



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ONLINE HOMESCHOOL HANDBOOK

2021 – 2022

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in
them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be
created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.*

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DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Nicole Filipowski, M.T.S.

703-280-1122 (office)

nfilipowski@stambroseva.org

Dear Parents,

Thank you for enrolling your children in online Religious Education classes through St. Ambrose Parish. As parents, you are the primary educators of your children. We are excited to support you in the great mission to which you have been called of educating your children to become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ!

Online Religious Education classes are designed to supplement the faith formation your children receive at home throughout the week, not replace it. Therefore, it is important that you continue to teach your children at home, primarily by living out the Catholic faith we profess. To ensure your children get the most out of their Religious Education it is important for you to do three things.

First, take your children to Mass every Sunday and Confession at least monthly. These sacraments are privileged encounters with Our Lord through which we experience his great love and mercy. The Eucharist strengthens us on our journey of faith and unites us more closely with Christ. Reconciliation restores our friendship with Christ which becomes damaged by sin.

Second, pray daily with your children and for your children. Communication is the foundation of any relationship. Prayer is how we communicate with God. By praying with your children you help them foster their relationship with Our Lord. Prayer is also the primary means of obtaining grace for ourselves and those whom we teach.

Third, continue your own faith formation. Faith formation is a lifelong process. It doesn't end after Confirmation or when we graduate from high school. When your children see you learning about the faith they will be excited to learn about it too. The more you learn the more you'll be able to share with your children.

Please be sure to watch your email throughout the year for important Religious Education news and updates. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns about your children's Religious Education at nfilipowski@stambroseva.org or 703-280-1122.

Sincerely,

Nicole Filipowski

Nicole Filipowski, M.T.S.
Director of Religious Education

MISSION

The St. Ambrose Religious Education program strives to support parents in handing on the Catholic and Apostolic Faith to their children by offering a systematic presentation of the Faith in union with and in fidelity to the Holy Roman Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ.

RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS

Religious education, or catechesis, is only part of any child's faith formation. In raising up children in the Faith, parents are primarily responsible for ensuring their children's regular participation in the sacramental life of the Church and for witnessing true Christian discipleship on a daily basis, especially in the home, the "domestic Church."

Regular participation in the sacramental life of the Church, and a lived experience of Christian discipleship within the home are essential for cultivating good soil in which the seeds of faith imparted during Religious Education may take root and grow. Without good soil in which to take root, these seeds of faith will become scorched and wither away (see Matthew 13:1-9).

Saint Pope John Paul II taught that, "Family catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis. Furthermore, in places where anti-religious legislation endeavors even to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, 'the church of the home' remains the one place where children and young people can receive an authentic catechesis. Thus there cannot be too great an effort on the part of Christian parents to prepare for this ministry of being their own children's catechists and to carry it out with tireless zeal" (*Catechesi tradendae*, 68).

CURRICULUM

Grades 1 - 8

Faith & Life, Ignatius Press (online)

St. Ambrose Religious Education offers a systematic presentation of the truths of the Catholic faith for all grades. All textbooks have been found to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

ASSESSMENTS & GRADING

The Religious Education program at St. Ambrose adheres to the Standards of Learning set forth by the Diocese of Arlington which determine successful grade-completion and a student's ability to advance through the program. These standards are in place to ensure all students throughout the diocese receive a full, systematic presentation of the truths of the Catholic Faith from kindergarten through grade 12.

In order to assess each student's progress, students will take a quiz at the end of each lesson, as well as a test at the end of each unit. Progress reports will be available to parents, or legal guardians, online throughout the year.

Students must receive an overall grade of 70% or higher in order to advance to the next grade level.

PRAYERS TO MEMORIZE

Students are expected to master the prayers at their grade level, in addition to knowing the prayers from previous years. This can only be done through repetition. Praying together regularly at home will help students learn these prayers.

The prayers for each grade level are as follows:

K	The Sign of the Cross, Glory Be, and Guardian Angel Prayer
1 st	The Our Father, Hail Mary and Grace Before Meals
2 nd	The Act of Contrition
3 rd	The St. Michael Prayer
4 th	The Act of Faith, Act of Hope, and Act of Charity
5 th	The Apostles' Creed, Fatima Prayer, and Hail Holy Queen
6 th	The Divine Mercy Chaplet
7 th	The Angelus and Memorare
8 th	The Come Holy Spirit Prayer

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

COMMUNICATION

The Religious Education Office communicates with parents primarily through email. Please be sure to check your email regularly for important updates. Parents, or legal guardians, that do not have regular access to email should let the Religious Education Office know so that alternate arrangements can be made.

