children.

REGISTRATION FEE AND PAYMENT

Grades 1-8 registration fee, for families registered in St. Margaret Mary Parish, is \$75 per child. For families not registered in the parish, the fee is \$125 per child. Sunday School classes for 3, 4, and 5-year olds are \$75. Fees help pay for textbooks, supplies, and catechetical materials. Total or partial payment is appreciated at the time of registration. Payment reminders will be mailed in October and February, with the expectation of the balance due in February. Scholarship money is available to any family for whom the Registration Fee is a burden. Special arrangements may be made by calling the Director of Religious Education or the Pastor.

II. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE

To assure continued quality of religious education for your children, regular attendance is necessary. If you know that your child will not be able to participate in the Wednesday evening class, please call the office (558-9119) before 6:30 p.m.

If a student is reported absent from class, a phone call will be made to the home to verify the absence. In case of mistakes where the child is in attendance, we ask for your patience. However, we hope this is minimal. After three (3) consecutive absences without communication from home, the Director of Religious Education (DRE) will call to assess any assistance that might be extended. If there is a problem, such as transportation, please call the Office of Religious Education.

Sports: Participating in sports should not conflict with class time. It is a Parish Policy that all St. Margaret Mary (SMM) sports program activities will end by 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday evenings to insure time for attendance at class in the Religious Education Program.

Arrival: Your assistance is needed to have children arrive ON TIME for class. Parents are asked to have the children in the building between 6:15 and 6:28 p.m. The tardy bell rings at 6:30. Tardiness is disruptive and distracting to the other students. Enter through the east auditorium doors which will be open at 6:15. Do not bring your children before 6:15, as the doors will be locked and there will be no supervision available.

Early Dismissals: These are distracting to the class and should be done only in emergency occasions. But, if you need your child dismissed early, you must notify the catechist and the Religious Education (RE) office previous to pick-up time, and you must come to the northwest entrance of the school (the RE office entrance) to be admitted. You will then go to the child's classroom to get your student. No student may leave early unless supervised by a parent or adult approved by the parent.

First Communion: This is a two year program. Children that are not enrolled in first grade will not be permitted to make their First Communion in second grade without completing the first grade curriculum.

Confirmation: The Confirmation program at SMM is a two-year program. All classes during the seventh and eighth grade years are part of this program. Participation and attendance at **ALL** Confirmation classes and attendance at Small Faith Group sessions and service activities are necessary. Absence is excused only for illness and emergency situations. **Confirmation candidates will make up all classes missed by homework and make-up sessions.**

***Sport activities of any nature DO NOT constitute a justifiable absence from Confirmation classes or activities.**

DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

The dismissal bell will ring at 7:45 p.m. Students, grades 1-4 are to dismiss through the front doors of the school building. Grades 5-8 are to leave, with their siblings in the lower grades, through the back door, by the Religious Ed Office.

Parents of grades 1 - 4 park in the east horseshoe drive. Parents of grades 5 - 8 park on the blacktop. This is a great safety procedure, which diminishes congestion.

If a child is to leave with someone else other than the parent/guardian, a note is to be sent to the Religious Education Office at the beginning of the evening session.

SNACKS

Snacks may be brought for special occasions. Please do not bring items with nuts or peanut butter as many children are allergic to these items. All snacks must be eaten in the auditorium.

III. BOARDS

BOARD OF TOTAL CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

This Board is commissioned by the Parish Pastoral Council of St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church of Omaha, Nebraska, to operate its total Christian educational program, subject to such regulations that proceed from the Omaha Archdiocesan Board of Education and the Office of Religious Formation. The phrase “total Christian education program” means all educational functions carried out by St. Margaret Mary Parish, including St. Margaret Mary Day School and Parish Religious Education Programs involving children, youth and adults.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY BOARD

Board members are appointed at each annual fall meeting to begin a 3-year term in December. There may be six or more members who meet 5 times per year for the purpose of assisting the Director of Religious Education to know the needs of these parish families, as they understand them. The quality of such things as the spirit of hospitality and belonging, the efforts of inclusion, catechist training, promotion of attitudes of service, etc. will be addressed as needs arise.

Board members are to be responsible for keeping a finger on the pulse of Religious Ed Program families by actively seeking information in their informal contacts, as well as being a conduit to the Director for parent requests/suggestions/comments.

IV. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RELIGIOUS ED AND HOME

COMMUNICATION

A vital Religious Education Program relies upon clear, consistent and frequent communication between the Director, Catechists and the Parents. Several means are taken to accomplish this goal:

- Parent Meeting
- a weekly Parent Memo,
- a weekly “Brown Envelope”
- weekly written homework assignments
- homework assignments mailed when a child is absent
- Open House
- Progress Reports two times annually, December and May
- Parent – Teacher conferences as necessary
- a SMM tote bag for Gr. 1-5, and a six-pocket plastic folders for Gr. 6-8.

Parents are encouraged to write comments to their child’s catechist through the “Brown Envelope,” or give a phone call as necessary. (See Catechist Roster in Religious Education Phone Directory.)

PROGRESS REPORTS

A child's faith and relationship with God is unique and special and therefore cannot be evaluated. However, due to the need for close communication with the parents, and to give maximum support to the child's growth and well being, the catechists will complete a progress report for each child two (2) times a year. The Office of Religious Education will mail these reports to the parent during the months of December and May. The parents are encouraged to contact the catechist if there is an indication of a concern on the part of the catechist. A parent's call due to a concern is also always welcome.

V. CURRICULUM

A listing of the doctrines of the Catholic Tradition grade by grade should enable all of us to work toward a stronger faith development for the children. What follows is only a guide for you, the parent. We use the all-new edition of Harcourt's Call to Faith for grades 1-8. Prayer and song are integrated. The children are given the opportunity to pray in both formal and spontaneous manners. Parents are encouraged to attend Parent Night with their children and incorporate their faith into their homes.

CIRCLE OF GRACE

This program is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others. It will help children understand they are created by God and help them to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries and how to take action if any boundary is threatened or violated.

PRAYER BOOKLETS

Each grade level will have its own prayer booklets. Children are to learn these prayers during the year. Holy cards will be given as each prayer is learned and a saint statue will be given as they complete their level.

