



**Religious Education Program  
Handbook  
2017-2018**

St. Veronica Parish  
4475 Mt. Carmel – Tobasco Rd.  
Cincinnati, OH 45244

REP Office: (513) 688-3155  
Parish Office: (513) 528-1622

[www.stveronica.org](http://www.stveronica.org)





# ST. VERONICA

ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH

Dear Parent,

## **Welcome to Saint Veronica Parish Religious Education!**

St. Veronica Parish is here to assist you in the faith formation of your child. Thank you for making your family's faith a priority and letting us serve your family through the Religious Education Programs at St. Veronica Parish.

The Rite of Baptism tells us that parents are the first teachers of their children. Therefore, the St. Veronica REP program is designed and intended to be done in partnership with the teaching that goes on in your home. The REP classes (preschool on Sunday mornings or Grades 1 thru 8 on Wednesday evenings) are meant to enhance your efforts. We invite you to be involved with what your child is doing in the classroom. Speak to your child's catechist and find out what is being covered in the classroom and what projects or lessons they are to work on at home with the family. Ask your children what they are studying in REP. When you pray together as a family, keep the catechists and volunteers who serve the REP programs in your petitions. Ask God to bless the work they do so it will yield rewards for the children and families they serve.

This R.E.P. Handbook is provided to give you a good understanding of what our programs seek to accomplish. Please familiarize yourself with it so you fully understand the procedures and philosophies of the Religious Education Programs and return the acknowledgement form to the R.E.P. Office.

As always, please let us know if there is anything you would like to share. We can be reached by email or at 528-1622 or 688-3155. We hope that the time the children spend in REP class this year will help them grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Del Staigers

Pastor  
del.staigers@stveronica.org

Mr. Bill Frantz

Pastoral Associate  
bill.frantz@stveronica.org

Mrs. Theresa Kearney

Coordinator of Children's  
Faith Formation  
theresa.kearney@st.veronica.org

Mrs. Sarah Lanham

Coordinator of Preschool  
REP  
sarah.lanham@yahoo.com



# ST. VERONICA PARISH

## Mission Statement of St. Veronica Parish

*St. Veronica Catholic Parish is a Community of the Faithful in which all members share in the essential purpose of living, teaching, and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

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#### A. Mission / Purpose

The purpose of the St. Veronica Parish Religious Education Program is to support and assist all parish families in the religious formation of their children and in the Catholic Christian way of life through formal classroom study of the truths of our faith and its lived dimensions. This holistic approach to faith formation interweaves message, worship, prayer, community, and service. The goal is to foster relationship with God as Trinity, with Jesus Christ as Son of God and Savior, with the local and universal Church, and with the larger community in which we live our daily Catholic Christian lives.

Our lives as Catholic Christians are supported and strengthened through regular participation in the weekly Eucharist and frequent reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The St. Veronica Religious Education Program [REP] tries to foster understanding and practice in these areas for students and their families. It is important that REP families are participating in weekly Sunday Mass, and are involved in Parish life.

#### B. Program Organization and Administration

The Pastoral Associate, Bill Frantz, reports to the Pastor, Fr. Del Staigers. The Faith Formation Office coordinates the religious formation of children, from nursery age through grade eight, as well as Adult Faith Formation programs (RCIA, Bible Study, etc.). The Youth Ministry program is currently under the direction of the Pastoral Associate.

The Pastoral Associate is assisted by a part time Administrative Assistant for REP (Paige Umstead), a part time Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation (Theresa Kearney), and a part time Adult Formation/RCIA Coordinator (Emily Besl).

A dedicated core of generous volunteer REP teachers and aides make the program possible.

#### C. Communication / Contact Information

We are here to serve the religious education needs of our parish children and youth. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, you may contact us at the following:

St. Veronica Parish Office      528-1622

Religious Education Office      688-3155

Bill Frantz, Pastoral Associate    [bill.frantz@stveronica.org](mailto:bill.frantz@stveronica.org)

Theresa Kearney, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation    [theresa.kearney@stveronica.org](mailto:theresa.kearney@stveronica.org)

Sarah Lanham, Coordinator of Preschool REP    [sarah.lanham@yahoo.com](mailto:sarah.lanham@yahoo.com)

Paige Umstead, Administrative Assistant for REP    [paige.umstead@stveronica.org](mailto:paige.umstead@stveronica.org)

## D. Curriculum / Course of Study

The Pastoral Associate, with the cooperation of the Pastor, establishes the curriculum for St. Veronica Parish. This curriculum is based on the guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in *Growing Together: Ministry to Children* and in *Growing Together: Ministry to Youth*, and in the archdiocesan policies regarding early childhood education.