In the event that a student emails their catechist, or the Director of Religious Education, directly, their parent, or legal guardian, must be copied on the email. This ensures their safety.

REGISTRATION

All students enrolled in Religious Education at St. Ambrose Catholic Church must be registered members of the parish, or provide a letter of permission from their pastor granting permission for them to be enrolled in Religious Education at St. Ambrose. Registration of non-parishioners is subject to approval by the Director of Religious Education and/or Pastor.

Parents, or legal guardians, must complete and submit a new registration form at the beginning of each academic year. When a student is enrolled in Religious Education at St. Ambrose for the first time, a copy of their Baptismal Certificate must be provided to be kept in their records. This copy will suffice as proof of Baptism for the reception of First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. Students who transfer from another parish religious education program must provide record of their last grade completed, attendance, grades (if applicable), and any Sacraments received.

If a student transfers to another parish religious education program, a copy of their record will be provided upon request, including attendance, grades and any Sacraments received.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

FIRST PENANCE & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Preparation for First Penance and First Holy Communion takes approximately two years and typically begins in first grade. Students who begin their religious instruction in their second grade year will be enrolled in the Grade 1 class. Parents are required to attend a parent meeting during their child's second year of preparation.

Students preparing for First Penance and First Holy Communion must maintain an overall grade of 70% or higher. Students whose Grade 2 mid-term grade falls below

this threshold must meet with the Director of Religious Education and/or Pastor, along with their parents, to determine their preparedness to receive the Sacraments.

Important Dates for First Penance & First Holy Communion 2021-2022

- Parent Meeting – Thursday, January 13 at 7:00 pm
- First Penance – Wednesday, February 23 at 7:00 pm
- First Communion Retreat – Saturday, April 30 from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm
- First Communion Rehearsal – Thursday, May 12 at 7:00 pm
- First Communion Mass – Saturday, May 14 at 11:00 am

For students in third grade and above who have not yet received these Sacraments, parents should contact the Director of Religious Education about the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC).

CONFIRMATION

Preparation for Confirmation takes approximately two years and typically begins in seventh grade. Students who have missed a year or more of classes since their First Holy Communion must enroll at the grade level that corresponds with their knowledge of faith per the Standards of Learning (*See Assessments & Grading*). Parents are required to attend a parent meeting at the beginning of their child's first year of preparation.

Students preparing for Confirmation must maintain an overall grade of 70% or higher. Students whose Grade 7 final grade falls below this threshold must meet with the Director of Religious Education and/or Pastor, along with their parents, to determine their preparedness to receive the Sacrament.

In addition to the regular homework, quizzes and tests, students preparing for Confirmation are required to complete the following:

- 20 Service Hours and Essay
- Saint Report
- Letter to the Pastor Requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Confirmation Interview

Details will be provided at the parent meeting.

Important Dates for Confirmation 2021

- Interviews – October 12 to 14 from 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm
- Confirmation Retreat – Saturday, October 23 from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm
- Confirmation Rehearsal – Wednesday, November 3 at 7:00 pm
- Confirmation Mass – Thursday, November 4 at 7:00 pm

Important Dates for Confirmation 2022

- Parent Meeting – Thursday, September 23 at 7:00 pm
- Interviews, Retreat, Rehearsal and Mass are TBD.

For students in ninth grade and above who have not yet received Confirmation, parents should contact the Director of Religious Education about the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC).

TUITION & FEES FOR 2021 - 2022

Tuition Rates

\$75 per child (online option only)

\$205 for three or more children (online option only)

Out of Parish Fee

Non-St. Ambrose Parishioners: \$50

No child will ever be prevented from enrolling in Religious Education at St. Ambrose because of an inability to pay. Parents facing financial hardship should contact the Director of Religious Education.

If you must withdraw your children from the program before the first day of class, a refund will be issued upon request minus a \$30 administrative fee. No refunds will be issued once classes have begun.