RESPECT LIFE PROGRAM

The goal of the Pro-Life Curriculum is to teach that all human life must be respected from conception to natural death. The lesson plans for grades 1-8 are prepared for one 40-60 minute class, but may be expanded by the teachers. The lessons build on the previous year, or stand alone. Each class has a visual aid and handout. The Archdiocese of Omaha Pro-Life office provides this material.

SOCIAL JUSTICE PROGRAM

The Columban Fathers *Come and See!* Mission Education Program deepens the students' understanding of Global Awareness and the missionary dimension of their baptism.

SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

We offer curriculum for children with special needs. Catechists work closely with these children and develop a curriculum especially for them. Parents need to inform us of their needs at registration. Creation, God, Jesus, holy days, sacraments, and saints are some of the concepts taught. Children actively learn with hands-on activities. Basic prayers are learned. This program is offered 6:30-7:00 on Wednesday evenings.

PARENT NIGHT

Grades 1-8 will have a special night where parents are invited to Religious Ed. to do an activity, prayer service, and enjoy refreshments with their child. A special topic appropriate to the grade level will be enjoyed. We hope each child will have a least one parent or significant adult to join him/her on this evening.

R.C.I.A. (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) Modified for Children

Children who have not been baptized may be instructed so they can be baptized. The curriculum will be tailored to their needs.

FIRST GRADE

First grade students learn about God as our Creator, Jesus as the Son of God and the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of God. The people of God are the Church. They are exposed for the first time to the sacraments and specifically the Sacrament of Baptism; Reconciliation and Eucharist. As Christians we are called to care and share God's gifts of creation, to be like Him and to do what He would do. The Bible is introduced to children as a collection of many books written by people chosen by God. Pro-Life Unit: The love of a family toward a baby is beautiful. Social Justice Unit: One World! One Home! One Family! Circle of Grace: recognize we are children of God. Formal Prayers: the Sign of the Cross, Guardian Angel Prayer, Glory Be, The Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary are memorized. Other prayers are available in the text. The children participate in the children's liturgies. This is a prerequisite to receiving the sacrament of Holy Eucharist.

SECOND GRADE

This year, children will be given more detail of the basic teachings about the sacramental life of the Catholic Church and will discover what it means to belong to the Christian Community. Unit One and Two will present teachings of Genesis, the Trinity, and the beginning of the Church. Units Three and Four are specific on the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Mass. Units Five, Six and Seven emphasize the Eucharist and the Mass. Pro-Life Unit: Each of us is special. Social Justice Unit: Building Christian Community. Circle of Grace: Recognize that Jesus teaches us how to love and respect God, others, and ourselves. Formal prayers: Review Grade 1 prayers, Act of Contrition, Grace Before and After Meals, I Confess, and A Morning Offering memorized. Children's Liturgy: First Reconciliation and First Eucharist celebrated. Other Prayers are available in the text.

THIRD GRADE

The focus of Grade 3 is the Church and the kind of community the Church is called to be. The mission, the message, the prayer and the actions of God's special family will be explored. Pro-Life unit: Each of us is different and each is valuable. Social Justice Unit: The Contrast Between the Rich and the Poor. Circle of Grace: Recognize that God calls us to be responsible for our actions. Formal Prayers to be memorized: Grades 1 and 2 prayers, and Apostles' Creed. The sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are celebrated.

FOURTH GRADE

This year the fourth grade student will learn about the Church's rich tradition of moral example and teaching. This tradition will provide motivation and direction for the child's moral growth. They will learn about the great commandment of love, the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments. Pro-Life Unit: We were once very tiny; we learn how we grow. Social Justice Unit: Respect for Other Religions. Circle of Grace: Understand the concept of a Circle of Grace in relation to the internet. Formal Prayers/Practices: Act of Contrition, the Apostles' Creed, The Ten Commandments, The Prayer to the Holy Spirit, and the Stations of the Cross Response are memorized. Children's Liturgy celebrated: Reconciliation and Eucharist.

FIFTH GRADE

The fifth grade students will study scripture, God's call, how we respond to his call, the Incarnation, the life of grace, the seven sacraments and the signs of hope. Pro-Life Unit: "Handicapped" is just a word. Social Justice Unit: The Power of the Gospel. Circle of Grace: To recognize the influence of the media on their Circle of Grace. Formal Prayers/Practices: Act of Contrition, Pius Invocation, the Seven Sacraments; The Memorarae, and the Holy Days of Obligation are memorized. Other prayers are available in the text.

SIXTH GRADE

Sixth grade students will study the roots of our faith found in the Hebrew Scriptures. God is presented as the One who creates out of love and who cares deeply about the world. Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, Moses and the prophets. In His life, death and resurrection, Jesus is seen as proclaiming a new covenant, the coming to the Kingdom of God. Pro-Life Unit: There are many champions for life. Social Justice Unit: Christian Citizenship. Circle of Grace: Recognize that responsible relationships are based on love, honesty, and respect. Formal Prayers to be memorized: Act of Contrition, The Memorare, Hail Holy Queen, and the Prayers for the Dead. Practices to be memorized are the Precepts of the Church.

SEVENTH GRADE

Students begin confirmation preparation, if they have not already been confirmed. They study these units: Morality, Jesus Christ, and Sacraments. Lives of the Saints and service to the community are emphasized. Small Faith Groups begin second semester that meet monthly with parent facilitators to plan, implement and reflect on chosen service project for the community. Pro-Life Unit: In pregnancy it is a baby, not a glob of cells! Social Justice Unit: World Poverty. Circle of Grace: Learn to make moral decisions consistent with Church teaching. Formal prayers: Act of Contrition, Apostles' Creed, the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy, and Receiving Holy Communion., how to create their own prayers. Reconciliation and Eucharist are celebrated.

EIGHTH GRADE

Continuing preparation for Confirmation, students will develop a relationship with God and learn we are each called to recognize His power and celebrate His love for us. They will be study these units: Revelation, Church History, and The Holy Spirit. They will study the Gifts and the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. Through volunteer service and small group sessions, the confirmands are led to affirm their Baptism and the mission of the Church. Pro-Life Unit: The fact of what an abortion is and does; and sexuality is a gift from God, and by respecting that gift, they can enjoy life to its fullest. Social Justice Unit: World Hunger. Circle of Grace: Identify skills such as listening, self-disclosure, and compromise as necessary for communication with others, and being a friend, and handling peer pressure. Formal Prayers to be learned are: Nicene Creed, Act of Contrition, Come Holy Spirit, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the Apostolic Blessing. They will create their own prayers. Reconciliation and Eucharist are celebrated.

