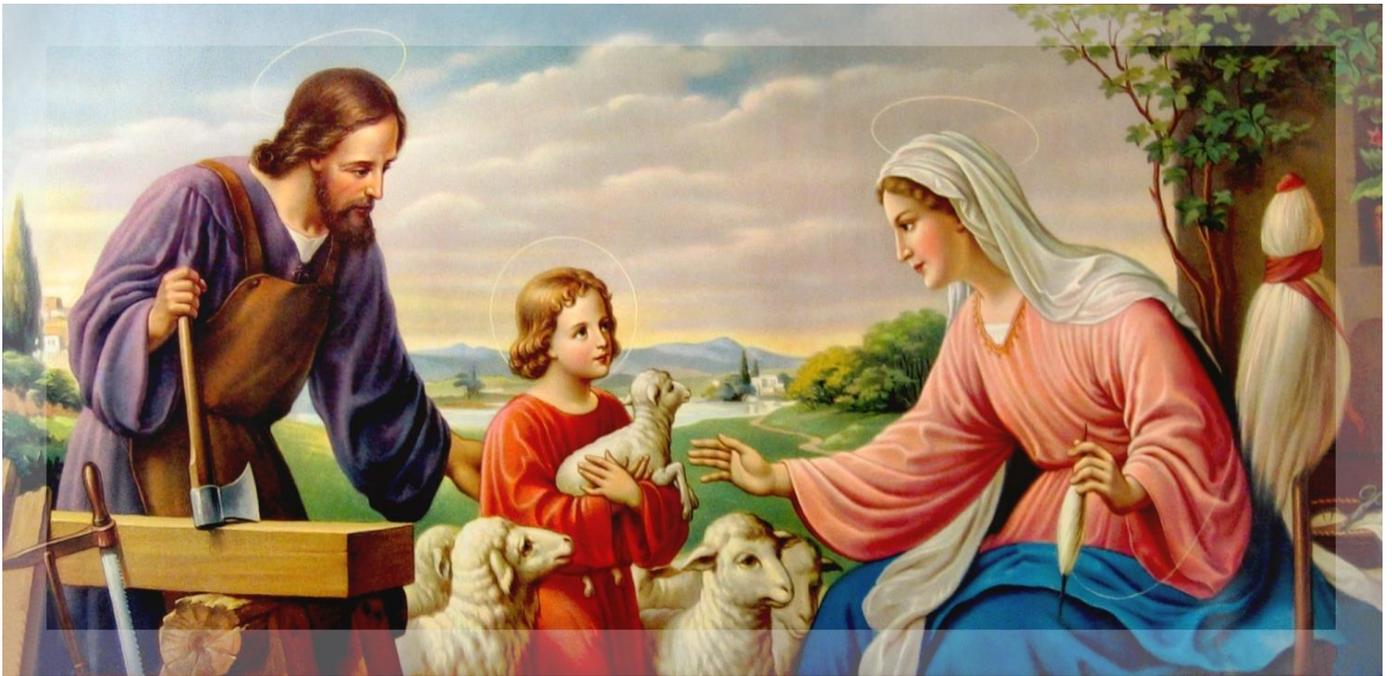


St. Veronica Catholic Church

Religious Education

Parent Handbook

2017-2018



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[ST VERONICA LETTERHEAD]

September 2017

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 academic year for the St. Veronica Religious Education program. St. Paul, the Apostle of Nations, reminds us, “Faith, then, comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ.” (Rom 10:17). His simple words remind us of the fundamental responsibility of the Church to hand on—by teaching—the doctrine and the practice of the Faith.

This year, the United States Council of Catholic Bishops has established “Living as Missionary Disciples” as its theme for the 2017-2018 Religious Education academic year. Today’s youth are bombarded by all kinds of information. Whether it comes from television, radio, internet, cellphones, or billboards, our youth take in more “messages” than we did when we were their age. In fact, scientists tell us that the average young person’s brain is programmed to receive information differently than adults of today; thus widening the “generation gap.” Parents, along with pastors, youth ministers, catechetical leaders, campus ministers, and any other person trying to engage youth find it more difficult to link youth with their faith. Is this impossible? Not at all, but we are called to meet our people where they are at, just as Jesus and the early disciples did, so that we can teach our young people to be better evangelizers to the world they live in.

