ST AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

Religious Education Handbook

School Year 2023-2024





ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. AGNES PARISH

VERY REV. WILLIAM P. SAUNDERS Pastor

REV. ANDREW HAISSIG Parochial Vicar

REV. ANTHONY PINIZZOTTO Priest in Residence

REV. STEVEN OETJEN Priest in Residence

LISA OROSA Director of Faith Formation dff@saintagnes.org

MEAGAN MONTANARI

Asst. Director of Faith Formation sacraments@saintagnes.org

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MISSION STATEMENT

Called by our Lord Jesus Christ, and strengthened by His Word and Sacraments, as faithful Catholics, we strive to be faithful missionary disciples in Jesus Christ, sharing His love with one another and all in need.

CORE VALUES

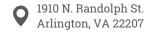
Communion: Uniting ourselves with Jesus and other baptized Christians in the Church, which has its source and summit in the Eucharist.

Holiness: Embracing the "light, love and limitless possibility" communicated by the Holy Spirit and consecrating ourselves to doing God's will by uniting ourselves to His Son, Jesus Christ.

Joy: Delighting in the peace that comes from knowing God's love and manifesting His love to others in the hope of sharing in His glory.

Service: Promoting the dignity of the human person by sharing our God-given time, talent and treasure with others and in service to the Church.

Discipleship & Formation: Recognizing that conversion is a gradual and lifelong process, we commit to fostering a deeper relationship with God, living a fully sacramental life, sustaining our faith through ongoing catechesis and witnessing to the love of God through Jesus in our words, actions and relationships, and passing this on to our children.



Dear St. Agnes RE Parents,

Welcome to the 2023-2024 Religious Education program at Saint Agnes Catholic Church.

The Saint Agnes RE Office is dedicated to support you in your role as primary educators of your children and supplement the faith formation they receive at home.

We have a comprehensive, robust and proudly Catholic program that features a new series of books and materials called **Word of Life** for Grades 1-5. This new textbook and online series was created by the Augustine Institute (creators of Formed.org) and Ignatius Press (publishers of Faith & Life). Grades 6-8 will continue to use the **Faith & Life Series**. Our 8th Grade students delve more deeply into the Faith through our **Chosen series** by Ascension Press. A Flipped Classroom model is used where students take classes online in preparation for their in-person class. Families can choose to register for classes on Sunday mornings from 10:15AM-11:15AM or Tuesday evenings from 6:15PM-7:15PM. **Non-parishioners will need permission from their pastor to receive Religious Education in St. Agnes**.

At your child's Baptism, you asked the Church for eternal life for your child. In doing so you accepted the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith and acknowledged your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. We commend your commitment to keep that promise by enrolling them in Religious Education. Nothing can replace your example and witness to your love for Christ by your in-Person prayerful participation at Sunday Mass and all Holy Days of Obligation, praying as a family, attending to your own personal faith formation and teaching them that God is the first priority in your life.

This priority of "God First" is the reason why participation every year in Religious Education is essential. Our Sacramental preparation program is typically a two year preparation to ensure the children and their family are spiritually prepared and committed to First Penance, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Students are given opportunities to avail of the Sacrament of Penance, adore Jesus in Holy Hour, pray the Stations of the Cross in Lent, and participate in the Nativity Play for Christmas and in the May Crowning at the end of the year. Service opportunities also abound for students and their families. Meaningful retreats are offered for sacramental year students. Faith formation opportunities and workshops help empower parents to fulfill their vocations and build community.

This Parent-Student Handbook explains our program, philosophy, and expectations. We pray that as we accompany you and your child in this spiritual journey, we may all be blessed with the grace of Jesus Christ, ever Present in our midst and especially Present in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Blessings,

Lisa Orosa Director of Faith Formation dff@saintagnes.org 703.527.1129



OUR MISSION & VISION

At St. Agnes, we believe in the inherent dignity of every person, created out of love and for love, in the image and likeness of God.

The goal of St. Agnes Religious Education is to provide opportunities for students and families to have a profound encounter with our Trinitarian God, our Abba Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Sunday liturgies, the Sacraments, the Word of God and joyful service to become intentional disciples and ambassadors for Christ.

By living a grace-filled life, nourished by prayer, strengthened by the Sacraments, and transformed by the Word of God, our students and families are empowered to grow in the Faith, deepen their relationship with God, and live out their mission to be the loving and courageous presence of Jesus Christ in a world in need of hope.

> "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." - St . Catherine of Siena

Saint Agnes Religious Education 2023–24 Highlights

Supporting both child and family in growing in their love for Christ and their lifelong journey of intentional discipleship.

