

**St. Vincent de Paul Parish
Religious Education Program**

**Parent/Student
Handbook**

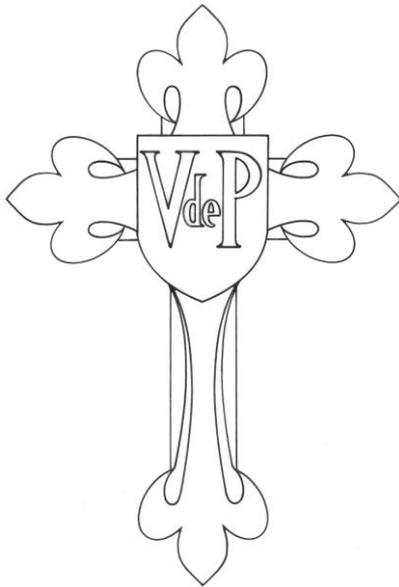


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Mission Statement

The mission statement of the St. Vincent de Paul Parish Religious Education (RE) Program is to foster within an educational environment the teaching and values of Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic Church. Through the promotion of these teachings and values, a Catholic community is created where students are accepted, cherished, and challenged. The St. Vincent de Paul RE Program recognizes that parents are the primary religious educators of their children in faith development, and assumes a mutual responsibility to enhance this development.

Philosophy

The St. Vincent de Paul Parish RE Program offers a Religion Program of Catechesis within a Christ-centered community. The RE Parish Program exists to provide its parish children attending schools other than SVdP Grade School, a basic, yet firm foundation in our Catholic beliefs and practices.

The St. Vincent de Paul RE Program respects the uniqueness of each child and the diversity of needs within its Parish family. The Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE), under the guidance of the Pastor and the Diocesan Office of Religious Education, devises a Religious Education program to meet the needs of its students- challenging them to grow in the knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, its teachings and practices.

The St. Vincent de Paul Parish RE Program strives to not only teach about Jesus, but just as importantly, strives to inspire a relationship of friendship and lasting love with Jesus.

The ideals of this philosophy can **only be fulfilled through a spirit of cooperation** shared by each of the three major groups of our **RE family-staff, parents, and students**. The quality and success of the RE Program recognizes the need for each group to accept the responsibility of openness to one another, in mutual respect and encouragement.

Statement of Goals

St. Vincent de Paul Parish RE Program exists to provide its students with a basic, yet firm foundation of religious education that is developed

and nurtured within a faith-filled environment. This is accomplished when these goals are achieved:

1. To proclaim the message of Jesus Christ, by providing a religious program based on Scripture and Tradition.
2. To encourage reception of the Sacraments by preparing students to understand and appreciate their importance and necessity in their life.
3. To foster growth in a faith community, by providing valuable experiences of shared prayer and worship.
4. To encourage a spirit of charity, by promoting positive Christian attitudes to one's responsibility toward God, others and self.
5. To encourage students to take responsibility for their learning.
6. To foster cooperation and communication among staff, parents, and students.
7. To continually review and update curriculum needs and materials.
8. To offer staff opportunities to improve teaching methods through in-service, professional magazines, and further education.
9. To evaluate each student's strengths and weaknesses through testing in order to help.

Catholic Doctrine

St. Vincent de Paul Parish and RE Program shall uphold the teachings and disciplines of the Roman Catholic Church. Compromising the tenants of the faith in word or deed will not be tolerated.

Parish Registration

To register for the RE Program a family must:

Be a registered, active member of St. Vincent de Paul Parish. If a family is registered in another Parish, a signed letter from that Pastor to the Pastor of St. Vincent de Paul Parish is required before enrollment into the RE Program can take place. Baptism, First Communion, and/or Confirmation may not be administered to a non-registered person without the consent of the Pastor of the parish of registry.

Families not registered in any parish and seeking to enroll children in the RE Program, must first become registered in the parish before enrollment into the RE Program can take place.

RE Registration

Registration will take place in late August. At the time of Registration, a parent should be prepared to:

- Provide a copy of Baptismal Certificate for new members entering the Program if they were baptized anywhere other than St. Vincent de Paul Parish. This should be presented at the time of registration. Likewise, if a student received First Communion or Confirmation at any parish other than St. Vincent de Paul, verification of date from that parish must also be presented at the time of registration.
- Sign the agreement as stated on the Registration form showing willingness to fully support the program in its efforts to assist you in teaching the faith to your child.

