

Rosary Cathedral Parish

2024-2025

Children's Religious Education

&

Sacrament Preparation Handbook

Classes begin Sunday, September 15, 2024



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Rosary Cathedral Parish

Our Mission: **To be the Body of Christ**

The center of our parish life is the Mass and the opportunity to receive the Eucharist to become more perfectly the Body of Christ. St. Paul tells us that we are the Body of Christ as the Church and that in our many talents and abilities we constitute the different parts of that body. As a rich community of faith, we continue Christ's ministry by representing him to the world in sharing the Gospel and serving others.

Our Vision: **To become a vibrant catholic parish forming missionary disciples**

A vibrant catholic parish is a parish that makes Christ's presence obvious to others by living the whole Gospel. It is a parish where people are challenged to love better and learn what it means to be a Christian. Missionary Discipleship is closely following Jesus and trying to conform your entire life according to Christ's teachings. This discipleship includes sharing your faith with others.

Our Strategies:

Discipleship - We recognize that there is more to our faith than just showing up. Discipleship emphasizes that the Christian walk is a lifelong journey of following Christ by continuous learning, growth in virtue, and reaching out to others.

Worship – Worshiping our Lord is the center of our parish life. Through the Sacraments and especially the Eucharist we are nourished by God's grace and sent out to help others.

Community – We strive to form a community that is in the Image and Likeness of God. Community done well both forms its members in Christian love and is an attractive example of the Gospel lived.

Compassion – Compassion is more than just a handout. We are called to recognize the dignity of every person, and to do our best to provide for their needs physically and spiritually.

Parents are the Primary Catechists

The Church teaches that parents are the primary Catechists, or faith teachers of their children. Everything we offer at Rosary Cathedral Parish is designed to be a supplement to this primary formation in the faith that happens at home. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, a summary of the Church's doctrines and beliefs, states:

“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery—the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the ‘material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.’ Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2223*)

“Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church 2226*)

To Summarize

- “Parents have the first responsibility for educating their children
- The home should offer an “education in the virtues”
- “Parents have a grave responsibility” to be good examples
- Start as young as possible
- Family catechesis comes before and is more important than Parish Religious Education

Best Practices (Highly Recommended Ideas)

- Attend Mass Every Week and on Holy Days (attend week day Mass to commemorate special dates, birthdays, baptism dates, etc.)
- Pray with your children every day: teach them the prayers you know (pray from the heart out loud so your child can hear how you express yourself to God)
- We are never done discovering God. Parents should continue to learn about the faith themselves (consider ALPHA, Bible Studies, or the FORMED app parish# 8XNPZ)
- When your children have screen time, direct them to faith-based programs (Go to FORMED.org or app and use the code 8XNPZ for your free account)
- Discuss the faith at home (Read and discuss the upcoming Sunday readings as a family)

Religious Education Policies

Children's religious education is the parish faith formation program for children from preschool ages to high school, or the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The following are the policies and expectations of the program (the signed expectations form at the end of this handbook is required for participation):

Registration: Parents/Guardians need to submit a registration form for each child to Karen Wozniak. Forms can be found in the cathedral book rack, or on our website. Additionally, each family needs to sign off on the Handbook Acknowledgment Page, found on page 11.

Drop Off/Pick Up: Classes run Sunday Mornings from 8:45 am to 9:45 am. Please drop off your children from 8:30 – 8:45 am. Classrooms are not open prior to 8:30 am. *Mass at Rosary Cathedral is at 10:00 am.* We hope that the class time makes it convenient for you to attend Mass as a family. Since our catechists will also be attending Mass, children not picked up by 10:00 am will accompany a catechist and can be picked up at Mass. No children will be allowed to stay in the parish office after 10:00 am.

Attendance: Please inform your catechist if your children will miss a week of class at least a week ahead of time so class materials can be sent home. If your child is preparing for a sacrament (Baptism, First Communion, or Confirmation) missing two class sessions in a semester without making up the work will lead to their reception of the sacrament being delayed.

Dress: Please bring your children ready to attend Mass. If you are attending Mass at another time during the weekend, ensure that your children are dressed appropriately for the educational environment.

Cost: The cost of religious education is subsidized by the generous offertory contributions of Rosary Cathedral Parishioners. Please consider registering as a parishioner and giving regularly to the parish. If you are a member of another parish, please consider a donation to help offset the cost of the program. The first copy of a text book is provided for free. There is a \$20 fee for the replacement of a book.