The following textbook materials will be used in the St. Veronica Parish REP programs. These textbooks develop understanding of the four pillars of the catechism of the Catholic Church (Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer) each year at age-appropriate levels. Below is a snapshot of what is covered, generally each year.

### Preschool: **God Made Everything** series (Loyola University Press)

Three year olds: *God Made Me* – God made me, alive, good, happy, active  
Four year olds: *God Made the World* - God made people, earth, living things, surprises  
Kindergarten: *God Loves Us* - God loves us; we love God

### Grades 1 thru 6: **We Believe** series (Sadlier Publisher)

Grade One: *God Loves Us: The Church, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Following Jesus*  
Grade Two: *Jesus Shares God's Life, Preparation for/Celebration of Reconciliation and Eucharist*  
Grade Three: *We Are the Church: The Church, The Creed*  
Grade Four: *God's Law Guides Us: The 10 Commandments, Beatitudes*  
Grade Five: *We Meet Jesus in the Sacraments: Mass, Prayer, The Sacraments*  
Grade Six: *We Are God's People: The Old Testament*

### Grades 7 and 8: **Christ Our Life** series (Loyola Press)

Grade Seven: *Jesus, the Way, Truth and Life: The New Testament*  
*Confirmed in the Spirit, Part 1* (Loyola Press)  
Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation  
Grade Eight: *Church, Then and Now: The Church and Church History*  
*Confirmed in the Spirit Part 2* (Loyola Press)  
Preparation and celebration of Confirmation

### Sacramental Preparation: **Journey of Faith** (Liguori Press)

RCIC (children in the Third Grade or above who have not received the first sacraments)

## E. Prayers

Students will be given a list of prayers to be learned in their grade at the start of the year. It is hoped that parents will help their children become familiar with these customary prayers of the church. With so little time in class, it is imperative that children practice these prayers at home. With the addition of a voluntary Prayer Coach this year, students will be invited to show their mastery of these traditional prayers throughout the year. Please help them prepare.

## F. Admission Policies

Normally you must be a registered parishioner of St. Veronica or St. John Fisher Parish to enroll your child in Preschool or Elementary REP classes. All school-age children of registered members of St. Veronica or St. John Fisher Parish not attending a Catholic school are expected to be enrolled in a parish Religious Education Program (REP). Out-of-parish students/families may register for REP classes with the permission of their home parish pastor/DRE; this registration is dependent on space availability and at an additional out-of-parish rate.

## G. Program Fees / Tuition

Fees are renewed annually for families with children ages three through grade eight. Fees for the 2015-2016 year are as follows:

<u>St. Veronica Parishioners:</u> (Registered)	One Child	\$115.00
	Two Children	\$185.00
	Three or More	\$225.00
<u>Non-Parishioners / Those Not Registered in the Parish:</u>	One Child	\$145.00
	Two Children	\$215.00
	Three or More	\$255.00

**Tuition/fees are to be paid at the time of registration unless special arrangements are made with the Religious Education Office.** This is so that we can order the books and supplies we need over the summer and be ready to begin the program in September. All tuition/fees should be dropped off or sent to the Parish or REP Office, or dropped in the Sunday collection in an envelope clearly marked "REP" Please include students' names.

There will be an additional fee for Retreats and other special events.

A payment plan can be set up upon request. Please contact Bill Frantz, Pastoral Associate to work out a payment schedule. I would be happy to serve as the contact to coordinate payments plans if it helps free up Bill's schedule.

## II. PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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### A. Registration

REP Registration for the following year begins in the spring. New families may register their children any time after registering with the parish office.