RE Registration Fee

A Registration Fee of \$85.00 per student is payable at the time or registration. A Sacramental Fee of \$30.00 is also required for students who will be preparing to receive a sacrament during that current school year (2nd and 8th grade years).

Emergency Information

A current address, telephone number and e-mail (when possible) for each RE family must be in the RE Office files at all times.

Catechetical Mission

The St. Vincent de Paul Parish RE Program seeks to address the six fundamental tasks of Catechesis. Therefore by 8th grade they will have:

1. A continuing **knowledge and understanding of the Faith** and the saving person of Jesus Christ through knowledge of Scripture and Tradition. They will seek to know and understand the Creed and Catholic Doctrine.
2. Prepared for, experienced, and participated in the sacraments of

Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) and Reconciliation; they should also be prepared for future participation in **Liturgical** functions of Mass and prayer services through their past experience.

3. Engaged in and be prepared for future engagement with the **moral teachings** of the Church through studying the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes and the Commandments as well as receiving formation for their own conscience.
4. **Learned** what it means **to pray**, to experience and nurture a relationship with Christ in prayer and worship. This will be accomplished through learned formal prayers and spontaneous prayer.
5. Experienced and be educated in forming **community life**. This task is twofold, the formation of proper attitudes for relationship and dialogue with fellow Catholics and with fellow Christians.
6. Charged with having a **missionary spirit** within them of evangelization to others in both their own family of faith as well as those of other faiths. They will be asked to witness to Jesus through word and deed in all aspects of their lives.

Another way to say this would be:

By the end of 8th grade, RE students:

- Will have learned the principle teachings of the Church as taught by Scripture and Tradition
- Will have a **basic** understanding of and be able to explain the life of Jesus and His part in God's plan for salvation
- Will have prepared for and received the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation
- Will have learned the elements of appropriate behavior in church-reverence in prayer, posture, genuflection, and silence
- Will have learned formal prayers and grown accustomed to praying spontaneously
- Will have participated in prayer services and liturgies
- Will have participated in social action projects through service hours required in preparation for Confirmation

Guideline for Sacrament Preparation

Sacramental preparation is an integral part of the religious education program. Second graders usually receive First Reconciliation in the winter and First Eucharist in the spring. Seventh graders prepare for Confirmation during the school year, and receive the sacrament in the fall of eighth grade. To qualify the student must be able to demonstrate by attitude, oral and/or written testing and completed written assignments that he/she is prepared to receive this sacrament. If a student does not meet the above stated requirements, consultation between parents, CRE and Pastor will be necessary.

If after consultation a student is deemed not ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at this time, the following options may be offered:

1. Return to 7th grade to complete a full year of study of the sacrament.
2. Remain in 8th grade, but, Confirmation would be received at the Easter Vigil (in the Spring), allowing more time to adequately prepare for the reception of this sacrament.
3. If it is determined that only a limited amount of preparation time/work is needed, a student will receive one-on-one help by a tutor. However, any work missed during the time the student is out of the classroom with the tutor may have to be made up at home.

Because of the seriousness of these sacraments, regular Mass and class attendance and parental involvement are essential.

The following procedures are followed in the sacramental program:

1. First Reconciliation-A child shall participate in the religious education program at least one full year prior to receiving the sacrament.
2. First Eucharist-A child shall participate in the RE Program at least one full year prior to receiving the sacrament. Both first and second grade class attendance is necessary.
3. Confirmation-A child shall participate in the religious education program at least one year prior to receiving the sacrament. Seventh grade class is almost exclusively

preparation for this sacrament; therefore, seventh and eighth grade class attendance is required.

4. If a child enters our program from elsewhere, he/she must provide written verification of sacraments from the parish received and a letter or transcript from the coordinator of the former religious education program.
5. If a child is in need of sacramental preparation and is not in the grade level that provides such instruction, parents are responsible for notifying the CRE, to discuss the matter.
6. These policies may be modified in the best interests of the students, at the discretion of the CRE, after consultation with the Pastor.
7. These policies are not particular to our parish program. They are consistent with policies adhered to by most RE Programs in the US.