Behavior: We expect everyone involved in our religious education program to act in a respectful and appropriate manner that reflects the teachings of the Catholic Church, including students, parents, catechists, and parish staff. If students become disruptive during class time, the catechist, parish staff, and parents will discuss a plan of expectations for the child.

If you believe any adults involved in the program have violated this policy, please report them to the Office Manager or Pastor/Rector by calling the parish at 419-244-9575.

Safe Environment: The safety of your children is our highest priority. All staff and adult volunteers involved in religious education are required to complete a three-part safe environment program that includes Safe Environment Training, Background Checks, and an agreement to the Diocesan Boundaries and Standards of Behavior Policy. For more information on the program or to report any suspected abuse go to <https://toledodiocese.org/page/protecting-youth-victim-assistance>.

Children will have two class periods which include lessons on safe environment. Lessons are adapted to be age appropriate and cover themes such as safely using the Internet, how to say “no” to an adult who is acting inappropriately, how to report, safe and unsafe adults, and boundaries. You may choose to opt your children out of these lessons. Please call the parish office if you have questions or concerns.

Weather: In the case of a Level 2 or 3 snow emergency in Lucas County as designated by the county Sheriff, class will automatically be canceled. Other situations will be considered on a case by case basis. Cancellations will be announced on the cathedral Facebook page, and by email/text message to the contact information provided on your registration form.

Sacrament Preparation

Children who are preparing for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation) are required to receive at least a school year or catechesis prior to the reception of the sacrament. This catechesis can take place in three contexts: Parish Religious Education, a Catholic School, or Homeschooling. When registering for Sacrament Preparation (see form at end of handbook), please specify which method of catechesis you will be employing (note that children that are homeschooled or attend a catholic school are welcome to additionally attend religious education classes but are not required to). Parents who choose to homeschool should specify the curriculum being used on their registration form (p.12)

Notes about Baptism: Children younger than the “age of reason” (generally Kindergarten and younger, although each child should be discerned individually) can be Baptized as an “infant” based on their parent’s profession of faith. Children who have reached the age of reason will become a part of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults adapted for children. These children will be required to attend a year of class with their same age peers. At the end of this first year they will become Catechumens in a Rite of Acceptance. The following school year, they will attend special RCIA sessions that will prepare them to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil the following year. Applicable additional requirement as follows are also required.

In addition to the year of Catechesis the following are required:

1. Attendance at the Parish Sacrament Preparation Retreat or equivalent retreat.
2. A parent will attend a parent preparation session.
3. First Communion/Confirmation – Sacramental Confession (preparation for this sacrament is done during the first semester of religious education)
4. Baptism/Confirmation - A Godparent/Sponsor application completed and turned in
5. Confirmation Only – selection of a Confirmation Name, performance of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, and a conference/interview with the Rector or his delegate.
6. Mass attendance

Policy Statement on Gender-Related Matters

The Catholic Church has always believed that her first mission given her by Christ Jesus is the salvation of souls. The Church must be true to her own identity and mission. Thus, the teachings of the Catholic Church must permeate all aspects of her activities. As a result, the Catholic community has a responsibility to be a witness to truth, charity, and justice based on the Gospel; and must always strive to be respectful of persons and understanding of the struggles present within and among the people of God. It would be inconsistent with the Church's mission to teach, promote, or encourage anything that is contrary to the teachings she has received from God and which the Magisterium has clearly and consistently articulated. For this reason, the Church cannot, and may not, sponsor, endorse, facilitate, or host such organizations, events or activities that would promote such views, in any form or format whatsoever.

With specific regard to the human person, the Catholic Church has always and everywhere affirmed her belief that each and every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. As such, every person deserves respect, dignity, and freedom from discrimination. By remaining true to what Christ has taught concerning the human person, the Church encourages individuals to accept their own bodies and gender as they were created¹, and seeks to help all people to recognize that the current attempts in modern culture to redefine gender and social institutions, as well as alter the nature and purpose of human beings, are misguided and not in accord with the truth. Therefore, it would be morally unacceptable for the Catholic Church, including the Diocese of Toledo, its parishes, schools, or ecclesiastical organizations to provide accommodations based on anything which in itself is contradictory or antithetical to the teachings of Christ and his Church, including notions of gender and sexuality that are contrary to Catholic teachings. For a fuller catechetical treatment of this topic, see Catechesis Regarding Human Dignity and Gender-Related Matters in the Appendix.