Robust Curriculum

Word of Life for Grades 1–5, Faith & Life for Grades 6–7, and Chosen for 8th Grade provide a rich and engaging faith formation that is relevant to the times.



Parent Formation

Recognizing the primary role of parents, St. Agnes seeks to form parents in the Faith while building community and supporting the family. These 7 week adult formation sessions begin in January.



Prayer & Sacramental Grace

Children are given opportunities to encounter the Living God through prayer, adoration, and avail of the Sacrament of Confession.



Flipped Classroom Model

Students prepare at home and receive in-depth instruction and creative and engaging exploration in the classroom.



Priest Visits

Students are encouraged to get to know our priests and learn directly from their wisdom, knowledge and experience through classroom visits from St. Agnes priests.



Sacramental Preparation

A readiness model for sacramental preparation allows for both individual and family transformation while forming intentional and missionary disciples of Christ.



Celebrate the Life of the Church

Catholics love to party! Celebrate the liturgical seasons of the year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, May Crowning & holy days with meaningful activities.



Service as a response to God's love

Students and families are able to put their faith into action and mirror Christ's love to others through various charitable service opportunities throughout the year.



Sundays, 10:15AM-11:15AM or Tuesdays, 6:15PM-7:15PM Contact Lisa Orosa at dff@saintagnes.org for more info.



PROGRAM DETAILS

St. Agnes Religious Education

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents have the primary responsibility of raising and training their children in the Faith, as they had promised at their child's Baptism. Through their living example of faithful participation in the liturgical life of the Church, the practice of virtues and prayers, and their own lifelong discipleship, parents exercise the greatest influence on the faith of their children.

St. Agnes Religious Education strives to support parents through a formal, structured and organized program of catechesis and formation for both students and parents.

Parents are encouraged to attend to their own faith formation by participating in Christ Life (and similar programs), a 7week evangelizing course to help them enter or renew their personal relationship with God and provide the community support they need to live as intentional disciples. Dinner will be provided. This is a great opportunity for adults to learn, to grow, to build friendship, and to journey together in the Faith.

THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL

The Flipped Classroom model allows children to learn at home (with their parents' supervision) through online lessons and activities to help them prepare for class. This frees up time in the classroom for the catechist to provide more in-depth instruction, creative exploration and opportunities for meaningful activities and liturgical celebrations.

ADORATION, DEVOTIONS & CONFESSIONS

St. Agnes students will be given several opportunities to grow in prayer and encounter Christ through participation in Holy Hour, Confessions and other seasonal devotions. Families are encouraged to take part in these activities, as well.

Through these activities, RE families are able to celebrate the richness of our Catholic Faith and live according to the liturgical seasons of the Church.

"Parents always influence the moral development of their children, for better or for worse. It follows that they should take up this essential role and carry it out consciously, enthusiastically, reasonably and appropriately."

- Pope Francis

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICIES

ATTENDANCE & BEHAVIOR

Regular and consistent attendance in RE classes is essential in helping students master knowledge of the faith. Classes run for one hour: Tuesdays, 6:15PM-7:15 PM and on Sundays, 10:15AM-11:15AM. **Students are allowed no more than 4 absences (excused or unexcused).** Please inform your catechist or the Director of Faith Formation (DFF) if your child will be absent.

Students are expected to be punctual and prepared for class. Class preparation is primarily done through completion of the online lessons assigned in Word of Life (Gr. 1-5) and My Catholic Faith Delivered (Gr. 6-7).

Tardiness can be a serious disruption to the class. With only one per week, we appreciate your cooperation in getting your child/children to class ON TIME each week.

Students are expected to be respectful towards their teacher, their classmates and their environment. If a student consistently causes disruption in the class, a parent may be asked to sit in with their child for the duration of RE classes.

EARLY DISMISSALS & INCLEMENT WEATHER

If a child must leave class early, a parent is required to inform the DFF, Lisa Orosa, at drop off or via email so that the child may be brought to the Front Office for pick-up. Students will only be released to those persons listed as authorized to pick up.

In case of inclement weather, St. Agnes follows Arlington Public Schools for class cancellations. Please check WTOP for announcements.

DRESS CODE & USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Students should dress comfortably according to the weather, but modesty in dress should always be maintained. Articles of clothing with inappropriate images or sayings (drugs, alcohol, profanity, weapons) are not permitted. Short shorts, ripped shorts, leggings, bare midriffs, (girls) or low hanging pants (boys) are not permitted. Pajamas are unacceptable. Hats must be removed before entering the building.