**Registration for students currently enrolled in REP is held each Spring for the following academic year, with deadlines noted in the packet.**

- Registrations may be dropped off at the Religious Education Office, the Parish Office, or in the Sunday Collection basket in an envelope clearly marked: "REP Registration".
- A separate Registration Form and Medical Release/Emergency Contact Form are needed for each child.
- All students entering REP for the first time must provide a copy of the **Baptismal Certificate**.
- Registration forms should be marked with the grade the child will be entering in the fall.
- **A child must be 3 years old by September 30 to be enrolled in the Sunday Preschool Program.**

**B. Family Information Changes:** Please notify the REP Office if your telephone, e-mail, or home address changes during the year. We use Constant Contact email for all the majority of our communications. Therefore it is very important that we have your correct email address. Keeping records up-to-date helps us to keep you up-to-date. Contact Paige Umstead, Administrative Assistant at 688-3155 ext. 1, or email Paige at [paige.umstead@stveronica.org](mailto:paige.umstead@stveronica.org).

### C. Classroom Locations

Primary grade classes (Gr. 1-4) are held in the primary wing classrooms of the St. Veronica School. Upper grade classes (Gr. 5-8) are held in the upper grade classrooms of the St. Veronica School.

Preschool/K classes are held in the parish center classrooms and the Nursery is held in the Pre-School Room 401.

### D. Class Times

REP runs from early September through the beginning of May with the exception of Christmas and Spring Breaks. (Please see attached calendar.) Classes meet according to the following schedule:

<b>Preschool - K:</b>	Sunday	9:25 am – 10:30 am
<b>Grades 1 thru 8:</b>	Wednesday	7:00 pm - 8:15 pm
<b>RCIC- gr. 3 and above:</b>	Sunday	10:30 am – 12:00 pm

### E. Catechists / Aides / Volunteers

All REP Program Catechists, aides, and other volunteers are **VIRTUS** (see below) trained members of St. Veronica Parish. Beginning in 2017-18, Catechists are required to take courses in the Archdiocesan program of faith formation for Catechist certification. These programs are designed to help form catechists in their faith, develop skills needed in the classroom and to present material helpful to the faith formation of their students.

Parent Volunteers and other family members are invited and encouraged to assist with the REP program in a variety of formal and informal capacities: Formally, as a Catechist, Substitute Catechist, Teacher Aide, Prayer Coach, Office Aide, or member of the Faith Formation Commission; Informally, as a volunteer for specific events such as All Saints, Christmas, Easter and end-of year celebrations, class projects, special prayer services, retreats, etc.

Sharing your life experiences and your own faith journey with children is an invaluable gift both for you and for the children. Please let us know of your willingness to share your faith journey.

### F. Child Protection Policy

**VOLUNTEERS in all children's programs throughout the Archdiocese of Cincinnati are REQUIRED to complete and remain current with the Child Protection policy by:**

- **Attending a VIRTUS Orientation – Child Awareness Session** conducted at St. Veronica or another parish throughout the archdiocese.
- **Completing the Archdiocese On-Line Background Check**
- **Completing monthly on-line bulletins through VIRTUS** to remain current with Virtus topics and training.

**VIRTUS TRAINING IS FREE.** It is highly recommended that all REP parents complete this requirement in order to assist regularly with REP activities. Both of these components are offered at various Archdiocesan sites. Check **[www.catholiccincinnati.org](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org)** (Protecting Our Children) for a complete list of locations and dates.



## **G. Class Attendance / Absence**

### **Attendance:**

Regular attendance at REP is important. By making the effort to come every week, you let your children know that you value their faith formation. At REP we are about helping children strengthen their relationship with God, and deepen their understanding of church teaching, scripture, prayer and community. We hope to see all our students each week at REP.

Attendance is taken weekly. Students are expected to be in their classroom and ready to begin five minutes prior to class, and to stay for the entire class. Should early dismissal be required, we ask that parents report to the REP office before going to the classroom. If the early dismissal is planned, please bring a note for the classroom teacher and office at the start of class.

### **Absence:**

Please **notify the REP Office (688-3155) as soon as possible** if your child will be absent. You can leave a message with the child's name, grade, and the reason for absence. It is expected that the material missed will be covered at home.

### **Extended Absence:**

Should you find that your child will be missing a substantial number of classes, we can meet to set up a Home-Schooling curriculum so that he/she does not miss out on any lessons. Of course, all work, projects and assignments will need to be turned in.