Our patron saints for our Religious Education program for 2017-2018 will be Saints Francisco and Jacinta Marto, two of the young children to whom Our Lady appeared at Fatima one hundred years ago this year. The simple faith of these two humble children, who were blessed by a vision of Our Lady, is a wonderful model for our young people who live in a world of so many challenges to the Faith.

One of the best ways to show and to strengthen our Faith is to believe and to profess our belief in all we say and do. Parents, of course, should be outstanding examples of living the Christian life every minute of every day, in word, deed, and example to their children. This year, St. Veronica School and the Religious Education program will work with our children and their families to place special emphasis on one virtue every month. We encourage parents to work with their children on these virtues every month throughout the year. Indeed, as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us, parents are the “principal and first educators of their children” in matters of the faith. Our dedicated catechists and catechist aides are there to assist our parents in passing along this great gift of the Christian faith to their children. Please know that the entire Religious Education staff stands ready to help you with this most important of missions—passing on the Christian faith to our children, setting them on the road to salvation.

I am grateful once again this year for the leadership of Father Michael Isenberg, Deacon Paul Ochenkowski, and Mrs. Julie Chadowski in the vital ministries of education and evangelization.

Please know that you and your families are ever in my prayers,

In Christ,

Reverend Dennis Kleinmann
Pastor

(ST. VERONICA LETTERHEAD)

September 2017

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2017-2018 Religious Education academic year. Thank you for entrusting your children to us to complement your family faith formation. The Church teaches that parents are the primary educators of their children. We are here to support you in this mission. With the help of the Holy Spirit, catechists will pass on our Catholic faith to your children. Please try to learn your child's catechist's name and introduce yourself to the catechist and assistants working with your children.

The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason, the family is rightly called "The Domestic Church." God ordained the family as the place where life in Christ takes root in the human heart. Active participation in the sacramental life of the Church nurtures the spiritual life. Please try to ensure your child has opportunities for frequent participation in the Sacrament of Penance and attends weekly Mass, for "the Eucharist is the heart and summit of the Church's life" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church 1407*).

This handbook was written to help make clear the mission and policies of the St. Veronica Religious Education program. Please take time to familiarize yourself with it, paying particular attention to the Drop-off and Dismissal procedures and the important dates listed on the academic year calendar.

Feel free to contact us at the Religious Education Office ((703) 773-2004) with any concerns you might have. May God bless you and your families as you strive to imitate the Holy Family.

In Christ's Love,

Reverend Michael Isenberg
Director of Religious Education

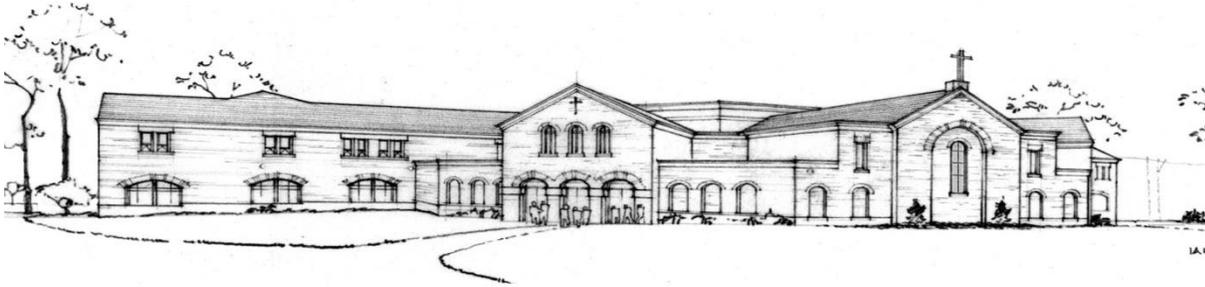
Deacon J. Paul Ochenkowski
Coordinator of Religious Education

Catholic Church

ST. VERONICA



“To know, to love, and to serve God”



Religious Education Mission Statement

St. Veronica Church, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, will strive to bring parents and children of the parish into a deep, personal communion with Christ and His Church, and to foster in them a missionary zeal for souls by:

- Proclaiming the Word of God and His loving plan of salvation as expressed in Holy Scripture and the Sacred Tradition of the Catholic Church;
- Acknowledging every person as a child of God, uniquely created by the Father in His image and likeness;
- Teaching the Person of Jesus Christ, the source and summit of all life, through whom we are granted our salvation.