Small Faith Groups: Students learn about their faith best by sharing with other Christians, both peers and elders in the parish community, and by doing service. Each 7th and 8th grader join a small faith group. Each group decides on service and faith building activities to do. We are proud of our parish families who have supported this portion of the young person's preparation! They have been courageous and generous in opening their homes and their hearts as facilitators of small faith groups of 8-9 students per group, and by seeing to it that their young person is faithful in their attendance of these monthly meetings.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Students in first and second grade prepare for and celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. **Seventh and eighth grade students** prepare for the sacrament of Confirmation. Eighth Grade students who are prepared may choose to be confirmed. Special arrangements are made for those who have not had prior religious education, or have not received the sacraments of Baptism or Eucharist. Contact the RE Office for further information.

Parents of children preparing for celebrating the sacraments are expected to attend at least one Parent Meeting for each of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, Confirmation and First Eucharist. As the parents are considered by the Catholic Church to be the “primary educators” of their children in the faith, the Religious Education program offers a textbook for home use for each of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. These books provide families the most up-to-date theology on the sacraments, as well as, the opportunity to share their faith with their children in an intimate setting.

Children in Grades 2 and 8 will have a retreat day in preparation for receiving the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

VISITORS

Parents are welcome to visit their child’s classroom during the regular Religious Education class. **Courtesy dictates that they have made prior arrangements with the catechist. All visitors, children and adults, must report and sign in at the office upon entering the building.** This is an important safety precaution for everyone in the building.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR 3-4-5 YEAR OLDS

A pre-school or kindergarten curriculum is followed for these youngsters of the parish. They use Stories of God’s Love for their appropriate age. The program is on Sunday mornings, 10:20-11:30 AM, and takes place in the first floor classrooms of the school building. Registration forms may be found on-line or in the kiosks of the church or at the Religious Ed Office.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are considered a privilege. Students can be denied participation if they do not meet appropriate behavioral or academic requirements. Before leaving for field trips written permission, using the approved Religious Education form, must be given by the parents. Parents who do not wish their child to participate in a field trip have the right to refuse permission. Any child not participating in the field trip is to remain at home during that event.

***NOTE:** Drivers for field trips must have proof of insurance on file with the administrator prior to departure for trip.

HOME SCHOOL

Parents who have chosen home schooling for their children will have the support of the Parish Religious Education Office in the following ways:

1. consistent contact with the Director to receive textbooks, other instructional materials and necessary information;
2. parent mailings from the R.E. Office;
3. an invitation to classroom and all total program events are to be understood.

Parents are asked to make the initial contact with the Director of Religious Education, when this step has been chosen, to make the necessary arrangements for follow-up.

HOMEWORK

Parents are asked to assist the child in the memorization of our traditional prayers, review basic concepts of the lessons, and encourage the completion of homework assignments. Students may be assigned, either by means of the textbook or a specific assignment, to do some work in preparation for the next class. Grades 1-6 have a special Family Faith page at the end of each chapter. These include a brief review of that week's lesson, plus a family scripture moment. **Lessons missed due to absence are to be reviewed at home, worksheets completed, and the work given to the Catechist the next week.** When parents insist on fidelity to homework, they convey an important message to the child; that is, that they have a responsibility to attend to their relationships with God and the Christian community.

VI. PARISH ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

CHILDREN'S CHOIR/LITURGIES

Children are invited to join the Kid's Choir (grades 3 - 6) or the Christae Choir (Grades 7 - 8). The choirs will be scheduled to sing for one Mass a month. There will be a Saturday morning rehearsal prior to the scheduled Mass. Please call Mrs. Peg Lacy at the Parish Business Office if your child is interested. Invitations will be sent home with students in their brown envelope or by e-mail.

ALTAR SERVERS

All boys and girls grades 6 and up will be invited to participate in the St. Margaret Mary program. Parental help is needed to make arrangements for practice and to be faithful to the server schedule once the student has mastered the skill.

YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAM

The SMM Youth Ministry Program offers a variety of social and service activities for 7th and 8th graders throughout the year. Students are encouraged to participate in these events as their schedule allows.

SPORTS

All athletic programs offered by SMM are open to all registered parishioners enrolled in Religious Education as well as all day school students. Information is found in the bulletin and fliers distributed at R.E. and/or in the weekly R. E. Memo.

VII. DISCIPLINE

CARE OF PROPERTY

Students are expected to assist in taking care of the school building/parish property. The students must remember that other students use the desks during the week and that their personal belongings are in them. They are to show respect by not touching these belongings. Therefore, parents are asked to impress upon their children to:

- 1) remember that they share Parish facilities, which are to be used with care;
- 2) respect the property of others;
- 3) conduct themselves properly in hallways, lavatories, and wherever they might be on parish grounds.

DISCIPLINE

All catechists will promote an open, inclusive, joyful and Christian environment. Parents are asked to discuss expectations of what cooperation looks and sounds like with their children, especially in the beginning month of the program and periodically throughout the year.

Students enrolled in Religious Education classes are expected to maintain a high standard of behavior. This expectation will encourage and strengthen each child's character in accordance with Catholic principles, and promote order and an atmosphere of discovery/learning throughout the Program. Compliance with three rules is expected of all students at all times. These rules are:

1. Demonstrating respect for yourself and others;
2. Contributing to the learning environment at all time; and
3. Following religious education classroom rules and procedures. (See Classroom Rules of Discipline, page 16.)

The St. Margaret Mary RE faculty consists of catechists and aides who are volunteers. They give freely of their time, talents and energies and deserve our utmost respect, consideration and support at all times.

Since the true form of discipline is self-discipline, it is our goal as educators to assist the student in acquiring self-control. Disciplinary actions, if necessary, will be guided by care and concern, fairness and truth. While temporary guardians of your children, the catechists wish to collaborate with the parents in a problem-solving manner for the good of all concerned. If it is determined that misbehavior is of a very serious nature, the following steps may be followed.

