



St. Veronica Parish



Religious Education Program Handbook 2019-2020

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

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

www.stveronica.org



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Saint Veronica Children's Faith Formation!

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 and modeling 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. Ask your children what they are studying in REP. When you pray together as a family please keep the catechists and volunteers who serve the REP programs in your prayers. Please ask God to bless the work we do so it will yield rewards for the children and families we 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 Program.

As always, please let us know if there is anything you would like to share regarding our programs, or any aspect of your children's faith formation. We can be reached by the emails below or at 688-3155 or 528-1622. We hope that the time the children spend in REP this year will help them grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Del Staigers

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Del Staigers".

Pastor
del.staigers@stveronica.org

Mr. Bill Frantz

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr. Bill Frantz".

Pastoral Associate
bill.frantz@stveronica.org

Mrs. Theresa Kearney

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa Kearney".

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

Mrs. Sarah Lanham

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Lanham".

Coordinator of Preschool
REP
sarah.lanham@yahoo.com

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

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 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 relationships with God as Trinity, with Jesus Christ, Son of God and Savior, with the Holy Spirit, guide and advocate, with the local and universal Church, and with the larger community in which we live.

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 expected that REP families participate in weekly Sunday Mass, support the parish through the Sunday collection, and are involved in Parish life.

B. Program Organization and Administration

The Faith Formation Office coordinates religious formation in the parish from nursery - adulthood. Pastoral Associate, Bill Frantz, heads the Faith Formation Office and reports to the Pastor, Fr. Del Staigers. The Faith Formation Office staff includes part-time Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation, Theresa Kearney, part-time Administrative Assistant for the REP, Barb Farwick, and part-time Adult Formation/RCIA Coordinator, Emily Besl. Volunteer Sarah Lanham leads the Preschool REP.

A dedicated core of generous volunteer REP catechists and aides make the REP 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, please contact us at:

St. Veronica Parish Office 528-1622

Religious Education Office 688-3155

Bill Frantz, Pastoral Associate bill.frantz@stveronica.org

Theresa Kearney, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation

theresa.kearney@stveronica.org

Sarah Lanham, Coordinator of Preschool REP sarah.lanham@yahoo.com

Barb Farwick, Administrative Assistant for REP barb.farwick@stveronica.org

The twice monthly email newsletter, the Sunday bulletin and the parish website are the chief means of communication with REP parents. As such, it is imperative that current email addresses are on file.

D. Curriculum / Course of Study

The curriculum followed in the REP is based on the Graded Course of Study of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (available on request) and archdiocesan policies regarding early childhood education. The following textbook materials will be used in the St. Veronica Parish REP programs during the 2019-2020 catechetical year. At each grade level, the four pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church- Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer-are explored in developmentally appropriate ways. Below is a snapshot of what is covered, generally at each grade level.

Preschool: God Made Everything series (Loyola 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
- Kindergarten: *God Loves Us* - God loves us; we love God

Note: Textbooks are different than those used in St. Veronica School Preschool/Kindergarten.

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 Reconciliation & 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; AND *Confirmed in the Spirit*, Chapters 1-3 –beginning preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Grade Eight: *Church, Then and Now* - The Church and Church History; AND *Confirmed in the Spirit*, Chapters 4 onward *Continuing preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation*

Rite of Christian Initiation for Children: Journey of Faith (Liguori Press)

This program, for children in the third grade or above who have not yet received the first sacraments, introduces children to and prepares them to receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation).

E. Prayers

Families are given a list of prayers to be learned at each grade at the start of the year. It is expected that parents help their children become familiar with these traditional prayers of the church and that they will be practiced at home.

F. Admission

School-age children of registered parishioners who do not attend Catholic school are to be enrolled in a Parish Religious Education Program (REP). Normally you must be registered at St. Veronica or St. John Fisher to enroll your child in Preschool or Elementary REP classes, though out-of-parish families may register for REP classes with the permission of their home-parish pastor/DRE.

G. Program Fees / Tuition

Fees are paid annually for families with children ages three through grade eight.