## **H. Homework / Class Assignments / Make-Up Work**

### **Participation/ Homework / Class Assignments:**

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities, which may require some home preparation, especially in the older grades. Please insure that your child is prepared, and brings both the textbook and a pencil with them to REP class.

In addition students may have homework or projects to complete outside of class. The curriculum and textbook materials are designed with the expectation of family involvement. Talk to your children about what they are learning in class, and share your experiences with them. Please encourage your child to always do his/her best in completing any assignments.

### **Make-Up Work:**

Any missed lessons/classes should be made up at home, just as students would make up regular school work. Parents can contact the child's REP teacher or the REP office to determine the lesson missed and obtain any make-up assignments.

## **I. NCEA –IFG (ACRE) Testing**

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati has adopted the National Religion Testing program known as NCEA – IFG ACRE for the fifth and eighth grades in both the parochial school and parish religious education programs. This test is a helpful guide in assessing the children's understanding of their faith at these grade levels. It is a measure of how well we as Parents, Parish, and Program are passing on the important aspects of the faith. Results are not giving for individual students; only the overall program scores. This national test is administered at the elementary level in January or February of each year.

## L. Drop-Off / Pick-Up of Students

In order to insure greater security of all, families with **students younger than 4<sup>th</sup> grade are asked to walk students to and from their classrooms for Wednesday REP classes.** Please use the front entrance to St. Veronica School.

Families with students 4<sup>th</sup> grade and older may continue to use the rear entrance to drop students off. Doors will be open for students at 6:45.

On Sundays, parents will walk Preschoolers through the doors in the Gymnasium wing to their classes.

**Class Drop-Off:** Parents (or older siblings) should escort children in Grades 1 to 3 directly to the child's classroom and sign them in. Older siblings may sign in the younger children. Children in grades 4 to 8 should go directly to their assigned classroom.

At 7:00 p.m., the doors will be locked. Late arrivals and those wishing to enter the building must be buzzed in at the REAR entrance only.

From 7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. the building areas occupied by REP will be restricted to students, catechists and registered parents/visitors. Parents are welcome to remain in designated areas, but must pick up a visitor's badge in the Faith Formation Office, and wear it at all times. Parents are welcome to sit in their child's class but must wear a badge.

**Church Drop-Off:** Bring your child directly into Church. Please insure that your child reports to their catechist. Parents are encouraged to remain and sit with their child during the Service. Following the service Catechists will walk children to the classroom.

**Dismissal and Pick-Up:** At 8:15 p.m. the doors will be opened so that parents can enter the building. Parents will please wait until after announcements are finished to go into the classrooms. Parents may pick up children from the classrooms after announcements.

**Students in Grades 1 thru 3** must be met at the classroom door by a parent, guardian, or approved representative, i.e. older sibling.

Children in Grades Four and above may be responsible for picking up younger siblings at the discretion of the parent. Parents will be asked to complete REP Student Dismissal Permission Form for children in grades 1-3 **at the beginning of the school year.** Should someone not on the list be picking up your child, please send a note to the REP teacher explaining who that will be. The person must clearly identify themselves to the REP teacher at dismissal time.

**Students in Grades 4 thru 8** will be dismissed independently at the end of the evening.

**IN ALL CASES, unless a parent comes in the building to get their child at the end of the evening, all children should wait in the entryway until the parent/driver pulls up to the walkway.**

Arrangements for early dismissal should be made with the catechist and Mrs. Kearney at the beginning of class.

After class, all car drivers should circle around the parked cars, and exit via the normal front parking lot exits to Mt. Carmel-Tobasco Rd.

## M. Emergency Cancellation Policy

If classes for West Clermont Schools are canceled on a Wednesday due to bad weather or other emergency, there will be NO REP that evening. If West Clermont classes are delayed, there will typically be REP classes if the roads are generally clear by the time classes begin at 7:00 pm. If it snows later in the day, or if there is any other reason for classes to be cancelled, you will receive a Constant Contact email message as well as a Notify Now phone message (automated calls will introduce themselves as an IRIS alert). **Please insure we have a valid phone number and email for these to notification systems on file.** A message will be left on the office answering machine. (688-3155). During inclement weather if classes are scheduled to take place but you feel the roads are unsafe for you to travel, please use your best judgement and do what is safest for your family.