1. The student will be dealt with by the catechist in charge. A phone call will be made to the parent(s) or guardian(s) involved or a "Time Out Form" is completed to be returned the following week.
2. If a problem cannot be solved quickly in the classroom setting, the Catechist will ask the Hall Monitor to accompany the student to the Director's Office. Once a student has been sent to the office the following steps will be taken:
 - After confirming the reason sent by the teacher, the student will be talked to, a "Disciplinary Action Plan" will be made, and then the student will be walked back to the classroom with a copy of the written plan for the teacher and parent(s).
 - In the case of a second occurrence of being sent to the office, parents will be called for a conference.

3. If the behaviors cannot or will not be corrected and expulsion becomes necessary, this decision will be made by the Director of Religious Education in consultation with the Pastor. Notification may be made by phone discussion or face to face conference, but shall be confirmed to the parents in writing, as well as notifying them of their right to appeal. This expulsion may then be appealed to the Board of Education by a written request to the President of the Board from the parent(s) or guardian(s) for a special hearing. Any such requests must be made no later than 7 days after the date of the expulsion.

If an appeal is requested, it shall be the policy of the St. Margaret Mary Board of Total Christian Education that all students of St. Margaret Mary Religious Education Program receive a hearing before a committee appointed by the Board President in any expulsion proceedings. This committee shall consist of the Executive Committee of the Board (President, Vice-President, and Secretary) and other non-Board members appointed by the President of the Board. This committee shall hear from the Director of Religious Education and the parent(s) of the expelled student. No attorneys or witnesses shall be present. This committee shall make a recommendation to the pastor, who shall make final determination in the matter. The recommendation of the committee shall be either to uphold the expulsion or to overturn the expulsion and return the student to enrollment in the religious education program. The Pastor has the final word in such matters.

The following list enumerates some of the circumstances which may lead to immediate disciplinary action.

1. Seriously disrupting instruction or a school event.
2. Using any abusive, rude, disrespectful, or inappropriate language and/or responding in an insubordinate manner to the catechist, adult or other students.
3. Language or behavior which is of an explicitly sexual nature, name calling based upon gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin or disability, or vulgar or profane language, or action or graffiti which is vulgar, profane or disparages others based upon the conditions cited herein.
4. Physically harming, threatening, or attempting to do physical harm by word or action, or harassing a catechist, adult or other student.
5. Causing damage to the school, church, or another's personal property, causing a fire, or causing a false fire alarm, or threatening to cause harm or damage, or making terroristic threats toward the school or church or any person in the school or church.
6. Possessing any dangerous weapons or substances.
7. Being truant for all or part of the class, or being in a part of the school or parish property without authorization from a supervising adult.
8. Behavior of the student that presents a moral danger to other students.
9. Behavior which is incorrigible.
10. Frequent absences.
11. Being involved in any serious misbehavior, activity or event which violates or appears to violate the philosophy and policies of St. Margaret Mary Church.



CLASSROOM RULES

- We respect all persons, places and things.
- We listen to the person speaking.
- We take turns speaking.
- We leave the room only with permission.
- We behave in mannerly ways, showing care for others.
- We cooperate with others as on a team.
- We return our space to the way we found it.
- We complete homework assignments on time.
- We follow the dismissal and emergency plans inside and outside the building.
- When in doubt, we ask ourselves “What would Jesus do?”

VIII. SAFETY

INCLEMENT WEATHER

There are times throughout the school year when it is necessary to cancel classes because of severe weather.

Religious Education classes are canceled if the Parochial Schools or Omaha Public Schools are canceled for the day due to severe weather. In case of approaching storms later in the evening, catechists will call families to announce the cancellation and it will be on our answering machine. For parents who have provided an email address, an e-mail will be sent in the event that classes are cancelled. Any questions about cancellations should be directed to the Director of Religious Education Office (phone # 558-9119).

TRAFFIC SAFETY

For the safety of your children, the following guidelines are established:

- In the parking lot, a minimal speed limit is to be observed lest a child be hit by a car.
- Follow the U-shaped driving pattern marked in the lower parking lot: enter from Chicago Street remaining on the west side to drop children near the front doors, then exiting on the east side. Do not park in the circle.
- Parents should be prompt in picking up the students at 7:45 P.M. Any child not picked up promptly must come back and remain in the Religious Ed Office until the parents come to get them. (Please come to the RE Office door to pick up your child when arriving late.)

FIRE AND TORNADO DRILLS

Students will be made aware of safety measures by fire/tornado drills. In case of severe weather, students will remain at school until they are picked up by their parents. In case of fire, the students will go out of the building into the parking lot, then will proceed to the Raynor Parish Center. In case of a tornado, the students will follow the same procedures as SMM's Day School and gather in the basement of the building until the threat has passed.

REPORTING OF ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES

The Religious Education Office will promptly record in writing and report any student accidents or injuries to the affected student's parents. Reporting does not constitute an acceptance of liability.

IX. VOLUNTEER NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Parents are needed to volunteer their assistance to the Religious Education Program. We really need your help for students' safety, learning environment, hospitality, and your growth is important too! Added benefits include knowing your child's catechist and other parents! Either or both parents can volunteer for something you would enjoy.

CATECHIST - One who provides the classroom instruction for 8-15 children. A teacher's manual is available. In-service is provided, both by the parish and by the Archdiocesan Office of Religious Formation. A catechist is expected to immediately begin working toward Archdiocesan certification.

Time Commitment: Approximately 4 hours per week including lesson planning, early arrival and classroom clean up.

PARENT ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER – Someone who has an interest in being appointed to the board. Three-year terms begin in December. The board meets 5 times per year to assist the director of religious education in knowing the needs of the religious education families.

CATECHIST ASSISTANT - One who supports the catechist in the classroom by helping with distributing papers, set-up and environment, routines and activities, and by working with individual students. Can also help with preparing materials for catechists at home.

CATECHIST FOR RCIA CHILDREN - One who instructs children in preparation for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation. These are elementary and adolescent age children who meet on Wednesday evenings from 6:30—7:45 p.m.

CATECHIST FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN—Classroom instruction for a small group of special needs children. Experience in this area is helpful.

SUBSTITUTE CATECHIST – One who is willing to be on call to provide classroom instruction. Notice will usually be a week, or more, in advance, but last-minute emergencies occasionally happen. The teacher's manual and a plan for the evening will be provided for the substitute.

HOSPITALITY - One who provides refreshments and/or help decorate, serve, clean up for special Religious Ed. evenings or parent meetings. Parents at each grade level are asked to assist with some event. Events are hosted by committees, room parents, or the Parent Advisory Board.