Fees for the 2019-2020 year are as follows:

<u>Registered Parishioners:</u>	One Child	\$115.00*
	Two Children	\$185.00*
	Three + Children	\$225.00*
<u>Non-Parishioners:</u>	One Child	\$145.00*
	Two Children	\$215.00*
	Three + Children	\$255.00*

*There may be additional fees for retreats and other special events.

Fees are to be paid in full at the time of registration so that necessary books and supplies can be ordered over the summer months. **A payment plan can be set up upon request.** Please contact Bill Frantz, Pastoral Associate to work out a payment schedule.

II. PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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 full school year prior to the school year when the sacraments are 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 have a copy of their Baptismal Certificate on file. If your child was baptized at St. Veronica Church, please note the child's date of birth and date of baptism (if known) on the Sacramental Registration Form distributed at the first Sacramental Preparation Parent Meeting.

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

A. Registration

Fall REP Registration begins in the preceding spring. Once registered in the parish, new families are welcome to register their children in the REP.

- Registration, Fees, Archdiocese Medical Release/Emergency Form, Parent Volunteer Form, and Baptismal Certificate (Copy), if needed, may be dropped off at the Religious Education Office, the Parish Office, or in the Sunday Collection basket in an envelope clearly marked with "REP Registration", with the child's name and grade entering.
- All students entering REP for the first time must provide a copy of the **Baptismal Certificate.**
- **A child must be 3 years old by September 30 to be enrolled in the Sunday Preschool Program.**

A CURRENT, CLEAR email address must be on your registration form, to receive your twice monthly REP newsletter. If you do NOT receive the newsletter, please notify us ASAP. This is our #1 way to communicate with parents.

B. Family Information Changes: Please notify the REP Office if your telephone, e-mail, or home address changes during the year. It is very important that we have your correct current email address. Keeping records up-to-date helps us to keep you up-to-date. Please contact Barb Farwick, Administrative Assistant at 688-3155 ext. 1, or at barb.farwick@stveronica.org.

C. Class Times

REP runs from early September through the beginning of May with Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Breaks, and days off for catechist in-service days. You can find our calendar on the REP page of the St. Veronica website. Classes are scheduled at:

Preschool - K:	Sunday	9:25 am – 10:30 am
Grades 1 thru 8:	Wednesday	7:00 pm - 8:15 pm
Children's Catechumenate- gr. 3 and above:	Sunday	10:30 am – 12:00 pm

D. 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 were required to take courses in the Archdiocesan program of faith formation for Catechist certification (V0care). These programs are designed to help catechists grow in their own faith, develop classroom management and teaching skills, and to share materials 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 and 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.

*All classroom volunteers must be VIRTUS trained.

E. 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. Please check with the Parish Office for upcoming VIRTUS Orientation dates and locations.
- 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. VIRTUS is offered at various Archdiocesan sites. Check www.catholiccincinnati.org (Protecting Our Children) for a complete list of locations and dates.

F. Class Attendance / Absence

Attendance:

Regular attendance at REP is important. By making every effort to come each week, you let your children know that their faith formation is an important FAMILY priority. At REP we help the children strengthen their relationship with God, and deepen their understanding of church teaching, scripture, prayer and community. We expect to see all students each week, so attendance is taken weekly. Please have students in their classroom and ready to begin by 6:55. Should early dismissal be required we ask that parents notify the REP office before 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 your child's name, grade, and the reason for absence.

Make-Up Work:

Any missed lessons/classes should be made up at home, just as students would make up regular schoolwork. All missed lessons will be scanned and emailed to you. Please print, complete and send back any indicated pages. Parents can contact the child's REP catechist or the REP office with any questions regarding the lesson missed and any make-up assignments.

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. All work is to be turned in and will be marked and returned to the student.

G. Student and Family Participation

Student Participation:

Students are expected to participate in class discussions and activities, which may require some home preparation. Please ensure that your child is prepared, and brings their textbook, Bible (gr. 6-8) and a pencil to REP class. 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 and share your experiences with them. Please encourage your child to always do his/her best in completing any assignments.