## N. Social Justice / Mission Outreach Service Projects

In light of the Gospel call to serve the least of our brothers and sisters, we aim to give students and families opportunities to reach out in love throughout the year. We hope that YOUR family will joyfully participate. This outreach will help our children learn to care for and minister to others in the spirit of Jesus' love. Each class will initiate a service project based on the Course of Study for that class.

## III. EXPECTATIONS

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### A. Parents

The Catholic Church believes that the parents are the primary and most important educators of their children. Our goal is to assist you in that sacred endeavor. Therefore, to give your children a positive model to follow, we respectfully ask that you:

#### Be models of prayer.

- Parents will witness their faith by attending weekly Mass with their children.
- A list of prayers to be studied will be sent home with each student each year.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to join their children for REP prayer times.

#### Be models of formation.

- Parents will insure students' attendance and participation at REP.
- Attend class Parent Night, REP community events, retreats and other parent meetings.
- Parents can take advantage faith formation programs offered by the parish.
- Parents are cordially invited to join in the discussion and fellowship at Wednesday Cafe'. Held monthly during REP, this is an opportunity to discuss topics of interest to Catholic parents.
- Wednesday Café: Held one Wednesday of every month, this is an opportunity to discuss topics of interest to Catholic parents raising their children. You are cordially invited to join in the discussion and fellowship. Includes refreshments. Let your children see you using the time they are studying the faith to grow in your faith too. You won't be disappointed.
- Wednesday Church Night: Held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month from September through May, these are special presentations, guest speakers and prayer events for all adults of the parish. They are held from 7:00 p.m. to 8:10 p.m. to accommodate REP parents. Check the REP newsletter for the upcoming presentation/event.

#### Be models of Christian Service.

- Help with projects in the REP office. If you can copy, staple, collate, cut, paste, sort or organize we probably have a job you could help with.
- Come in to listen to students practice their prayers and pray with them.
- Respond generously with your time, talents and treasure when we have an REP or Parish service project.
- Your children will learn to live a life of service from watching you.

**B. Students** are expected to:

**i. Behave in a Christian manner at all times.**

- Be respectful, obedient and helpful towards catechists and adult helpers.
- Respect and work well with all other students.
- Actively participate in classroom discussions and activities.
- Complete all projects and assignments to the best of your abilities.

Most classroom behavior issues will be handled by the catechist with reminders of appropriate behavior. However, should a child's behavior continually interfere with the rights of others in the class, it will be brought to the attention of the Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation or the Pre-School REP Coordinator and the Pastoral Associate. The child may be removed from class, and parents called to collect the child.

**ii. Attire - Students are expected to dress comfortable but respectfully at all times.**

- Messages and images on t-shirts may not be appropriate. If you are wondering whether something is or isn't appropriate for REP, it should not be worn.
- When going to Church during REP, our clothes should reflect the importance of the occasion: meeting our God.
- Hats/hoods should be removed inside.
- Sports uniforms may be worn.

**iii. Bring no food/drink to class.**

- Candy, gum, and drinks are not allowed in any classroom.
- Candy, gum, and drinks are never to be brought in church for any occasion.
- All classroom areas are Peanut Free Zones.

\*\*An exception can be made if teachers give out treats in class.

**iv. Leave cell phones and other electronic devices at home.**

- Our time is short, and these devices are a distraction.
- Any and all electronic devices, including cell phones and head phones, which are OUT or IN USE during class will be taken to the REP Office,
- The parent can retrieve electronic devices after class. NO EXCEPTIONS.

If there is a need for your child to make an emergency telephone call, there is a telephone in the REP Office. Should you need to contact your child in an emergency, please know there is always someone in the REP office to take a phone call. The office telephone number is **688-3155**.

**v. Care for the property and REP materials they use.**

- Our parish property belongs to all of us, and as good stewards, we are responsible for taking care of it.
- The classrooms we use are shared with St. Veronica day students. REP students should NEVER use supplies that belong to the children whose desks they share.
- We are expected to use school furniture respectfully.
- We are expected to clean up at the end of each class session, leaving the classroom in proper order, just as we found it.