LITURGY ASSISTANTS – Interested in being a song leader or instrumentalist during times of prayer, or interested in assisting with the practices for the liturgy on special occasions.

AUDITORIUM MONITOR – Must arrive by 6:15. Unlocks door, greets children, troubleshoots problems. After attendance is turned in by the catechists, arriving children are sent to the religious ed office to obtain a "Change in Attendance" form to take to class. Picks up all table signs and any other religious ed. items left in the auditorium and brings them to the office.

OFFICE ASSISTANTS – Must arrive by 6:15. One who assists during the Wednesday night program. They answer telephone calls, collect attendance sheets and notify parents, deliver messages, and supervise the office area. Can perform other office tasks if needed.

PARKING LOT MONITOR- One who supervises the children to maintain safety in the upper and lower parking lot areas, checking in at 7:40 and ending by 8:00.

PRAYER LISTENER - Must arrive by 6:15. Listens to memorized prayers recited by students. Supervises auditorium before class begins. Supervises the halls, stairways, restrooms, and assists catechists with a sick child or a visit to the office. They also supervise the students during fire and tornado drills.

PHOTOGRAPHER - One who may be contacted periodically to take photos for special occasions. Expenses reimbursed.

CARNIVAL WORKER - One who runs a booth at the spring carnival for grades 1-6.

ROOM PARENT /FAMILY NIGHT ASSISTANT- One who assists the teachers by providing occasional treats or phoning other parents for help as needed. Assists with a grade-level Family Night one Wednesday during the year. Organizes classroom parties (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Epiphany, Valentines, St. Pats, Easter?) May be asked to assist in phoning for snow days, etc., or to serve at events. May organize voluntary group gifts for catechists and aides.

OPEN HOUSE HELPERS – Help set up, serves refreshments, and clean up during Open House Night.

SPIRIT DAY OR CONFIRMATION RETREAT HELPER (OPEN TO 8TH GR. PARENTS) – Sign ups for these positions are found on the Confirmation Candidate Information Form received by all 8th grade students at the beginning of the year.

FIRST RECONCILIATION PARENT MEETING (OPEN TO 1ST GRADE PARENTS)– Help set up, serves refreshments, and clean up at the First Reconciliation Parent Meeting.

FIRST EUCHARIST PARENT MEETING (OPEN TO 1ST GRADE PARENTS) – Help set up, serves refreshments, and clean up at the First Eucharist Parent Meeting.

CONFIRMATION PARENT MEETING (OPEN TO 6TH GRADE PARENTS) – Help set up, serves refreshments, and clean up at the Confirmation Parent Meeting.

BABYSITTING – Volunteers will be called to babysit on Wednesday nights when catechists need a babysitter for their children during religious ed. Also, volunteers may be called to babysit during parent meetings to help families attending.

CLOSING PROGRAM HELPER – Help set up, serves refreshments, and clean up at the Closing Program.

ST. MARGARET MARY'S PARISH ATHLETIC HANDBOOK (updated May, 2006)

ADMINISTRATION

The Athletic Committee reports to the Total Board of Christian Education and administers the athletic programs for St. Margaret Mary parish.

DUTIES

The members of the Committee, their offices and their duties shall be:

President- The President shall be responsible for the overall operation and functioning of the Committee. The President shall preside at all meetings; prepare an agenda for each meeting; assign responsibilities and tasks; appoint sub-committees; and have the primary responsibility for planning and setting of objectives.

Vice President- The Vice-president shall preside at meetings in the absence of the President, and is responsible for special assignments given by the President.

Secretary – The Secretary shall record the minutes of Committee meetings, notify members of all meetings and meeting agendas, and be responsible for the safekeeping of all official Committee records.

Treasurer – The Treasurer shall keep a record of all Committee funds received and disbursed; prepare the annual budget and monthly reports of expenditures and receipts; deposit all receipts of the Committee; and present all obligations of the Committee to the parish bookkeeper for payment.

Athletic Director—The Athletic Director (AD) shall direct all athletics (Intramural and interscholastic) and the Chairpersons in charge thereof. The AD shall be in charge of all aspects of the program. Responsibilities include: the athletic budget, athletic policy, and parity within programs, field & facility scheduling, coaches (recruitment, selection and management), players, equipment and team placement. In addition, the AD is to maintain clear communication between the sports chairpersons, coaches, participants, parents, school, and religious education students. The AD acts only with the consent of the Committee.

Assistant Athletic Director— The Assistant Athletic Director performs duties as directed by and in the absence of the Athletic Director. The assistant AD is also responsible for the recruitment, selection and management of coaches.

Sports Chairperson—Each sport sponsored by the Committee shall be the responsibility of one or two Chairs, who shall have the primary responsibility for that sport's program. Each sport Chairperson is chosen due to his/her enthusiasm for the sport that he/she represent and for his/her past support and dedication to the various programs of SMM. The sports chairs will cooperate with the Athletic Director in administering and managing his/her sport, including helping with recruiting coaches as necessary. The sports chair will address issues not able to be handled at the coach level. In addition, the sports chair is responsible for organizing a meeting (prior to the start of the season) with all the coaches involved in his/her sport. The purpose is to review the Athletic Handbook, coach's plans for the season and encourage better communication between everyone involved.

Coaches—Coaches are volunteers who are in charge of their respective team. They share a responsibility with the SMM Parish Athletic program and parents to teach their sport, promote good sportsmanship, encourage positive attitudes and build strong values. Coaches should lead by example. Coaches are expected to hold a parent/player meeting prior to the start of the season. Doing so will allow the coach to communicate his/her expectations to both the parents and players, learn more about the athletes on the team and answer any questions. The main purpose is to boost communication between all parties involved. If a meeting is not feasible, the coach is expected to send an information letter to all participants prior to the start of the season. More information on coaching is available in the athletic section at www.smmomaha.org

Board of Education Representative—The representative will be the liaison between the SMM Total Board of Christian Education and the Athletic Committee.