Family Participation: In addition to bringing students to class and assisting with lessons, we encourage parents and families to attend group REP events whenever possible, including Parent-Child evenings, Grade-level Eucharistic Exposition, Stations of the Cross, and Family Rosary for Peace. Please check the REP calendar for dates. In addition, we may need parent help with retreats, service projects and other events throughout the year. Please fill out and turn in the Parent Volunteer form in your registration packet to make us aware of your willingness to help.

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 in these projects

alongside the Outreach Ministry. This outreach will help our children learn to care for and minister to others in the spirit of Jesus' love.

H. NCEA –IFG (ACRE) Testing

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati uses a National Religion Testing program (NCEA –IFG ACRE) in grades 5 and 8 in parochial school and parish religious education programs. This test helps assess students' faith knowledge, beliefs, thoughts, and practices at these grade levels. It is a measure of how well Parents, Parish, and Program are working together to pass on the important aspects of the faith. **All results are anonymous**; only overall program scores are given. This national test is administered at St. Veronica in late January each year.

I. Classroom Locations

Grades 1-4 classes are held in the primary wing classrooms of the school. **Gr. 5-8** classes are held in the Jr. High wing classrooms of the school. **Preschool/Kindergarten** classes are held in the Kindergarten and Preschool classrooms of the school.

The Co-op Nursery for children younger than 3 is held in a Pre-School classroom in the school. For information about the nursery, please, contact Tammy tammyg1111@hotmail.com

Children's Catechumenate sessions are held in the Parish Ministry Center.

J. Drop-Off / Pick-Up Procedures

For Wednesday REP classes, students younger than 4th grade must be walked to and from their classrooms by a parent, older sibling, or other family member to be signed in and out. Please use the front entrance on the west side of the school. **Please make us aware of any unfamiliar adult who may be accompanying your child, as well as any other restrictions on who may pick up your child.** Children are to wait in their seats until they are signed out by a known parent, sibling or other family member.

Students in 4th grade and above, who are not accompanying younger siblings can be dropped off and picked up at the rear (REP) entrance of the school and go directly to their classrooms.

Doors will open for students at 6:45, then locked at 7:00 pm. Doors will open again at 8:15 for pick-up. Students in grade 4-8 will be dismissed independently at the end of class and leave by the same rear door. If they are signing out younger siblings, they will exit by the front door.

On Sundays, parents can enter through the doors in the Gymnasium wing to drop off Preschoolers, Kindergarteners and Nursery children to their classrooms.

Late arrivals and others wishing to enter the building must be buzzed in at the REAR DOOR ONLY between 7:00 and 8:15. The building is reserved for REP students, catechists and registered parents/visitors. Parents can be in these areas but must wear a visitor's badge from the Faith Formation Office.

Alternate Drop-Off Locations: You will be notified if your child's class starts in an alternate location.

Chapel/Church Drop-Off: Bring your child directly into Church/Chapel and ensure that your child reports to the catechist. Parents are encouraged to remain and sit with their child.

Gym/Cafeteria Drop-Off: West-side front doors and rear doors will NOT be open. Please enter through the Gymnasium Wing or front Cafeteria Doors nearest the school office.

K. Emergency Cancellation Policy

If **West Clermont Schools** are **canceled** on a Wednesday due to bad weather or other emergency, **THERE WILL BE NO REP CLASSES THAT EVENING.** If West Clermont classes are DELAYED, there typically WILL BE REP classes, as the roads are generally clear by class time. If it snows later in the day, or there is any other reason for classes to be cancelled, you will receive a Constant Contact email message, a message will be left on the REP office answering machine (688-3155) and an announcement will

appear on the parish website. If classes are scheduled to take place but you feel the roads are unsafe for you to travel, ALWAYS use your best judgement and do what is safest for your family.

III. EXPECTATIONS

A. Parents

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

Be models of prayer.

- Witness your faith by attending weekend Mass with your children every weekend.
- Practice the list of prayers that is sent home with each student each year.
- Join your children for REP prayer times: Sept. and Jan. opening prayer, Ash Wed. Mass, Stations of the Cross, Family Rosary for Peace, Class Eucharistic Exposition, May closing.