Students who bring cell phones to class must keep these devices turned off and out of sight. Smart watches and similar devices must also be turned off and out of sight. At no time during class are students permitted to use these devices, unless the catechist requires it for a specific activity (ex. Kahoot). Otherwise, all devices must be turned off. Failure to comply may result in the confiscation of these devices with the parents having to pick it up from the RE Office.

EXAMS AND ASSESSMENTS

In compliance with the Arlington Diocesan Standards of Learning, students will be given assessments to measure learning (not faith) and to aid the catechist in planning for lessons. Students are expected to score 70% or higher in their online assessments with Word of Life or My Catholic Faith Delivered, for both lesson tests and unit tests. Students may retake these tests as necessary. In addition, a midterm and final exam is given to assess a student's knowledge of the subject and prayers.

Students must receive a grade of 70% or higher to be promoted to the next grade level.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICIES

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- Students are reminded that all property and possessions found in the classroom are to be left untouched. Desks are not to be moved from their allocated position.
- No food or drink, including chewing gum is allowed in the classrooms because of food allergies.
- Items that could cause injury to a student or others (including dangerous toys) are not permitted in the building.
- Every student has the right and privilege to learn in a classroom where students are well behaved. Similarly, every catechist has the right to teach in such an environment. In the event a student does not exhibit proper behavior, the catechist will call upon the Director of Faith Formation (DFF) to remove the child from the classroom. If the child is unable to refrain from the improper behavior, the DFF will enlist the support of the parents to rectify the situation.
- Students and catechists must comply with the prevailing CDC and Diocesan guidelines to keep our students and staff healthy and safe.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Students preparing for First Holy Communion and Confirmation are required to have two years of in-person instruction and preparation. Several requirements specific to sacramental preparation are detailed in a separate sacramental packet.

The best preparation to receive these sacraments is through faithful attendance of Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation in person. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith because it is Christ Himself, fully Present in the Eucharist whom we receive and nourishes us. The graces received at Mass are immeasurable and necessary in the life of a disciple. The goal of sacramental preparation is to help one live a fully sacramental life. If you are struggling to make Sunday Mass the foundation and priority in your family's life, please contact our Religious Education Office to discuss how we can help you.

In addition, mandatory retreats, mini-talks and Confirmation Youth Sundays are planned to help students reflect more deeply into the great gift of the sacraments they are to receive and to learn how to fully live out their faith amidst the challenges of the world today, and grow in their relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING

All program employees, staff and volunteers who have direct contact with children are subject to a Police background check, fingerprinting and the completion of a VIRTUS seminar.

St. Agnes Religious Education program participates in and adheres to the Safe Environment Training Program – Formation in Christian Chastity and Circle of Grace. These programs provide age appropriate lessons on the topic of personal safety. Catechists in the program are responsible for administering these lessons, the curriculum for which is provided by the Arlington Diocese.

THE CURRICULUM & STANDARDS OF LEARNING

TEXTBOOKS & ONLINE PROGRAM

Grades 1st through 5th use the Word of Life series by Augustine Institute and Ignatius Press. Students will receive both a textbook and access to online text and activities.

Grades 6th and 7th use Faith and Life Series published by Ignatius Press. They will receive the online book through My Catholic Faith Delivered. Children will not receive a textbook; parents will receive instructions to log-in to their account at the beginning of the school year. Students are expected to complete up to Lesson 29 of their online lessons and must receive an assessment grade of 70% or more.

All students must complete lessons prior to attending class in order to receive the benefit of the Flipped Classroom model.

8th grade will use Chosen: Your Journey towards Confirmation by Ignatius Press. Students are expected to fully engage in the discussions to get the most out of the class. Every First Sunday, students will participate in Confirmation Youth Sundays, where they will participate in discussion-based activities with young adult leaders to help them learn how to live the Faith in today's world. In addition, 8th graders are expected to review key concepts learned in previous years in order to prepare adequately for a comprehensive Confirmation exam in the Spring. The Confirmation Exam is a necessary requirement to assess the student's ability to give an explanation and defense of their Catholic Faith.

HEALTH, LEARNING DISABILITIES & OTHER CHALLENGES

If your child has a learning disability, behavioral or health related problem, please indicate this on the registration form. All information will remain confidential but will be passed on to the catechist for their assistance in teaching your child.