Liturgical Celebrations

Special liturgical celebrations will be scheduled periodically during the year. All parents are invited to join in these activities. Non-Catholic parents are welcome and encouraged to attend these services.

Parents have an obligation, not only to insure that a child attends Mass, but also that he/she grows in understanding and participation in the Mass. The RE Program supplements this training, **but no amount of training in school can supplant the example of regular (weekly) family participation in the Mass.** Frequent confession and reception of Holy Communion should be encouraged both by the home and RE Program.

Drop Off/Pick Up

Due to the volume of traffic in the parking lot, students should be dropped off and picked up at the Northmoor door of the school. Parents should also pick up their children at this same door.

Drop Off/Pick Up of Primary Students

For your child's safety and protection, all 1st and 2nd grade RE students

must be brought to the classroom and picked up in the classroom by the parent. If your child is to be released to someone other than the parent with whom the child resides, a signed and dated note must be presented to the teacher at the beginning of class.

Absence/Tardiness

Regular and punctual attendance in RE Class is essential to each child's continuous learning. Education is long-range and sequential and is hampered by absence or tardiness. Students should be in the classroom no later than 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise discussed with CRE.

Extra Curricular Activities/RE

Programs such as athletics and scouting, etc...are considered extra curricula activities. These programs are considered a privilege in which to participate. **However, they should never be considered a priority over a RE commitment.** If a sporting event or practice or activity interferes or falls on the same night as RE and will knowingly conflict with, or cause tardiness beyond the first 15 minutes of class on more than 3 class nights, then other arrangements may have to be made-such as switching to another parish program offered on a different day or time. This will be determined through consultation between the parent and CRE and the CRE and Pastor.

Release During Class

Safety is a major concern to everyone involved with the child's welfare. Therefore, the following practices for release of the child are necessary:

1. If it is necessary for parents to take their child out of class for any reason once class begins or before it ends, the teacher must be given written notice in advance.
2. No child will be released from class alone. Parents or guardians must collect the child at the classroom.
3. If a child becomes ill or for a predetermined reason a child is to be dismissed early from class, the parent must come to the child's classroom to pick them up.
4. The student will be responsible for work missed due to absence or early dismissal.

Homework

Occasionally your child will have homework assignments to complete. It is important to cooperate with our child's teacher to be certain that homework is finished. Homework may be given at any level for a variety of reasons:

- To finish what was begun in class
- To reinforce what was learned in class
- To study independently a topic initiated in class
- To research a topic chosen in class

You can help your child when you:

- Check to see if your child has an assignment and if he/she understands how to do it
- Help him/her set a specific time for doing homework without interruptions...preferably within a day or two after class
- Let your child do his/her own work...ask what he/she is studying and what he/she has learned
- Share your own faith stories according to the appropriateness to the lesson

You hinder your child if you...

- Do his/her homework for them
- Disagree or criticize with his/her teacher in front of your child
- Nag or argue about homework
- Disregard RE homework assignments

Discipline

It is the intent of St. Vincent de Paul Parish RE Program that its Discipline Policy be based on the premise that **conduct disruptive to good learning will not be tolerated.** Students will learn to be responsible for their actions and to be respectful to the right and feeling of others by observing RE Program regulation.

Violations of Program regulations are divided into two (2) categories: *Classroom Violations*

Classroom violations are less serious infractions that will be handled usually by the teacher and/or CRE and occasionally by

a cooperative parent. The teacher will correct the situation, which may require a punitive action. The teacher will furnish classroom rules and consequences to students at the beginning of the school year. Examples of classroom rules, misconduct in halls, cheating, lying, chewing gum or snacking, and missing assignments. Consequences of classroom violations could be: "time out" in the classroom, phone calls to the parents, conference with parents, and referral to the CRE for disciplinary action. Disruption of class on a regular basis may result in Parent participation. Child's parent may be asked to sit in if the child is to be admitted back to class.