Be models of formation.

- Ensure students' weekly attendance and participation at REP.
- Attend class Parent Night, REP events, retreats and other parent meetings.
- Take advantage of faith formation programs offered by the parish.
- Join in discussion and fellowship in a Small Church Community.
- Watch the newsletter for dates and subjects of upcoming events and programs.

Be models of Christian Service.

- Help your children learn to live a life of service from watching you.
- Respond generously with your time, talents and treasure for service projects.
- Volunteer as a substitute catechist, classroom aid or office helper.
- Come in to listen to students practice their prayers and pray with them.

B. Students

We believe children to be respectful, responsible, and trusted. We honor and respect each person as a beloved child of God, and value the gifts of each one. We expect children will

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 their abilities.
1. Most classroom behavior will be addressed by the catechist.
 2. Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation, the Pre-School REP Coordinator and/or the Pastoral Associate will be brought in as needed.
 3. The child may be removed from class, and/or parents may be contacted.

Dress comfortably AND respectfully at all times.

- Messages/images on t-shirts must be appropriate. If you think they aren't, they shouldn't be worn. Parents may be called if clothing is deemed inappropriate for REP.
- When going to Church, clothing should reflect the importance of the occasion and a respect for an encounter with our God,

- Hats/hoods are to be removed inside the school building and in church.
- Sports uniforms may be worn in season.

Not bring food/drink to class,

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

* Water bottles may be permitted AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CATECHIST.
Catechists may give out treats in class on occasion.

Not bring cell phones, earphones, and other electronic devices to class.

- Our time is short; electronic devices are a distraction. They are NOT permitted in class.
- Any and all electronic devices, including cell phones and headphones, which are OUT or IN USE during class **will be taken to the REP Office.**
- **Parents** may 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 someone in the REP office to take a phone call. The office telephone number is **688-3155.**

Care for the property and REP materials they use.

- Our parish property belongs to all of us. As good stewards, we take good care of it.
- The classrooms we use are shared with St. Veronica day students. Students should NEVER use supplies that belong to the children whose desks we share. REP will provide the needed supplies for REP students.
- Help clean up at the end of each class session; leaving the classroom in proper order.

C. Catechists and Administration. We 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 the safety of their students. As such, all catechists will

- Have VIRTUS training and be current on monthly online bulletins.
- Be present in the classroom any time when children are present.
- NEVER be alone in a classroom with a student.
- Remain vigilant in looking for cases of bullying, name-calling, teasing or physical aggression and will not permit any such disrespect in the classroom. Incidents, if recurring, will be brought to the attention of the Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation for action.

Catechists will care for the learning of their students. As such, all catechists will

- Create a yearly plan and prepare for each weekly session of REP, ensuring that they teach only what is in accord with Scripture, Tradition, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church; and follows the Course of Study of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.
- Pray nightly with their students.
- Ensure all needed supplies are on hand.
- Strive to make lessons interesting and enjoyable.
- Take advantage of in-service courses, retreats, and weekly Mass, etc. to deepen their relationship with God and their understanding of the concepts they teach.

Catechists will be accountable. As such, all catechists will

- Send something home each week to show what was covered in class.
- Test students at the end of each unit, at a minimum.
- Monitor behavior and step in when behavior is inappropriate or disrespectful.
- Monitor student attendance.

Page 8

The Faith Formation Office cares about communication, and so

- A twice monthly newsletter outlining parish and REP events; information on Church seasons and feasts, and ideas on how to celebrate at home will be sent electronically 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 are already decided and noted on the calendar posted online.
- Parents will be contacted regarding issues with student non-attendance or misbehavior in a timely manner to discuss next steps.
- Phone calls and emails will be returned within 3 business days after we receive them. Please note, we are usually in the office only 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. (Unless to report that a child will be absent; then a phone call is always the best choice.)