The Parent/Catechist Partnership

“Parents are the principal and first educators of their children” (CCC 1653). The home is where a child should first experience the Catholic faith. The parish Religious Education program aims to work in partnership with parents, to assist them in living their vocation of their children. The Religious Education program should complement, not replace, the catechesis that children should receive in the home.

Role of Parents

The Religious Education program assists parents in their God-given role as educators of the Faith by:

- Providing the truth of the Roman Catholic Faith as handed down by Jesus Christ through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Magisterium, and the Church Fathers
- Providing weekly Religious Education classes for children.
- Providing the opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration
- Providing opportunities to receive the sacrament of Confession

It is of utmost importance that children are given the opportunity for regular weekly Sunday attendance at Holy Mass and frequent participation in the Sacrament of Confession. It is difficult for children to grasp what they are being taught about the Sacraments if they do not experience the Sacramental life first hand.

Role of Students

Students should be punctual and prepared for class. They should arrive no earlier than 10 minutes prior to the start of class time. Students should meet their teachers and class in the Church and be mindful that they are in a sacred space. Our Lord is reposed in the Tabernacle. Please remind your children to use the time before class to pray and reflect and to show reverence for the Real Presence of Our Lord.

- Students are reminded that there is no food, drink nor gum permitted in the school. Several of the St. Veronica school students have life-threatening allergies which may be triggered by even minute residues of allergens.
- Students are reminded that all property and possessions found in the classroom are to be left untouched. Students should never go through the materials inside the desks at which they sit for Religious Education classes.
- Please go over the dismissal procedures that apply to your children. (These may be found on page 12 of this booklet.)

Every student has the right and privilege to learn in an environment where others are well behaved. Similarly, every teacher and assistant has the right to teach in such an environment.

Curriculum

The Image of God Series (Ignatius Press) is used for Kindergarten, and the Faith and Life Series for the first through seventh grades (Ignatius Press). For a more information on the *Faith and Life* series go to www.ignatiuspress.com and click on Catechism Series.

For eighth grade students preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation, we are using an exciting new program. *Chosen*, prepared by Ignatius Press, consists of lively texts and a superb series of videos.

The Sacramental preparation of older children (RCIC and RCIT) is supplemented by the *St. Joseph Catechism* and other material.

Each grade level has a specific curriculum guide provided by the Diocese. The Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines for your child’s grade level can be obtained from the Diocesan website at

<http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Catechetical-Resources/Policies-Guidelines-and-Directories/>

then click on link labelled “Pre K and Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines.”

Academic Calendar

The school year calendar for the Religious Education program is available on the parish website: www.stveronica.net; click on the “evangelization” heading. The calendar parallels, but not exactly, the Fairfax Counts Public Schools calendar. Please check the calendar so you will know when class is not meeting as well as to check for the Sacramental Preparation meetings and special programs such as Penance, Youth Adoration, Stations of the Cross, and the May Crowning.

For your convenience, a copy of the calendar is included in this handbook. Please note, the dates for Confirmation (and Confirmation rehearsal) have not yet been set.

A Few Early and Important Dates To Remember

Classes begin:	September 18/19
Confession:	September 25/26
Formation in Christian Chastity:	October 16/17
Parent/Confirmation Meeting:	October 24, 7 PM, Parish Hall
All Saints Day:	November 1 (Mass times in bulletin)
Youth Adoration:	November 13/14
Thanksgiving Day:	November 23 (Mass time in bulletin)
Parent Meeting for First Penance and First Communion	November 28, 7 PM, Parish Hall
Advent Begins:	Sunday, December 3
Feast of the Immaculate Conception:	December 8 (Mass times in bulletin)
Confession:	December 11/12

Prayers to be Learned

Each class will begin and end with a prayer. The Diocesan Curriculum Guidelines assign basic prayers to be learned for each grade level. Most of the prayers are in the back of the *Faith and Life* textbook. A life of prayer begins at home. Please try to reinforce a life of prayer at home by praying the prayers found in the chart below.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Prayers to be Learned (cumulative)</u>
Kindergarten:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Genuflection<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Grace Before Meals· Hail Mary· Our Father· Sign of the Cross
Grade 1:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Glory Be
Grade 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Guardian Angel Prayer<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Act of Contrition· Acts of Faith, Hope, and Love (simple forms)· Morning Offering
Grade 3:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Apostles' Creed<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Rosary· All Mysteries of the Rosary
Grade 4:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Acts of Faith, Hope & Love
Grade 5:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Divine Praises<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Hail Holy Queen· Memorare
Grade 6:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Stations of the Cross
Grade 7:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Prayer to the Holy Spirit· The Angelus· The Prayer of St. Francis Assisi· The Regina Coeli
Grade 8:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Write personal petitions for liturgical use<ul style="list-style-type: none">· See Psalms as prayers--express our need

The complete text of all prayers may be found at this link:

<http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Catechetical-Resources/Policies-Guidelines-and-Directories/>. Click on the link labelled "Pre K and Elementary Religion Curriculum Guidelines," and proceed to page P-1, near the back of the PDF, where prayer texts begin.