**C. Catechists and Administration** take seriously our call to assist parents in their mission to teach and to model the Catholic faith to our students.

#### **Catechists will care for their students**

- Catechists will be VIRTUS trained and be up-to-date on monthly online bulletins.
- Catechists will be present in the classroom at all times when children are present.
- Catechists will not be alone in a classroom with a student.
- Catechist will be vigilant in looking for cases of bullying, name-calling, teasing or physical aggression and will not permit any kind of disrespect in the classroom. Such incidents, if recurring, will be brought to the attention of the Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation.

#### **Catechists will care for the learning of their students**

- Catechists will devise a yearly and plan and prepare for each session of REP, insuring that what they teach is in accordance with Scripture, Tradition, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and follows the course of study of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.
- Catechists will pray with their students in every class.
- Catechists will insure all needed supplies are on hand.
- Catechists will strive to make lessons interesting and enjoyable, by using additional materials, projects, art, music, or audiovisuals.
- Catechist will take advantage of reading, retreats, classes, etc. to deepen their relationship with God and their understanding of the concepts they teach.

#### **Catechists will be accountable**

- Catechists will send something home each week from the chapter covered in class.
- Catechists will give students a test at the end of each unit.
- Catechists will monitor behavior and step in when non-Christian behavior is seen.
- Catechists will monitor attendance of students.

#### **The Faith Formation Office cares about communication**

- A bi-weekly newsletter outlining parish and REP events; information on Church seasons and feasts, and ideas on how to celebrate at home will be electronically sent to each family whose current email address is on file.
- Dates and times of all meetings and retreats will be posted in advance so that you may plan accordingly. Most will be noted on the yearly calendar posted online.
- Parents will be contacted regarding student attendance or behavior in a timely manner.
- Phone calls and emails will be returned within 3 business days after we receive them. Please note, Mrs. Kearney is usually only in the office 2 or 3 days a week, including Wednesday, and may not receive a phone message the day it is left. Email is usually a better way to get in touch, especially if the message is urgent.

#### **D. Students with Special Needs**

As Christians, we recognize the uniqueness of God's people. We try to accommodate parish students with special learning needs if at all possible. However all Catechists are volunteers, usually with no professional training as educators. At the time of registration, parents are encouraged to alert the staff if their child has been identified as having special medical or educational needs, so that the catechist can be confidentially informed. A meeting between the parent, catechist and the Pastoral Associate to determine the best way to assist the child will be set. Sometimes, the parent may need to be present in the child's class to provide assistance so that everyone experiences a loving and cooperative environment. Call the REP Office (688-3155) to arrange an appointment to discuss any specific learning needs or accommodations necessary for your child.

## IV. RIGHT TO AMEND

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The St. Veronica Parish Religious Education Program reserves the right to amend this Handbook as necessary. Parents will be notified in writing if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this Handbook.

## V. SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

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Sacraments are central and essential to what it means to live the life of a Catholic Christian, and are true expressions of faith. Sacraments both presuppose one's faith and strengthen that faith. Sacraments praise God as Trinity, build up the Body of Christ, the Church, and sanctify, or make holy, the individual.

At St. Veronica Parish, we believe this definition of "Sacraments" is essential. To request any sacrament, a person needs to understand the meaning and purpose of that sacrament, and have thorough preparation, so he/she can commit more fully to the life of faith presupposed and respond more fully to the grace given in that sacrament.

Ongoing religious education following First Reconciliation and First Eucharist is essential if there is to be a deepening in the understanding and practice of these important Sacraments in the life of the child and the family. This continuous education is normally done through attendance and participation in religion (formation) classes in the parochial school or regular/participatory attendance in an REP program.

The Catholic teachings, prayers, and formation obtained at the First Grade level – either through the parochial school or in REP classes – are essential for a child to have a basic understanding of this Jesus whom he/she plans to approach in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist in Grade Two. Similarly, a fundamental understanding of the Catholic faith in which one seeks to be confirmed, its sacraments, Scripture, and foundational life-principles is essential prior to the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation in Grade Eight.