PURPOSE and MISSION

The purpose of the athletic program at St. Margaret Mary's is to supplement the spiritual and academic curriculum. The mission of the SMM athletic program is to enhance the physical development of the child, and promote a sense of parish spirit, pride, and unity. The program is one of the most extensive and well-balanced parish programs in the city for both boys and girls. A variety of sports are offered and participation is encouraged. Below are the different sports that are offered during the year:

BOYS

FALL

Grade K Micro Soccer
Grades 1-8 Soccer
Grades 7-8 Football

GIRLS

Grade K Micro Soccer
Grades 1-8 Soccer
Grades 5-8 Volleyball

WINTER

Grades 3-4 Intramural Basketball Grades 3-4 Intramural Basketball
Grades 5-8 Basketball Grades 5-8 Basketball

SPRING

Grade K Micro Soccer Grade K Micro Soccer
Grades 1-8 Soccer Grades 1-8 Soccer
Grades 7-8 Track Grades 7-8 Track
Grades 5-8 Baseball

The seasons are broken into a variety of sports because it is strongly believed that specialization or concentration on any one sport at grade school age is detrimental and inhibiting to the children.

COMPETITIVENESS

For children in Grades K -- 4, the sports are almost totally instructive in nature, and the score and outcome of the game should be of small consideration. At this level, if the player has finished the season with an improved knowledge of the sport and has enjoyed playing the season, it was a successful season, regardless of the win-loss record of the team. Overall, coaches focus more on helping players improve their skills in the sport, and do their best to teach good sportsmanship.

In Grades Five and Six, instruction, enjoyment and good sportsmanship still play a much larger role in the approach than does winning. In Grades Seven and Eight (junior high) the athlete shows a greater enjoyment in the competition of the game.

Teaching the skills of the various sports, and certainly, good sportsmanship continues to be important. At the Junior High level, it is our philosophy to be competitive. "Competitive" means the team strives to win the game. There will be situations when athletes will be back-up players while others start. Each team member is expected to accept the role the coach outlines for him/her, even if that role means less playing time than others on the team. Team members are expected to support coaching decisions and exercise good sportsmanship.

We want our children to learn how to be both good winners and good losers and to realize that the scoreboard only tells part of the story. We must not forget that the purpose of the athletic program is only one part of the total parish experience. We want our sports program to be one of the many positive aspects of SMM parish life. Cooperation and communication between coaches and parents is vital.

ATHLETIC RULES AND REGULATIONS

RULE 1

No one is "cut" from teams because of a lack of ability. Everyone makes a team and has the chance to play any sport in which he or she wishes to participate. Should too many players sign up on the designated date for a given sport, these athletes will be accommodated as best we can by adding additional teams.

Intramural -- Every attempt will be made to balance all the teams within an age group. It would be perfect if all games were decided in the last seconds by a point.

Interscholastic--Teams will be divided according to the league rules. League rules will vary from league to league and sport to sport. Players cannot be downgraded within an age group or to a younger group in any league. No "A" player can play on a "B" league team. Conversely, any "B" player who plays in an "A" league game becomes an "A" player and is no longer eligible to play in the "B" league. There are two times when players will be asked to move up and play with a higher grade:

1) When there are insufficient players in the higher grade to fill out the roster

2) There are too many players in the lower grade and moving a player or players up would benefit both teams. No player will be moved up without permission of his or her parents. If no player wants to move up, the teams will be combined and play in the higher division.

RULE 2

Until a team plays its first game, teams may practice as often as necessary, within reason. This allows a team sufficient time to prepare for the coming season. Once the first game is played, practices are limited to four times a week for junior high and three times weekly for all other grades.

Practice times are determined by:

- (A) Availability of the coaching staff
- (B) Number of teams participating
- (C) Facility or field availability

Practices are limited to two hours per time. Shorter practices are recommended for lower grades. The general guideline is that we would like to have the last practice end by 9:30 p.m. According to Archdiocesan policy, no practice, league game or intramural event will begin before 1:00 p.m. on Sunday. On Wednesday any practice or game must conclude by 6:30 PM to accommodate religious education and parish youth programs.

RULE 3

Basketball and volleyball teams may play in a variety of different pre, post, and holiday tournaments. Listed below is the number of tournaments recommended. There may be opportunities for additional tournament play. It will be up to the coach and players whether or not they wish to play beyond the recommended number of tournaments for their grade. Additional fees may be incurred by those who participate.

8th Grade	5 Tournaments, plus League Tournament
7th Grade	3 Tournaments, plus League Tournament
6th Grade	2 Tournaments, plus League Tournament
5th Grade	1 Tournaments, plus League Tournament

LEAGUE AFFILIATIONS

St. Margaret Mary's will only participate in leagues that provide its members an opportunity to compete on the fields and in the school gymnasiums in an atmosphere of Christian sportsmanship, competition and fellowship. SMM participates in the PAL League in football, volleyball, basketball, track and baseball. The soccer league is the CYSL. SMM also participates in the CYO for basketball and the SOSL for 5th and 6th grade baseball.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITY

Parents are big part of the athletic program at St. Margaret Mary's. From parents come the staff and support needed for a successful program. Parents of participating children are often asked to assist in various ways: gate/ticket sales, scoring, and concessions. A schedule is mailed to parents regarding these assignments. Please fulfill your commitment or trade with another parent.

It is important that you see to it that your child attends practices as scheduled by the coach. Occasionally, you may be called upon to drive members of your child's team to games or to practices. Please help us in this area if you are able.

Safety:

The Athletic Committee requests that parents inform the player's coach of any known medical condition that they should be aware of before the sports activity begins. Coaches are not medical personnel. They rely on parents to provide accurate information on a player. Parents are responsible for making sure that their child, who needs any type of medical apparatus (inhaler, etc...), has it with him/her at all practices and games.

Uniforms:

You can be of great help in the care of the uniforms. These uniforms are provided for your child to wear in game only, not in practices or for normal non-play purposes. Please observe laundry instructions attached to the uniforms. It is vital that the uniforms be returned promptly at season's end. All uniforms are to be properly cleaned and returned to the child's coach after the last game of the season or as directed. Remember that you must pay replacement cost of all uniforms not returned or if they are damaged.

Sideline coaching:

It is important to remember that your child's coach is in charge of the team during the practices and games. Please, do not interfere with the coach at these times. During games, please refrain from entering the team area. The coach has enough on his/her mind during the games, and cannot be expected to answer parents' questions or to take suggestions at this time.

Sportsmanship:

Lastly, it is hoped that parents will be good fans at the games. We would like to encourage parents to cheer the SMM teams and their opponents enthusiastically and in a spirit of positive and Christian sportsmanship. Let your child and his/her teammates and coaches know you are 100% behind them.