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 parents, catechist and the Pastoral Associate or Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation will be set, in order to determine the best way to assist the child. Sometimes, a parent may need to be present in the child's class to provide assistance, ensuring that everyone experiences a loving and cooperative environment.

Please 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

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 throughout the REP term.

V. SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Sacraments are central to what it means to live as a Catholic Christian and are true expressions of our 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 and respond more fully to the grace given in that sacrament.

Ongoing religious education prior to and 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 classes in the parochial school or regular attendance in REP, grades 1-8, and beyond.

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 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 have on file 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 distributed at the first Sacramental Preparation Parent Meeting.

A. First Reconciliation and First Communion

First Reconciliation and First Communion occur during the second-grade year for students who have reached the age of seven and

- 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 during Advent 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 regularly attends and participates at Mass on Sundays and prays together as a family at home.

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 **a parent meeting and retreat as part of the preparation process.** Dates and times of meetings/retreats are publicized well in advance through e-mails, the parish bulletin, and/or handouts the child may receive via their classroom teacher for your planning.

B. Confirmation

Though formal **preparation for** the sacrament of Confirmation begins at the start of grade 7, and ends in May of eighth-grade, **students begin to keep track of service to be included in their Service/Ministry Log the summer between grade 6 and 7.** Confirmation is received in the **eighth-grade year** for most students who have received the sacraments of Baptism, First Reconciliation, and First Eucharist and have completed years eight of religious education formation. The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually celebrated in the late winter or early spring.

Seventh and eighth graders who wish to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church through the sacrament of Confirmation must have the experience and the understanding of what it means to be a Catholic Christian. If they do not have this experience and understanding of Catholic Christianity, special preparation (for example the RCIA model) or evidence of **monitored** home-schooling are in order. [See the attached sheet on "Guidelines for Home-Based Religious Education" from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.]

In addition, students are expected to

- Attend and participation in religious education classes weekly
- Attend and participation at Mass on Sundays weekly
- Demonstrate growth in the understanding of the Catholic Christian way of life
- Live a life of service, evangelization, and prayer; at an age-appropriate level

Confirmation candidates participate in Confirmation Retreats and service opportunities in which they reflect on their baptismal call and the gifts of the Holy Spirit they will receive.

Guiding and **encouraging** your child during the sacramental preparation process are tasks you, as parent/guardian share with the chosen Confirmation Sponsor. **Participating** 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 candidates and their parents attend at least one meeting describing the Confirmation preparation process and giving the candidate preliminary information about the sacrament, sponsor selection, service opportunities and so on. This Confirmation Launch for parents and students is held in the fall of 7th grade year. This begins the formal start of Confirmation preparation.

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 7th and 8th grades, 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 and engage in service opportunities with their child/confirmation candidate, help as necessary with off-site Confirmation retreats, and most especially support the Confirmation Candidate through prayer.

C. Special [Delayed] Sacramental Preparation

Children and youth who have been baptized as a Catholic but who are older than seven (grade 2) will be enrolled in REP, usually at grade-level. In addition, they will be prepared for reception of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist through an individual process. Each individual situation is unique. Final decisions regarding sacramental preparation involves the Pastor, the Pastoral Associate, parents and the catechist; with the Pastor making the final decision.

After enrolling your child in the REP program, please contact the Pastoral Associate, Bill Frantz at 513-688-3155 ext. 3 or bill.frantz@stveronica.org to talk about your individual situation and scheduling the preparation process.

Page 11

D. 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.

Contact Emily Besl at emily.besl@stveronica.org or 513 688-3143 if you find yourself in any of these situations, and want to find out what to do.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
GUIDELINES FOR HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SCHOOLING

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 role is delegated to the Pastoral Associate, Bill Frantz.**
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 parish resource libraries 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 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 read the St. Veronica Parish Religious Education Handbook. We understand and agree to the Parish Religious Education policies set forth in the handbook.

Parent / Guardian Signature

Print Parent's Name

Print Child's Name

Grade

Print Child's Name

Grade

Print Child's Name

Grade

Print Child's Name

Grade

Date: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____ **(where you wish to receive notifications and newsletters)**
