



Parent / Student Religious Education Handbook 2026-2027

RADIATE CHRIST



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OUR MISSION

Catechesis is oriented toward forming persons who get to know Jesus Christ and his Gospel of liberating salvation ever better; who live a profound encounter with him and who choose his own way of life and his very sentiments, striving to realize in the historical situations in which they live, the mission of Christ, which is the proclamation of the kingdom of God. (*Directory for Catechesis*, # 75, Vatican, 2020)

The tasks of Religious Education are:

- to form children in the knowledge of our faith
- to prepare children for the Sacraments and initiation into the Mystery
- to foster a life in prayer
- to form children into a life in Christ and become missionary disciples

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

St. Mary's Religious Education program follows all Archdiocese of Cincinnati mandates and R.C. § 2151.421 regarding reporting suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff are considered mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse.

ARCHDIOCESAN DECREE ON CHILD PROTECTION

The Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection of 1993 and current SafeParish, applies to all parishes, schools, offices, agencies and other institutions that operate under the administrative authority of the Archbishop. Child abuse, whether mental, physical, or sexual, and whether inflicted by clerics or laypersons, professionals or volunteers, cannot be tolerated in the Church. The purpose of the Decree is two-fold: to prevent the abuse of children and adolescents, and to provide a system for handling incidents of abuse if they occur. All St. Mary's staff and volunteers must complete two requirements BEFORE they can work or volunteer. These requirements are: 1. Attend a SafeParish interactive training session. You will also be required to participate in an interactive online bulletin each quarter as a continuing education element to stay current with the SafeParish requirements. 2. Have a background check done by fingerprinting. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Safe Environment Coordinator for St. Mary's Parish, Maegan Miller, at 937-548-1616 extension 1004.

REGISTRATION

The student registration forms must be completed and on file for a child to attend the Parish Religious Education Program. Registration can be submitted through the parish website <https://www.nwv.church/st-mary-re-page>, be picked up in the parish office, or if requested, by mail. Tuition is necessary and payment is expected. Fees are:

\$75 for 1 child
\$140 for 2 children
\$200 for 3 children
\$250 total for 4 or more children

Cash or check is accepted and can be turned into the parish office or to the Religion Coordinator. You can also pay online through the online donation using the one time pay.

**If you find these fees a hardship, PLEASE reach out to Julia or Maegan to apply for a scholarship to have your child(ren) attend, for free or reduced cost. We do not want these fees to prevent your children from attending Religious Education.*

COMMUNICATION

To help keep you informed about Religious Education activities or reminders, we use a program called Flocknote. Flocknote allows you to receive messages via texting. This is a free service but standard messaging data rates may apply. Flocknote will keep your phone number private, while making it easier to receive reminders for parent meetings or weather-related cancellations for Religious Education classes and other events. It is important that you provide an email and a cell phone number so that we can contact you when necessary.

Other communication platform options are:

- the parish website: <https://www.nwv.church/st-mary-re-page>

CURRICULUM

- Pre-K - Kindergarten will use *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*
- Grades 1st – 6th will use the *Word of Life from the Augustine Institute and Ignatius Press*
- 7th – 8th grade will use *Word of Life from the Augustine Institute and Ignatius Press and Confirmation Curriculum*
- High School/ Youth Group (Confirmed 10th graders through 12th) will be using *Foundations for Discipleship by Curtis Martin and Edward Sri*
- **8th/9th grade- Confirmation Preparation all students in these classes must maintain a 75% class attendance to remain on track to make Confirmation their 10th grade year.**

2nd GRADE

- First reconciliation will be December 16th, 2026. It is optional but encouraged for parents to attend.
- 1st Communion will be April 3rd, 2027 at 11 am at St. Mary's Church.
***PLEASE NOTE:** This year is a special Mass for 1st Communion and does **NOT** fulfill the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass.
- The student/parent retreat for 1st Communion will be October 4, 2026 from 1 – 4 pm at Versailles High School (Dragon Slayer's) this retreat is **MANDATORY**. One parent is required to accompany their child but both parents are highly encouraged to attend.
- Practice for 1st communion students will be the Wednesday night before 1st communion during regularly scheduled class.

10th GRADE

- The parent/student **MANDATORY** retreat is September 27, 2026 at St. Remy Hall in Russia, starting at 1 pm. It is required that at least one parent attend with their child.

- Practice for Confirmation students will be the Wednesday night before Confirmation on October 14th at St. Denis and it is important at least one parent or sponsor be present with their child, time TBD.
- Confirmation will be October 18, 2026 at the 11am Mass at St. Denis in Versailles.
- For a student to receive their Sacrament of Confirmation they must complete 25 service hours, all required paperwork given to them at the beginning of 9th grade year AND have a 75% or better attendance rate for class.

HOMESCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Families who wish to provide their child's faith formation at home may choose the Homeschool Religious Education option. Homeschool instruction is offered under the guidance of the Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) and includes **monthly check-in meetings** to review the student's progress, answer questions, and provide ongoing support throughout the year.

Upon completion of registration and payment of the program fee, students in **Grades 1–8** will receive the appropriate religion workbook and instructional materials for home study. Families are expected to complete the assigned lessons and participate in the scheduled monthly meetings to ensure students are progressing through the curriculum and receiving a thorough Catholic faith formation.