PRAYERS TO MEMORIZE

- 1st grade The Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and Guardian Angel Prayer
- 2nd grade The Act of Contrition
- 3rd grade The St. Michael's Prayer
- 4th grade The Act of Faith, Act of Hope, and Act of Charity
- 5th grade The Apostles' Creed, and Hail Holy Queen
- 6th grade The Divine Mercy
- 7th grade The Angelus and Memorare
- 8th grade The Come Holy Spirit prayer

"Catechesis is a life-long process of initial conversion, formation, education, and on-going conversion. Through word, worship, service and community, it seeks to lead all God's people to an ever deepening relationship with God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ through the power of the

Holy Spirit."

(Echoing the Gospel for Catechists, Diocese of Grand Rapids)

THE CURRICULUM & STANDARDS OF LEARNING

GRADE	GOALS	THEMES
1 ^{sr}	To give the child a basic introduction to God, the life of Christ, prayer.	Introduction to the Trinity (emphasis upon Jesus) The plan of salvation and how the child fits into that plan – knowing, loving, and trusting God. Mary, angels, saints; Basic prayers
2 nd	To prepare students for Confession and Holy Communion and help them appreciate God's love as manifested in these two sacraments	Preparation for reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion; Divine law and salvation history; God's mercy and love; Ten Commandments, Creation and Redemption; Order of the Mass and prayer
3 rd	To show the student's membership among God's chosen people and role of the family as an important segment of God's entire family – the Church	God's plan of salvation from Creation to the Incarnation and Redemption to the birth of the Church at Pentecost and our life in the Church; Importance of Confession, Holy Communion and Mass; Importance of prayer and love of God's law
4 th	To help the students understand their purpose in life and to come to an awareness of God's plan in history and society to lead all to Heaven, our true, eternal home.	God's plan of salvation from sin (salvation history) Our participation in God's plan and how God assists us through His word, law, and the Church
5 th	To help fifth graders acquire a solid and specific knowledge of God and His church through knowledge of the Creed and by making theological distinctions to avoid errors that lead to a loss of love of God.	Thorough study of the Creed and the basic tenets of Catholicism Emphasis on an understanding of theological definitions through the words of the Gospels, the prophets, and the prayers of the church
6 th	To nurture a love for God's law and a love for the Holy Mass as our most perfect prayer to God. Students will also be formed to develop a sense of deep reverence and love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.	God's law (especially the Ten Commandments) as the blueprint for a life of love; Emphasis upon the doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, especially in the Mass; The interaction between God's law and His gifts of grace given to the faithful to fulfill His law
7 th	To assist the student in learning to treasure the seven sacraments as indispensable to a full Christian life of love and truth. To understand the nature of grace in the soul and its relationship to the life of virtue, reason, and faith.	Grace as our link with God and His gift to bring us to eternal life with Him; Grace through the seven sacraments Grace through revelation (prophets, Incarnation, the Church) Grace and the life of virtue
8 th	To help the student know and love the Church as Christ's Body and the Magisterium as the definitive voice of Christ on earth manifested in the person of the Pope. The student will also be formed to trust and be strengthened by the Church to face the confusion of secularism in modern-day society with greater confidence.	Church history – from its founding by Christ and its birth in the Holy Spirit; The four marks of the Church – one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church Fathers, Doctors of the Church, the saints, and the role of the religious and laity in the Modern Age. The structure of the Church – hierarchy, the role of the Magisterium (teaching charism) vocations to the single, married, and religious life

Faith, moved by divine grace and cultivated by the action of the Church, undergoes a process of maturation. Catechesis, which is at the service of this growth, is also a gradual activity." (General Directory of Catechesis #88)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR 2023-2024

AUGUST 2023				
01	Tue			
15		Religious Education Registration begins		
	Tue	First Holy Communion/Confirmation Registration begins		
	EMBER			
12	Tue	Tuesday Class 1		
17	Sun	Sunday Class 1		
19	Tue	Tuesday Class 2		
24	Sun	Sunday Class 2		
28	Tue	Tuesday Class 3		
	OCTOBER 2023			
1	Sun	Sunday Class 3; DEADLINE: RE registration		
		CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 Youth Meeting #1 – Mass@ 9AM; 10-12pm@Parish Hall		
3	Tue	Tuesday Class 4		
8	Sun	Sunday Class 4		
		DEADLINE: Confirmation registration (Years 1 & 2)		
10	Tue	Tuesday Class 5		
14	Sat	CONFIRMATION YEAR 1 Parent & Student Retreat		
15	Sun	Sunday Class 5		
17	Tue	Tuesday Class 6		
22	Sun	Sunday Class 6 – Safe Environment Training		
24	Tue	Tuesday Class 7 – Safe Environment Training		
29	Sun	Sunday Class 7; DEADLINE: First Communion registration		
31	Tue	NO CLASS - Halloween		
NOV	EMBER	2023		
01	Wed	ALL SAINTS DAY – Holy Day of Obligation		
04	Sat	FAMILY DAY OF SERVICE		
04 05	Sat Sun	FAMILY DAY OF SERVICE Sunday Class 8		
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	Sun	Sunday Class 8		
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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR 2023-2024