In Catholic parishes, schools and ecclesiastical organizations of the Diocese of Toledo, all activities and ministries are to be rooted in, and consistent with, the principles of Catholic doctrine. Therefore, in every parish, school and institution, all paid employees and unpaid volunteers will:

1. Treat all persons with sensitivity, respect, and compassion.
2. On a case-by-case basis, consider in a compassionate way any specific request sensitive to the physical and psychological needs of a person. The basis of the consideration will be on the following questions:
 - i. What is the specific request of the adult, student and/or parent(s)/guardian?
 - ii. Is the request in keeping with the teaching of the Catholic Church?
 - iii. Is the parish, school or ecclesiastical organization reasonably able to provide for the request?

3. Require that names and pronouns be in accordance with the person's biological sex.
4. Maintain names in records according to the person's biological sex.
5. Confirm that uniforms and gender specific dress, bathrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sponsored activities will all be according to biological sex.
6. Require that participation on athletic teams and extra-curricular activities be according to biological sex.
7. Consult the Office of Marriage and Family Life with extenuating circumstances.

¹ Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 56.

Catechesis Regarding Human Dignity and Gender-Related Matters

The Catholic Church has always and everywhere affirmed her belief that each and every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. As such, every person deserves respect, dignity, and freedom from discrimination. Indeed, there is an inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbor of all people, no matter who they are¹. Further, the Church is obligated to hand on to every generation all that she has received from Jesus Christ, her divine founder, especially as it relates to our understanding of the human person in these present times.

The witness of Sacred Scripture is clear: God created human beings male and female (Genesis 1:27). From the dawn of creation as depicted in the Book of Genesis to the closing pages of the Apocalypse, Scripture presents the human race as consisting of only two (2) sexes. Both sexes, male and female, are created in the image of God and are equal in dignity and destiny (Genesis 2:21-24). God created Adam and Eve out of love and for love. One's gender is therefore determined by one's biological sex.

The entirety of divinely inspired Scripture affirms the male and female forms of human nature *as reality*. They are not mere cultural phenomena or subjective constructs. Although wounded by the entrance of sin into human experience and its far-reaching effects on our bodily nature, man and woman continue to image God in both their uniqueness and complementarity. Scripture is clear on the necessity of respecting God's order and commands for human beings to experience the fullness of life he intends.

As articulated by Pope Francis, the clear and constant moral teachings of the Catholic Church have always envisioned a connection between our highest human happiness and our willingness to embrace the biological sex given us at birth². Our bodies teach us profound truths about ourselves and our purpose in life. Our bodies signify that we are called to and gifted for relationships that are complementary in nature, open to new life, and destined for eternal happiness and joy. Our bodies are God-given means of deepening our human generosity and communion with both God and each other.

Pope Saint John Paul II affirmed in his teaching known as the *Theology of the Body* that in our given biological complementarity, *as distinctly male and female*, God clearly intended us to live in loving communion with him and with each other. Through mutual self-giving and interdependence, he invites us to share in his own act of creation, as well as his own eternal happiness and joy. Therefore, our God-given maleness and femaleness clearly make visible our calling to love and co-create with God in bringing new life into the world. This is what Pope Saint John Paul II called the “sacramentality of the body.” Our bodies are “icons” that reveal the deepest essence of who we are in the moral, spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions of life.

Catholic teachings envision biological sex as neither a politically defined nor socially constructed reality. It is an objective reality, a cornerstone of our createdness, and an invitation to enter joyfully and generously into what we believe to be the central mystery of the Christian faith, namely, that God is himself an eternal exchange of love emanating from the love shared between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit³.

The Catholic Church recognizes that there is much confusion regarding human sexuality and gender in today’s society. Knowing that this confusion touches the lives of many people very personally, the Catholic Church is committed to walking with each individual on the path towards a more integral understanding of their human dignity and their unique vocation in the Creator’s plan for salvation history.

¹ *Gaudium et Spes* 27.

² Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* 285.

³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 221.

Handbook Acknowledgement Page

I have received a copy of the Rosary Cathedral Religious Education & Sacrament Preparation Handbook. I acknowledge that I have read and reviewed the Handbook. I understand the policies and procedures of the Handbook, and I agree to adhere to these policies and regulations. I further understand that Rosary Cathedral has the right to change, modify, and/or revise any of the policies set forth in this Handbook at any time.

Print Full Legal Name

Signature

Date