**In order to begin formal preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist (generally Grade 2), a student must have regularly participated in a formal program of religious education the school year prior to the school year when the sacrament is to be received. For Confirmation (generally Grade 8), students must have regularly participated in a formal program of religious education for 2 school years prior to the school year the sacrament is to be received.**

**All children preparing for sacraments (First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation) MUST submit a copy of their Baptismal Certificate.** If your child was baptized at St. Veronica Church, you may note the child's date of birth and date of baptism on the Sacramental Registration Form which is distributed at the first Parent Sacramental Preparation Meeting.

### A. First Reconciliation and First Communion

First Reconciliation and First Communion occur during the Second Grade year for most students who have

- been baptized as infants or in early childhood and
- who are in their second consecutive year of religious education formation.

The Sacrament of First Reconciliation is generally celebrated in late fall, while the Sacrament of First Eucharist is usually celebrated in late April and early May.

In addition to regular attendance/participation in religious education classes, it is necessary that the family is regularly attending and participating at Mass on Sundays and praying together as a family at home.

## B. Confirmation

The **preparation** for the sacrament of Confirmation begins at the end of the Sixth grade year, continues throughout the **Seventh Grade year** and into the Eighth Grade Year. The **celebration** of the sacrament of Confirmation occurs during the **Eight Grade year** for most students who have received the sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation, and First Eucharist and have completed years six-eight of religious education formation.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually celebrated in the late winter or early spring.

Youth of seventh and eighth grade level who hope to commit themselves to the Catholic Church for life through the sacrament of Confirmation need to have the experience and the understanding of what it means to be a Catholic Christian before they make this request for themselves. If they do not have this experience and understanding of Catholic Christianity, there needs to be special preparation (for example the RCIA model) or evidence of **monitored** home-schooling. [See the attached sheet on "Guidelines for Home-Based Religious Education" from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.]

In addition to the expectation of continued regular attendance and participation in religious education classes, it is expected that the child is regularly attending and participating at Mass on Sundays and demonstrating growth in understanding and support of the Catholic Christian way of life through service, evangelization, and prayer, at an age-appropriate level.

Confirmation candidates are also required to participate in off-site Confirmation Retreats (one in Seventh Grade and one in Eighth Grade) in which they reflect on their baptismal call and the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be received.

## C. First Sacraments Preparation Workshops

### First Reconciliation & First Communion:

Sacramental preparation is the responsibility of the parent/guardian. To aid parents in this process, the parish respectfully **REQUIRES** that all parents who wish to have their child receive these sacraments attend **one parent meeting for each sacrament** at the beginning of each sacramental preparation process, and a parent/child retreat before the children receive each of these important Sacraments. The dates and times of these meetings and retreats are publicized well in advance through e-mails, the parish bulletin, and/or handouts the child may receive via their classroom teacher.

### Confirmation:

**Guiding** and **encouraging** your child during the Sacramental preparation process is a responsibility you, as the parent/guardian, share with the child's chosen Confirmation Sponsor. **Participation** in the Sacramental formation process is the responsibility of the Confirmation Candidate.

To aid parents and Confirmation Sponsors in this process, the parish respectfully **REQUIRES** that all Confirmandi and parents whose children are of Confirmation age attend at least one meeting. Initially, parents are asked to **view a talk** on the St. Veronica Parish website at [www.stveronica.org](http://www.stveronica.org) in spring of a student's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade year, and discuss/share it with their child. This talk describes the Confirmation preparation process and gives the Confirmand preliminary information about the sacrament, Sponsor selection, service opportunities and so on. Students may begin to keep track of service to be included in their Service/Ministry Log. A Confirmation Launch, for 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents and students is held in the fall of 7<sup>th</sup> grade year. This launches the formal start of Confirmation preparation. Finally, in the fall of the eighth-grade year, the Candidate and **Sponsor** come together for a time of reflection, followed by Mass and the Rite of Enrollment. In both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, students are expected to attend a retreat, practice works of service in the community, attend weekly Mass, and participate fully in preparation classes for the sacrament.

Parents/sponsors are expected to assist with engaging their child/confirmation candidate in service opportunities, help as necessary with off-site Confirmation retreats, and most especially supporting the Confirmation Candidate through prayer.

