

The Grade School Program

The Totus Tuus Grade School Program is designed for children going into first through sixth grades.

The Grade School Program runs Monday through Friday.

The students are encouraged to be clear and consistent in their faith. They are shown how to view their Lord as a good Father. This personal relationship gives them the confidence to be Christ's witnesses in the world around them. Finally, Totus Tuus endeavors to show the youth that a humble and courageous desire to know God must be based upon a steadfast and disciplined life of prayer combined with the reception of the sacraments.

Facilities

In order for the Grade School Program to run smoothly, the team requests one large hall or room for their main assemblies. (This same room can be used as a lunchroom, if necessary.)

If the group is large, it is helpful to provide a microphone for the main speaker.

The size of the student body and number of teams assigned to each parish will determine how much classroom space is needed. For one team this will usually mean having three or four other classrooms available for use; for two teams, seven or eight classrooms; for three teams, eleven to twelve rooms. Each classroom should have a chalkboard or a dry-erase board. For the 1st and 2nd grade classroom, it is ideal to have a large enough room to have some empty space near the board for the children to gather on the floor, as well as tables set up with chairs for their activities. Team members will set up the rooms and will do their best to return them better than they found them when they arrived.

It is very important that the church be available for Mass and confessions each day.

Snacks/Recess

While classes comprise a large part of the day, Totus Tuus is not school and makes sure that the kids have FUN, too! Therefore, we have a break in the morning, recess and "cool down" after lunch and a short bathroom break in the afternoon.

We ask the parish to provide drinks throughout the day.

Water is a necessity, but we also encourage other drinks such as lemonade or Kool-Aid. The children will need drinks set out for them at three points during the day: at the morning snack break (10:00 a.m.), at lunch (12:15 p.m.), and after recess (1:15 p.m.). We ask that your volunteers have the snacks and drinks ready five minutes before each break.

We also ask that the parish provide snacks (cookies, chips, crackers, etc.) at the morning break. To make it easier on the parish resources, participating children can be asked to provide one dozen cookies (or a bag of chips, etc.).

The children should be asked to bring sack lunches, but drinks may be needed to be prepared. Some parishes choose to provide lunch for the children, especially on Friday afternoons (see below). The choice is yours; just be clear your parents know what to expect.

Recess follows lunch. Team sports are encouraged. The team will participate in recess with the children.

The 2:00 p.m. break is not a snack break.

Mass and Confession

It is in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works most fully for the redemption and sanctification of all mankind. We realize that Totus Tuus asks a lot of our priests who are already very busy, and for their presence and participation in the program we are eternally grateful. We have found over the years that celebrating and participating in the sacraments on such an intimate level has a tremendous effect on the children. We strive to help the children participate fully and actively in the liturgy and consider this an integral part of our program. It is the responsibility of the Parish Contact to arrange the liturgical and sacramental events with the priest.

Since the Eucharist is the source and the summit of the Christian life, Totus Tuus encourages the daily celebration of Mass at 11:30a.m. We also suggest that opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation be made available every day before Mass, beginning at 11:00 a.m. This schedule can be adapted to meet the needs and special circumstances of your parish though we would ask you to remember that the teams are trained to follow this schedule and it is already difficult for them to do so. The oldest students will be sent to Confession on Monday and younger grades as the week progresses. If your parish has many young people involved in the program, the pastor may find it helpful to invite a fellow priest to assist.

The youth will participate at Mass by serving, bringing up the offertory gifts, and proclaiming the readings and petitions. Totus Tuus team members will lead the children in a few songs during Mass; therefore, it is not necessary to ask the music director or parish musicians to be there, although they are certainly welcome.

The team will prepare the children for Mass and Confession, and they will practice the songs as well.

The children will be expected to behave during Mass—and at all times during the week. Their Friday afternoon schedule depends on it!

If a priest is unable to preside at and/or secure a replacement for the Mass at any point during the week, the team will take the children to the church to pray the Rosary, Mid-day Prayer, or the Stations of the Cross.

Friday Afternoon

On Friday, we will follow the usual schedule through lunch, but then it is modified to allow for “fun time” on Friday afternoon. Students can still bring their lunches, or some parishes like to take this opportunity to have a “cook out” (usually hot dogs and chips). After lunch there will be no classes.

Friday afternoon’s festivities can be held in a nearby park or recreation area, or just in a large, open area (the parking lot will suffice) on your church grounds. After lunch there will be a water-balloon toss and a “water fight” for which students can bring water guns, squirt bottles, buckets, etc. By about 2:40 p.m. the water fight ends and students help the team clean up the area. The parish is asked to provide water hoses and wading pools or a stock tank, etc. Parishes may also choose to provide popsicles, ice cream, or other treats at the conclusion of Friday afternoon.

Some parishes ask the local fire department to send a truck and join in the water fight. This adds a considerable amount of water and is completely optional.

Another Friday afternoon Totus Tuus tradition is the “human sundae.” If the students have behaved well throughout the week, they are allowed to choose one team member to become a human sundae.

The children are asked to bring sundae toppings; the team member will be considered the ice cream. The sundae usually happens before the balloon toss and water fight. If the children do not behave well, they will not get the sundae.

Not all parishes like the idea of the sundae. Other creative options are certainly welcome. For example, one parish chooses to take its children to the nearby nursing home and dish up real ice cream sundaes—and a few of the songs they’ve learned during the week—to the residents.

Parents should be warned that children will be wet and possibly dirty when they are picked up. Please recommend that the students wear something that can be ruined. The team will talk to the children about Friday afternoon at the close of the day on Thursday, giving them the rules of the day and what to bring/wear.

The day is closed, as is every day, with songs and prayer.