JANUARY 2024				
01	Mon	MARY, MOTHER OF GOD – Holy Day of Obligation		
02	Tue	NO CLASS - Christmas		
07	Sun	Sunday Class 14		
		CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 Youth Meeting #4 - Mass@ 9AM; 10-12pm@Parish Hall		
09	Tue	Tuesday Class 14		
11	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 1		
14	Sun	Sunday Class 15 – Midterm Exams		
16	Tue	Tuesday Class 15 – Midterm Exams		
18	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 2		
21	Sun	Sunday Class 16		
23	Tue	Tuesday Class 16		
25	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 3		
28	Sun	Sunday Class 17		
30	Tue	Tuesday Class 17		
FEBR	RUARY 2	2024		
01	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 4		
04	Sun	Sunday Class 18		
		CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 Youth Meeting #5 - Mass@ 9AM; 10-12pm@Parish Hall		
06	Tue	Tuesday Class 18		
08	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 5		
09	Fri	CONFIRMATION EXAM - School		
11	Sun	Sunday Class 19; CONFIRMATION EXAM – RE (10AM-12PM)		
13	Tue	Sunday Class 19		
14	Wed	ASH WEDNESDAY		
15	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 6		
17	Sat	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Retreat		
18	Sun	Sunday Class 20; DEADLINE: Sponsor Forms for Confirmation		
20	Tue	Tuesday Class 20		
22	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Discovering Christ Session 7		
25	Sun	Sunday Class 21 – LOCKDOWN DRILL		
27	Tue	Tuesday Class 21 – LOCKDOWN DRILL		
	RCH 202			
02	Sat	FIRST PENANCE Retreat & Liturgy		
03	Sun	Sunday Class 22		
05	Tur	CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 Youth Meeting #6 - Mass@ 9AM; 10-12pm@Parish Hall		
05	Tue	Tuesday Class 22		
10	Sun	Sunday Class 23 Tuesday Class 23		
12	Tue	•		
17	Sun	Sunday Class 24 Tuesday Class 24		
19 24	Tue			
	Sun	NO CLASS – Spring/Easter Break		
26	Tue	NO CLASS – Spring/Easter Break GOOD FRIDAY		
29 31	Fri Sun	EASTER – Holy Day of Obligation; NO CLASS – Spring/Easter Break		
21	Sun	CASTER - Hory Day Of Obligation; NO CLASS - Spring/Edster break		

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CALENDAR 2023-2024

APR	IL 2024	
02	Tue	NO CLASS – Spring/Easter Break
04	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 1
07	Sun	Sunday Class 25
		CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 Youth Meeting #7 - Mass@ 9AM; 10-12pm@Parish Hall
		Mini Catechesis with Fr. Saunders – 15 minutes after 9AM Mass (parents & students)
09	Tue	Tuesday Class 25
11	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 2
13	Sat	Family Day of Service
14	Sun	Sunday Class 26
		Mini Catechesis with Fr. Saunders – 15 minutes after 9AM Mass (parents & students)
16	Tue	Tuesday Class 26
18	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 3
21	Sun	Sunday Class 27
		Mini Catechesis with Fr. Saunders – 15 minutes after 9AM Mass (parents & students)
23	Tue	Tuesday Class 27
25	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 4
27	Sat	FIRST COMMUNION RETREAT
28	Sun	Sunday Class 28
		Mini Catechesis with Fr. Saunders – 15 minutes after 9AM Mass (parents & students)
30	Tue	Tuesday Class 28
MAY	2024	
02	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 5
04	Sat	CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 RETREAT Day 1 (whole day)
05	Sun	Sunday Class 29 – Final exams
		CONFIRMATION YEAR 2 RETREAT Day 2 (morning only)
		Mini Catechesis with Fr. Saunders – 15 minutes after 9AM Mass (parents & students)
07	Tue	Tuesday Class 29 – Final exams
09	Thu	ASCENSION – Holy day of obligation
		ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 6
11	Sat	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Retreat
12	Sun	JOINT MAY CROWNING & CELEBRATION @ 9AM
		FIRST COMMUNION LITURGY #1 @ 11AM
15	Wed	CONFIRMATION REHEARSAL & LITURGY
16	Thu	ADULT FORMATION – Following Christ Session 7
19	Sun	FIRST COMMUNION LITURGY #2 @ 11AM