Students preparing to receive the **Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, or Confirmation** must also complete all parish sacramental preparation requirements. These may include parent meetings, retreats, service opportunities (where applicable), interviews, rehearsals, and any other activities established by the parish. Participation in these requirements is essential to ensure that students are fully prepared to receive the sacraments.

ARK ASSESSMENT

As per the requirement of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, we will be switching to ARK testing this year. We are currently in the process of switching so details will be forthcoming.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

It is good practice for parents and children to take advantage of regularly scheduled Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please see the bulletin or website for the weekly scheduled times. We will have 2 scheduled opportunities for Day of Grace (all day confession available, 8am to 8pm) at St. Mary's, that will be during Advent (December 16th, 2026) and Lent (February 24th, 2027).

CANCELLATIONS AND INCLEMENT WEATHER

Please check Flocknote texts to find out if Religious Education classes are cancelled. All notifications regarding Religious Education cancellations will be sent by Flocknote. If Greenville City schools are cancelled, classes will not take place. If there is a 2 hour delay we will still have class. If there is inclement weather after school, a Flocknote will be sent out. Please make sure you have signed up for these text alerts, as they will be the fastest and easiest way to be

updated. You can also sign up for Flocknote on the parish website at <https://www.nwv.church/st-mary-parish>

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is taken at all Religious Education classes/gatherings.

- All students are expected to attend each scheduled class
- All students are expected to attend all sessions involving Sacramental preparation
 - **Special Note: Sacrament years (2nd, 8th, and 9/10th grades) are particularly important, and students must attend 75% of classes, if they do not and no plan is made with the CRE or Catechist, the student may be ineligible to receive their Sacrament.**
- All students are required to attend mandatory events
- If your child will be absent from class, please notify the CRE or your child's teacher before the start of Religious Education class via Flocknote or email.
- A Permission, Release, and Authorization to Seek Medical Treatment Form must be completed and kept on file to attend any off-site events

*Records of attendance for past years are kept at the Religious Education Office in the Parish Office.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

In the event that your child has a medical concern, please notify the CRE or your child's teacher so that we can follow any special instructions. A Permission, Release, and Authorization to Seek Medical Treatment Form must be completed and kept on file as noted under "Registration" above.

DISCIPLINE

Our children need to be models of good, Catholic behavior. They are expected to be respectful of each other, including teachers, guest speakers, the CRE and any other church employee. Children are to respect the use of the schools furniture and daily school kids items. Examples of unacceptable behavior include bullying, name-calling, swearing, or harassment. Unacceptable behavior interferes with learning and teaching. Each case will be handled individually and these steps will be implemented as necessary:

- The catechist will attempt to deal with the student(s) in the classroom
- If behavior continues, the catechist will inform and work with the CRE
- If behavior continues, the CRE will notify the parents.
- If behavior does not end, the parents will be notified by the CRE of the child's possible suspension, dismissal and/or expulsion. Parents will then be expected to home school religious education
- When the child resolves to no longer act in a disruptive manner, re-admittance will be considered

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students cannot have electronic devices out in class. Students may be required to place their electronic devices in a designated area during class. Violation of this policy while the student is under the supervision of their Religious Education teacher may result in disciplinary action and/or confiscation of the electronic device. In which case it will be the student's responsibility to have the parents contact the CRE and make arrangements to pick up the electronic device.

In the event you need to contact your child during Religious Education, please contact the CRE. If the child has an immediate need or emergency to contact you, the CRE (or the teacher) will contact you.

All teachers, youth ministers, and coordinators will have their cell phones with them and turned on during Religious Education classes. These are used for communication purposes when needed as part of our safety policy.

ARRIVING & PARKING FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (DROPPING/PICKING UP STUDENTS)

ST. MARY'S & LORETTO HOUSE

1. Students should not arrive at St. Mary's before 5:45 p.m. If a student needs to arrive before then, arrangements must be made with the CRE, when possible, 24 hours in advance.
2. Parents and students should enter the EAST door entrance for the school and the SOUTH entrance at the Loretto House. You may use the school parking lot or the school ally for drop off.
3. **PLEASE** have your children there at 5:45/6:00 so the catechists have plenty of time to take attendance and get to Adoration/Benediction and back with enough time to finish their lesson.

ARRIVAL, CLASS SCHEDULE & DISMISSAL

Classes begin promptly at **6:00 p.m.** To ensure a timely start, all students are expected to arrive by **5:45 p.m.** This allows adequate time for attendance before the class proceeds together to the church for **Adoration and Benediction**. Following that, students will return to the school for classroom instruction, which will take place from **6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

At the conclusion of class, students will be dismissed through the **side doors of the school nearest the playground**. For student safety, parents or guardians are asked to wait either **inside the school hallway outside their child's classroom** or **outside near the dismissal doors in the parking lot** until students are released. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us provide an orderly and safe arrival and dismissal process for all families.

RIGHT TO AMEND THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is not a binding contract on St. Mary's Religious Education. Rather, it is an unilateral set of policies which students and families are expected to, and must, follow. The Coordinator of Religious Education, or his/her appointee, with the support of the pastor, retains the right to amend this handbook at any time. Parents, guardians, and students will be given notification if changes are made.