Youth Adoration

An integral part of our Religious Education program is Youth Adoration, which occurs twice throughout the school year at the beginning of class time. Students are given the opportunity for worship and to express faith in the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Participation will include second through eighth grades. Proper manners in God's house should be stressed and reviewed for a short time during the class session prior to the Adoration. Parents are encouraged to attend.

The Sacrament of Confession

The opportunity for Confession will be offered three times during the school year: near the beginning of the new school year, during Advent and during Lent. All students grade three through eight participate. All students are expected to know the Act of Contrition by heart and the proper procedures for the sacrament. Third grade catechists will allow class time for review, because some students will not have received the sacrament since their First Penance.

May Crowning

The Religious Education Program celebrates May with a traditional May Crowning honoring Mary, the Mother of God. This Marian celebration is an important devotion; therefore, the last class of the academic session will end with this event. *Parents are welcome to attend!*

Report Cards

Catechists/Aides provide a standard written evaluation of a student's progress twice during the school year (January and May). Report cards will include the child's understanding of the material covered as reflected by test scores, the child's completion of homework assignments, prayers mastered, class participation, and behavior. We recognize that marks may not adequately reflect the degree to which a student is maturing in his/her Catholic life, but they do reflect how well they comprehend the material being presented.

Attendance/Absentee Policy

Attendance will be recorded each week at the beginning of class. We ask that you notify your child's teacher in advance, if possible, if your child will be absent, not the Religious Education Office. Regular attendance is very important. The total scheduled RE class time for the 2017-2018 school year is 32 hours and 30 minutes, so please make every effort to minimize absences and to get your child to class on time. Excessive absences could result in a child's not being prepared to receive the sacraments.

Cancellations/Snow Days

If Fairfax County Public Schools cancel school for the day, dismiss school early due to inclement weather, or if county afternoon and evening activities are cancelled, then Religious Education classes for that day are likewise cancelled. (Please note that if Monday RE classes are cancelled due to an emergency declared by Fairfax County, this does not automatically mean that the next day's, Tuesday's classes, are cancelled as well.) If the parish cancels classes, for whatever reason, we will attempt to send you an email as soon as possible. When in doubt contact the Religious Education Office at 703-773-2004 or the parish office at 703-773-2000. Please also check the Fairfax County website at www.fcps.edu, then click on the "Emergency" tab. Please note: FCPS teacher work days do not cancel RE classes.

Dress Code

Each class session begins in the Church where Our Lord is truly present in the Tabernacle. Please remind your child that in the Church they are in Jesus' presence and should dress to show respect. We ask that particular care for modest dress be observed at all times, but most especially on the days when Adoration and Confessions are scheduled. Students are expected to wear modest clothing to class. Short shorts, tops which do not cover the midriff area, pants hanging off of hips, mini-skirts, spaghetti straps, and other similarly immodest articles of clothing are prohibited. Graphic depictions or written references to drugs, alcohol, or weapons, as well as graphic or connotative profanity or sexual references may not appear on any clothing. Parents should set a good example of proper dress and of reverence for our Eucharistic Lord.

Classroom Discipline

If any disciplinary action is needed, it will be administered with Christian love.

In the event that a student's classroom behavior is disruptive, the catechist will:

- Not allow the disruptive situation to persist in the classroom
- Not embarrass the child in front of classmates
- Enforce assigned seating, separating misbehaving students if necessary
- Speak to the child and try to encourage the student to change their behavior
- If the student continues to be disruptive, send the student to the Director of Religious Education who will speak to the student.
- If this attempt is not successful, the parents will be contacted and asked to work with their child and the catechist to have this behavior corrected.
- If this does not work, the parent **MUST** accompany the student in the classroom until the student's behavior is acceptable for the classroom environment.