COACHES

*****All coaches and assistant coaches are required to participate in the Archdiocesan Safe Environment Training Program. This includes any re-certification as well. This is to be completed before any contact with the players. Contact the Parish office for more information (558-2255).*****

The sports chair for any sport is the coach's main contact. All issues not resolved at the coach level must be brought to the attention of the sports chair. The majority of our coaches are parents. We hope you will be willing to help if you are asked to do so. Expert knowledge of the particular sport is not always required. Perhaps you could help another, more-experienced parent who has volunteered to coach. Every team needs more than one coach.

Coaches are expected to abide by the rules set down in this handbook. Coaches are required to support the seasonal sport concept of the parish and not to encourage the playing of any one sport year round. At St. Margaret Mary's, winning is not the top priority. No coach was ever denied the opportunity to coach again because he did not win enough games in the previous season. Coaches are viewed as teachers of the sport involved and should strive to set a good example for their players in their language, their sportsmanship, and their respect for the philosophy of the program. For more information on the role of the coach, visit the athletics web page at smmomaha.org.

St. Margaret Mary's goal is to have dedicated coaches at the junior high level (7th & 8th Grades). We do this primarily to help bring more knowledge to the sports and to refine the skills of the player. Junior high coaches must make tough decisions when it comes to deciding who plays and for how long. There are various factors that are considered in regard to playing time and coaches should be able to explain to players and parents the player's role on the team and the amount of playing time he/she might expect. The Athletic Committee expects coaches to be as fair as possible, but in the end, the coach's decision must be respected.

In addition, the Athletic Committee expects coaches to communicate to players and parents his/her expectations of

the players, coaching philosophy, team rules, etc. at not only the beginning of the season, but throughout as well. The coach is expected to keep contact with the Sports Chair throughout the season.

ELIGIBILITY

Any child having difficulty with achieving at the acceptable level in academics, or complying with the disciplinary standards of the day school, will receive appropriate action from the school principal. As a part of the moral growth of the student, parents and coaches are to respect and support the disciplinary action taken by the school authorities.

Suspension from day school or religious education classes, or dismissal from the same, is an automatic suspension from any SMM athletic activity during the time the student is not allowed to attend school. A student who has an academic grade point average of 1.6 or is failing with an F in any subject is declared ineligible for any parish athletic program. This includes practices and games. Progress reports are issued four to five weeks into every quarter. At that time, if ineligibility is determined, a student needs to improve his/her grade(s) to an acceptable level and demonstrate the ability to keep schoolwork current and grades acceptable. The principal will determine when the student has reached eligibility status again.

To participate in the athletic program at SMM, the child must be a member of the parish attending either day school or a Catholic attending religious education classes. There are and have been exceptions to this policy. Football and baseball have had exceptions to these rules. These exceptions are based on CYO rules concerning neighboring parishes that do not field teams in a particular sport. SMM has modified its rules as follows: Children in other parishes may participate in our programs if their parish does not offer the program provided we are not at a predetermined number of parish players after the last day of registration.

(A) Football: If we have less than 38. Baseball: If we have less than 15 for one team or 26 for two teams.

(B) A qualified player is qualified until the end of his/her eighth grade year.

(C) Coaches will not actively recruit players to the program.

If you have any additional questions concerning eligibility, please contact the Athletic Director. Please remember that participation is a privilege, not a right. If your son or daughter participates in a sport, both of you make a commitment to the program.

Coaches will set practice times within the guidelines of the program. Ordinarily, no player can miss any practice without obtaining permission in advance from the coach. Excessive absences must result in dismissal from the team -- with no refund of fees.

It is the Athletic Committee's recommendation that no SMM athlete be registered in more than one SMM Interscholastic sport per season. The exception is track. It is our feeling that it is impossible for a player to participate on a SMM team and a select team or another preferred activity at the same time and do either justice. We encourage athletes to make a decision and then give whichever team or activity his/her best effort. However, any student who participates in select or club over SMM, he/she does so knowing that playing time for SMM will be limited despite skill level. A form stating this understanding is expected to be signed by coaches, parents and athletes. Coaches will provide the forms at the beginning of the season. Signed forms will be kept on file with the sports chair.

VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball is a fall sport for girls in Grades Five, Six, Seven and Eight. SMM plays in the PAL (Parochial Athletic League). Games are played in the gyms of the various participating parishes including ours. Games will be played weeknights and weekends.

FOOTBALL

Football is a fall sport for boys in Grades Seven and Eight. The league is called the PAL (Parochial Athletic League). SMM will carry as many SMM parish players who wish to participate as long as they fall under the above

eligibility guidelines for grade level. SMM can, at the discretion of the coach, fill their roster up to 50 players.

Football is a contact sport and, as such, requires protective pads and equipment. Physical conditioning before the start of the season is stressed more in football than in other sports. Practice starts approximately three weeks before the season opens. Even during the regular season, 20 minutes of each practice will be devoted to exercise.

Due to the rigid technical rules of football, each play requires every player on the team to perform to his best ability. This enhances a strong sense of personal discipline and an even greater sense of the inter-reliability of the players on the team. The players learn this, and as a result, an extremely close feeling of teamwork and team pride marks the successful football team. It is these qualities of teamwork, team pride, and physical conditioning that the football program at SMM endeavors to achieve.

SOCCER

Soccer is both a fall and a spring sport for both boys and girls from first through eighth grades. The league is the CYSL (Catholic Youth Soccer League). Games are played at SMM and at a variety of fields around town. Because of league requirements and the large numbers of players, soccer sign-ups are very early. It is important that you sign up at this time if you wish to play. Late sign-ups will be put on a team only if there is room. Soccer is an excellent conditioning sport that involves speed, control, coordination and teamwork.

Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten micro-soccer are run as an intramural instructional program. It is simply a great introduction to the sport. Games are usually played on Sunday afternoons at SMM. Signup dates are mandated by the State of Nebraska and these deadlines are not flexible. It is critical that students sign up for soccer by the deadline dates, as noted in the Parish bulletin.