## **D. Special [Delayed] Sacramental Preparation**

Children and youth who have been baptized as a Catholic but who are older than second grade will be enrolled in REP, usually at grade-level after discussion with the parent and at the discretion of the Pastoral Associate.

In addition, these children will be prepared for reception of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist through a process similar to the Children's Catechumenate (see below). This program meets weekly on Sunday mornings from late September thru Easter. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the Adult Catechumenate (RCIA) sessions to help them offer support to their child in this process of learning about the Catholic faith.

Each individual situation is unique, and the process above is typical of the preparation necessary. Final decisions regarding what preparation is needed for each situation will involve the Pastor, the Pastoral Associate, and the child's catechist; with the Pastor making the final decision.

## **E. Children Becoming Catholic**

### **Children's Catechumenate**

Children over the age of seven or so are initiated into the Catholic Church in a way similar to adults. They participate in a catechumenate and are gradually led into the Church's life of faith, worship, and service. As they progress in faith, they celebrate ritual steps to mark their growth. When they are ready, they receive the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist in the midst of the Church community at the Easter Vigil.

To guide them along the way of faith, they have a sponsor or godparent who assists and accompanies them. The whole parish prays for them and provides an example of what it means to follow Jesus.

Like adults, older children are baptized according to their personal faith, not the faith of their parents. The catechumenate is all about fostering and developing that faith within the parish community, so that the child can become a lifelong disciple of Jesus Christ, within the Catholic community of believers.

How does a child baptized in another Christian denomination become a Catholic? That depends on the child's age. For a young child under the age of 7, the parents make a statement to the pastor that they intend to raise the child as a Catholic. This is recorded at the parish, and the child is Catholic. There is no ritual or ceremony needed.

A child over age 7 would celebrate the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, like an adult. After a preparation suitable for the child's age and experience, the child would make a profession of faith, and receive the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist.

The RCIA Coordinator is the person to contact if you find yourself in any of these situations, and want to find out what to do.

RCIA Coordinator: Emily Besl [emily.besl@stveronica.org](mailto:emily.besl@stveronica.org) or 513 688-3143.



## GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHOOLING

### ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

1. When parents decide to provide the formal religious education of their children at home, they are encouraged to meet with their pastor so that he and/or his delegate can assist them in developing a catechetical plan and in choosing catechetical materials suitable for home-based religious education. (Canon 776, 793)

*[At St. Veronica Parish, this is delegated to the Pastoral Associate.]*

2. *Growing Together: Ministry to Children, the Graded Course of Study for Early Childhood and Elementary Catechetical Programs* and *Growing Together: Adolescent Religious Education, a Manual for Parish and School Programs* have been approved by the Archdiocesan Commission of Education and promulgated by Archbishop Pilarczyk as the official content to be followed for all early childhood, elementary and high school catechesis in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. All catechists for children or youth are expected to follow the content outlined in these documents.

3. Parents should be invited to use the parish resource libraries and the Archdiocesan Media Centers to supplement their educational efforts.

4. Parents and their children are welcome and encouraged to participate in parish liturgies and/or other events prepared specifically for children and their families.

5. The pastor and/or his delegate should invite the parents to participate in the VOCARE catechist certification process of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as outlined in *The Ministry of the Catechist*. (Canons 779, 780)

6. Parents are encouraged to meet with the pastor and/or his delegate periodically to review the progress of their catechetical efforts.

*[Here at St. Veronica Parish, this is two times a year: in November and in April / May.]*

7. When parents believe that their child is ready to receive a sacrament, the pastor of the parish to which the child belongs is to decide whether he or she is properly prepared. (Canons 777, 914). The parish to which a child belongs is either the parish in which he or she resides or is another parish in which he or she is registered. *Growing Together: Ministry to Children* should be used as the basis for determining readiness.

## PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

**- Please sign and return to the Religious Education Office -**

This is to acknowledge that we have received the St. Veronica Parish Religious Education Handbook. We understand and agree to the Parish Religious Education policies set forth in the handbook.

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Parent / Guardian Signature

Print Parent's Name

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Print Child's Name

Grade

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Print Child's Name

Grade

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Print Child's Name

Grade

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Print Child's Name

Grade

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ (where you wish to receive notifications and newsletters)