Drop-Off and Dismissal Policy

The following safety regulations have been formulated to ensure the safety of each student and will be strictly enforced:

- **Drop Off:** At the discretion of the parents, students in grades 3 through 8 may be dropped off in front of the church and allowed to walk in unaccompanied. Parents who have Kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students are asked to bring their child into Church and help their child find their catechist and classmates.
- **Pick Up:**
 - All parents of Kindergarten through third grade students are asked to come into the school and pick up their students in their assigned classroom.
 - Teachers of fourth- through eighth-grade students will escort their students to the school lobby to meet their parents. The catechist or aide should escort their students and then wait in school lobby until students have been picked up. The school lobby is on the north side, opening onto the large parking lot.

Families that will be sharing carpool duties are asked to inform their child's teacher ahead of time if someone other than the parent will pick up their children from class.

- For the safety of all the children, no child will be dismissed early from class, unless the parent comes in to pick up their child. See p. 13 for new procedures.

Security Initiatives

The Office of Risk Management for the Diocese of Arlington has asked parishes in the Diocese to implement a series of initiatives to improve security of our students enrolled in Religious Education. These are as follows:

1. Fire Drills: We are required to conduct two Fire Drills during the course of the school year for students enrolled in Religious Education. For the safety of our students, we will do both fire drills early in the school year, when it stays light later, and when the weather is most likely to be favorable.

2. Lock-Down Talk-Through: Tragic incidents like the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut have made us all aware of the sad and very real possibility of similar events happening elsewhere. To help ensure such an event never occurs here, we will, shortly after the start of the school year, talk through with our teachers and students what we would do in the event an armed intruder breached the security of St. Veronica School's classrooms during Religious Education hours. We will not be conducting a lock-down drill as such, but will ensure that teachers and students are made aware of what needs to be done if they are confronted with that situation.

3. Improved Security of Access to Classroom Areas: Doors leading from outside our school buildings into our classrooms have been kept locked and secure for many years. While RE classes are actually going on, access to the two sides of the parish complex that house Religious Education is only through the doors leading from the church itself into either the school lobby, or into the "grand staircase" lobby leading up to second floor classrooms on the Parish Office side. Both of those areas are kept secure by Hall Monitors. In an effort to improve on this security, we will implement the Office of Risk Management's request that parents and other visitors to classroom areas during RE class hours be required to present identification, to register in a Sign-In Log, and to receive a visitor sticker to identify themselves as properly registered visitors. This applies to parents who have to pick up their students early from Religious Education. When you do an early pick up, you will be asked to depart the building through the same lobby area through which you entered, and to sign your child out with the Hall Monitor on duty there.

These initiatives are not meant to be overly bureaucratic, but are our best efforts to keep your children safe and secure during their times of Religious Education.

Sacramental Preparation

A central aspect of the Religious Education program is preparing children to receive the sacraments. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Confirmation. This preparation involves both parents and students. Please take care to take note of and attend the various parent meetings. Please make certain your children involved in sacramental preparation submit required assignments when due.

There are meetings on the calendar for parents of students receiving First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Parental attendance is expected.

There are also rehearsals for First Holy Communion and Confirmation, which students are required to attend.

Formation in Christian Chastity

The Diocese of Arlington has implemented a program as part of their Child Protection Policy called "Formation in Christian Chastity" (FCC). Formation in Christian Chastity is intended to help children develop an awareness of the dignity of the human person and the integrity and holiness of the human body. We want to ensure that the years of innocence of the children are respected and that the parents are the primary educators of their children.

There are diocesan-prepared lesson plans for grades 1 through 8; all the lessons are very tame and avoid any discussion of human biology or anatomy. Some of the topics that will be covered are Love of God and neighbor, Chastity (purity), the key to holiness, vocations, love and responsibility, and the sacrament of marriage.

Parents are encouraged to review any of the material that will be taught in the classroom. All of the lesson plans that will be used in the FCC program may be found on the Diocese of Arlington website at:

http://arlingtondiocese.org/childprotection/form_christianchastity.php .

Formation in Christian Chastity lessons are voluntary, and parents may opt their children out of the FCC session. Opt-out forms will be made available in October. If you decide to opt your child out of FCC, you must turn in the Opt-Out form to your child's catechist *before* the October 17th/18th lesson. If you have opted your child out of the FCC training session, and have submitted the opt-out paperwork, simply do not bring your child to class on the day of the FCC session. We do not have the ability to provide child-care on that day for children who have been opted out of FCC and who may be dropped off at the Church.