RE Program Violations

RE Program violations are serious rule violations or serious patterns of behavior that must be corrected for the benefit of the student and the benefit of St. Vincent de Paul Parish, RE Program, and School. Such offences may occur in the school building, or on school or parish property. Parents will be responsible for paying any repair or replacement of school or parish property made necessary due to actions of their child/children. These rules will be handled by the CRE's Office where a disciplinary file will be kept. Violations include, but are not limited to: damaging school property, disrespect, dress guideline violations, fighting, insubordination and gross misconduct, offensive language, stealing, subversion and truancy. Any illegal activity or illegal substances (including drugs, look-alike drugs, alcohol or tobacco), weapons, toy weapons and any gang-related dress, behavior or activity will be considered a major offense.

Any student found in violation may be suspended or expelled in accordance with the RE's In-school Suspension or Expulsion Policies upon consultation with the Pastor, or a Parent/Guardian may be asked to attend class with their student if deemed necessary.

Diocesan Policy regarding bullying, possession or use of

weapons/look alike weapons, policies and procedures relating to sexual abuse of minors by Clergy, Lay Employees or Volunteers are on file in the Office. You can find Diocesan policy on their website at www.cdop.org

In-School Suspension

At the discretion of the CRE, a student may be placed on the In-School suspension. The parents or guardian may be notified. In-School suspension will be spent in isolation from peers under the supervision of an adult. Class work will be required.

Expulsion

Conduct by a student that consistently disrupts the learning of others, involves constant belligerence to a teacher, and/or impairs the safety of self or others or recognition that the RE Program is not suitable for a student may result in dismissal.

Procedures are as follows:

1. Other means should first be used to correct the situation, including a parent-teacher conference, at which the CRE will preside.
2. A record will be kept of the child's behavior showing at least some instances when problems developed.
3. Probationary period may be awarded to allow for improvement.

The Pastor has the final decision regarding a student expulsion from the Program.

Promotion/Retention Policy

St. Vincent de Paul RE Program places students in grade levels for which their level of maturity and learning skills are appropriate. Retention and promotion are recommended on an individual basis with the goal to best meet the student's need. Retentions are made only after thoughtful consideration and after possible alternatives have been explored by teacher, parent, and CRE. Determination of a student being promoted or retained is a function of the teacher(s) and the CRE after consultation with the parents. The CRE assumes final responsibility for grade placement.

There are academic performance guidelines that each grade level should adhere to. But, because our goal of promotion/retention is for each student to be considered individually, a student could fail to meet the academic guidelines for promotion yet be retained if teacher(s) and CRE after consulting with parents decide that retention would not be in the best interest of the student. Conversely, a student could meet the guidelines for promotion but if the teacher(s) and CRE, after consulting with the parents, feel that promotion would not be in the best interest of the student, promotion could be waived.

In case of retention consideration, a parent/teacher conference will be scheduled after the end of the first semester to confirm and consult with the parent about the possibility of retention. Another conference will be scheduled when the final determination has been made.

Dress Guidelines

The purpose for the St. Vincent de Paul's dress guideline is to promote Christian modesty and respectability that is expected within a Catholic environment. Students attending the RE program should present themselves in a manner of dress that promotes Christian modesty. Anyone with questionable dress will be asked to wear something from the Office for the duration of RE.

Medication Procedures

No student will be allowed to self medicate. If medicine is required, a note to the CRE or teacher is required.

1. Written orders must be provided to the CRE giving the name of the medication, the dosage and the time it is to be taken.
2. A written request from the parent authorizing the administering of any prescribed medication must be submitted to the CRE prior to class.

Fire/Tornado Drills

Drill and precautionary measures that are followed in event of a disaster from fire, storm, tornado threats or civil defense alerts insure the safety of students. The faculty will make students aware of these procedures during the course of the school year.

Parent Volunteers

Parents are needed each year to assist the faculty and administration in their work. Areas where parents can be of help are: teacher aides, room mothers and fathers, and clerical helpers. Each adult working in this parish environment will have had to undergone “Safe Environment Training.”

Late Enrollment

To ensure that your child is adequately catechized and well-disposed to receive the sacraments, a student may NOT enter the program for a sacramental year with no previous catechesis. The grade level placement of a student entering the program after the first grade year will be at the discretion of the program coordinator and parish priests.

Lost and Found

If clothing or articles are left in your child's classroom, hall, or church, please notify the CRE immediately. Articles, if found, may be picked at the Religious Education Office.