BASKETBALL

Basketball is the winter sport for both girls and boys in Grades Five, Six, Seven and Eight. All of our teams play in the PAL (Parochial Athletic League). The season is our longest. It runs from November through mid-March. SMM will attempt to have as many teams as we have players. Because of the increasing interest in basketball -- and the number of players involved -- additional teams may be formed within a grade or by combining two grades. League rules require a minimum of eight players per team. We would like to see at least 10 players on a team. Each team will be given as much practice time as available per week with priority in scheduling coming from eighth grade down.

Fifth & Sixth Grade Teams - These are non-competitive teams and we will divide these teams equally. Players will receive equal (as much possible) playing time -- if they attended practices, meetings, etc.
Seventh & Eighth Grade Teams - Teams will be divided into AAA, AA, A and B by league rules. Placement on a team will be based on skill levels, attitude and work ethic. When possible, the selection committee is made by non-parents with knowledge of the sport. At no time is a parent allowed input on team selection.

BASEBALL

Baseball is a spring and summer sport for boys in grades five, six, seven and eight. The 7th and 8th grade teams play in separate divisions in the PAL (Parochial Athletic League) league. In an effort not to interfere with track and soccer, SMM teams begin league play in late April and finish in mid to late July. The 5th and 6th grade teams play in the SOSL (South Omaha Saints League). At this level our teams will be divided equally and playing time will be as close to equal as possible. These are to be instructional teams with little interest in their overall record.

TRACK

Track is a spring sport for both boys and girls in grades Seven and Eight. The team is co-ed and practice begins mid-March, three days a week. There are four to five track meets in the season, with the season concluding the first week of May. Track is the only dual sport at SMM--athletes are allowed to run track and still play either soccer or baseball.

NOTE: Efforts should be made to avoid both practice, game and meet conflicts between track, baseball and soccer so that our players can participate in these sports.

LIABILITY

The parish has and assumes no liability for any injury to players. Insurance is the responsibility of the parents.

THEFT / VANDALISM

All players are cautioned to take care of their personal property at practices and games. Neither the coach nor the parish is responsible for a player's personal property, under any circumstances.

TEAM PARTY

Teams are encouraged to host a post-season party in order to facilitate the return of uniforms and to recognize athletes for achievements/give awards. Plans for these celebrations are made through individual teams or sport and not the Athletic Committee.

ISSUES/COMPLAINTS

Any parent having a complaint about a coach or the program is expected to follow these steps:

1. If you have an issue with your child's participation in a SMM sports program - PLEASE speak or write to your Child's team's Coach first in an effort to communicate your concerns and resolve any issue(s) as soon as possible.
2. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved and/or rectified at the Coach level – PLEASE then speak or write to the Sports Chairperson for the respective sport, in a similar effort to communicate your concerns and resolve the issue(s).
3. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved and/or rectified at the Sports Chair level – PLEASE then speak or write to the Athletic Director in an additional similar effort to communicate your concerns and resolve the issue(s).
4. If the issues(s) cannot be resolved at the Athletic Director level – PLEASE then contact the President of the Athletic Committee and ask to present your issue(s) to the Committee at its scheduled monthly meeting.
5. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved at the Athletic Committee level – PLEASE then contact the Total Board of Christian Education to request a presentation to this entity at its next scheduled meeting. This presentation can be organized through the Total Board Representative who acts as the liaison between the Total Board and the Athletic Committee. Contact information can be found at the front of the Parent/Student Handbook.
When the above process is followed, every attempt will be made to achieve a solution in accordance with the philosophies and guidelines notes in the handbook.

SUMMARY

The information presented in this handbook is a picture of the athletic program of St. Margaret Mary Parish. It is an attempt to illustrate, for the information of the parents of our children, just what sports are offered and the importance of athletics to the total educational experience of the children. We have tried to explain the philosophical approach the parish takes toward sports; how these sports are financed, and what the functions are of the Athletic Director, the Athletic Committee, the Sports chairmen and the coaches.

Should you have a specific question on a topic not covered in the handbook, please contact the Athletic Director. A concerted attempt will be made to provide a complete answer for you.

In short, it can be said that SMM athletics is a comprehensive and organized program designed to enhance the physical development of the child, and promote a sense of parish spirit, pride, and unity.

We feel the program is unequalled, and sincerely hope our children take advantage of it. The success of the program depends on each of us to make it work!

VINCENT MAINELLI AWARD

The Vincent Mainelli Award is the highest award that can be given by St. Margaret Mary's Athletic Committee. It does not honor basketball, volleyball or football skills. It honors the intangibles -- the things that every coach looks for in an athlete -- the qualities that make a person stand out from the crowd.

The Mainelli award is given annually to the eighth grade boy and girl who have shown the highest levels of spirit, dedication, leadership and sportsmanship throughout the year.

All eighth grade coaches have input. The Athletic Director with the approval of both the school and athletic com-

mittee makes the final decision.

THE ST. MARGARET MARY STUDENT ATHLETE SPARTAN SCHOLARSHIP

The SMM Student Athlete Scholarship is a two-year \$1,500 grant (\$750 per year for two years). The criteria include that the candidate, an eighth grade student in St. Margaret Mary's parish, be working to his or her potential, both academically and athletically.

The student shall have participated in the SMM sports program within the last two years. In addition, the financial need of the candidate(s) will be a strong consideration. The money is to be used to further a Catholic education. Candidates for this scholarship will be decided upon by committee. If the committee decides that there are two equally deserving candidates, the money will be divided equally.

Any child wishing to apply for this scholarship must do so in writing before May 1st. Scholarship winners will be announced during the annual awards presentation for the eighth grade.

Revised - May 2006

PARENTS' CODE OF ETHICS

I Hereby Pledge To Provide Positive Support, Care and Encouragement For My Child Participating In Youth Sports

By Following This Code Of Ethics:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice or other youth sports events.
- I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of any personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will provide support for coaches and officials working with my child to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all.
- I will demand a drug, alcohol and tobacco-free sports environment for my child and agree to assist by refraining from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for children and not for adults.
- I will do my best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed or ability.
- I will promise to help my child enjoy the youth sports experience within my personal constraint by assisting with coaching, being a respectful fan, providing transportation or whatever I am capable of doing.

Family Prayer

*God made us a family
We need one another
We love one another
We forgive one another
We work together
We play together
We worship together
Together we use God's work
Together we grow
in Christ
Together we love all people
Together we serve our God
Together we hope
for Heaven
These are
our hopes and ideals
Help us to attain them,
O God, Through Jesus Christ
our Lord
Amen.*