

St. Anthony † St. Cecilia † St. Margaret-St. John
EASTSIDE PASTORAL REGION

Parish Religious Education Handbook

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) for the Eastside Pastoral Region, which is comprised of St. Anthony, St. Cecilia, and St. Margaret-St. John Parishes. We are here to assist you in educating your children about the Catholic faith. PREP provides instruction about Catholic teachings, prayers, and rituals. The instruction includes preparation for 2nd graders receiving the sacraments of 1st Reconciliation and 1st Communion and is required of those students preparing for 1st Reconciliation/1st Communion as well as those making their confirmation (unless they attend a Catholic school).

There are three sections that families can choose from:

- Sundays at 8:30 AM – 9:45 AM at St. Cecilia School
- Sundays at 9:45 AM – 11:00 AM at St. Anthony Rectory
- Online Religious Home Study – Flexible Alternative to Sunday PREP

We ask all parents to attend Sunday Mass with your children every week. We also encourage you to frequently attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The sacraments are the best way to help you and your children grow in faith, hope, and love. Both sacraments will also provide your family with strength and healing.

Please carefully read the material in this handbook. We are committed to providing a safe, educational, and enjoyable environment for your children. Please contact us throughout the year with any questions or concerns.

In Christ through Mary,

Cody Egner
Regional Director of Religious Education
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MISSION STATEMENT

The Parish Religious Education Program exists to help your family develop a daily relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. We want your family to grow closer to the Lord by attending the sacraments, learning about the Catholic faith, reading Scripture, and experiencing the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

GOALS

- Guide families toward a routine of daily prayer that has a foundation in the Mass
- Provide families with knowledge of the faith and a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit
- Promote the importance of knowing and reading Scripture
- Prepare 2nd graders to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and 1st Eucharist

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

All classroom materials are faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The program uses *Spirit of Truth* by the Sophia Institute and *Pflaum's Gospel Weeklies* for our Kindergarten through 8th grade. Children in these grades will receive a student workbook and weekly handouts to take home. Catechists for these grades will receive a teacher's manual and available resources online.

GENERAL POLICIES - ALL GRADE LEVELS

- 1.) Students must attend class and participate to the best of their abilities.
- 2.) No more than 3 unexcused absences during the year. Further absences will require a meeting with parents/guardians. If there are extenuating circumstances, the parent/guardian must inform the Regional Director of Religious Education.
- 3.) Students must be on time and attend the full length of the class session. In case of illness, please do not send your child to class.
- 4.) Parent must attend and participate in scheduled meetings or liturgical events.
- 5.) Everyone is to show respect and be cooperative with adults and other students.
- 6.) If the student brings any type of electronic device to class, it must be turned off and not used during the class time. If a phone is used during class time, it may be taken and put on the catechist's desk until the end of class. This includes all cell phones and electronic entertainment devices.

7.) Students are expected to wear modest clothing to all functions. Catechists and the Director of Religious Education will speak with parents or guardians if a student wears immodest clothing to a class or other program function.

8.) Students must wait on the grounds of St. Cecilia School or St. Anthony Rectory until picked up by an authorized family member or designated adult. ***No child will be driven home by a staff member or catechist.***

MEDICATION

Adult leaders of the Parish Religious Education Program are only allowed to dispense medication with written parent permission and order of the physician. This applies to both prescribed medication and over-the-counter medication. Adult leaders will follow all medication policies as designated by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In case of emergency, adult leaders of the program may administer epi-pens with written parent permission. It is the parent's responsibility to give written instructions for using epi-pens to both the catechists and Director of Religious Education.

CLASS CANCELLATION

Parents will be notified through e-mail & text if classes need to be cancelled because of inclement weather. The decision will be made prior to 10:00 PM the day before class.

ABSENCE, ARRIVAL, AND EARLY DISMISSAL

If a parent knows that a child will miss a class, please send an email ahead of time to the Director of Religious Education. All children are to be in the classroom at the beginning of the class. *Please do not* have your children arrive in the classroom more than 15 minutes prior to the start of class. If your child needs to leave early, please give him/her a signed note to inform the catechist at the start of class.

DISMISSAL

We ask that parents wait in a parking space for their children at dismissal time unless you plan to walk into the building to pick up your children. For those families at St. Cecilia, please do not line up your vehicle in front of the school entrance, as this causes traffic problems in the parking lot.

CATECHISTS AND AIDES

Catechists are the main teachers in our program. Catechist aides are assistant teachers in our program. All catechists and catechist aides are volunteers who practice their Catholic faith on a daily basis, which includes attending Mass on Sundays each weekend. Every volunteer in our program must complete an online background check and comply with the requirements of the VIRTUS program.

INCIDENT REPORT

If a health, safety, disciplinary, or other incident occurs during the class time, the catechist will complete an incident report and return it to the Director of Religious Education. The incident report will list the date/time/location of the incident, the type of incident, a description of the incident, and the response taken by the catechist at the time of the incident. The catechist and Director of Religious Education will then discuss and write down recommendations for handling such incidents in the future. The catechist and Director of Religious Education will sign the report once it is completed. A copy of the incident report form will be kept on file for parents or guardians to access throughout the year. The catechist or Director of Religious Education on the day of the incident will notify Parents/guardians.

VISITORS

We invite parents and guardians to attend classes with your children. Please give notification a few days prior to the class. You can provide notification by contacting the catechist or the Director of Religious Education.