

St. Gertrude Parish

Religious Education Handbook 2021-2022



All are welcome!

Dear parents and legal guardians:

Welcome to St. Gertrude Church. We hope that you and your family had a fun and relaxing summer! It is our hope and expectation that this religious education year will be full of successful experiences for all students.

As we all are striving for a new normality, and praying so the pandemic no longer affects us, we are here to continue nurturing our faith and living out our call to love and serve one another. This is what religious education is about. This year we are coming back to in person classes for religious education. Yet, we all need to be very vigilant to ensure that the CDC and the Archdiocesan guidelines and protocols for COVID19 will be always implemented. We all need to take care of each other. Please, stay vigilant!

We are going to continue using *Alive in Christ*, a textbook from Our Sunday Visitor. In our religious education calendar, you will find the unit that will be taught/shared by the catechists to the children in each Sunday class. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns, or ideas for improvement about our program.

Thank you for sharing your children with us and we look forward to a wonderful, rewarding year. For our Religious Ed students, our primary method of communication with you will be via e-mail plus the Religious Education Newsletter posted every week in our website.

May the Lord grant us wisdom so we might be able to understand more the presence of God among us.

Eloy Escamilla,
Pastoral Associate, St. Gertrude
eescamilla@stgertruechicago.org
773.764.3621

St. Gertrude's Religious Education Program which encompasses grades 1 through 8, implements these tasks to support parents who are the first teachers of their children's way of faith. Parents are called to serve as role models of inspiration for their children through their own prayer life, education in faith and in support of St. Gertrude Church. Our parish family, through volunteer catechists, as well as our staff and pastor, work as a team with the parents so that together we can provide our children with a sound program to help them become disciples of Jesus Christ. We ask you as a parent to:

- A. Show to your children the way to God by your example. It is therefore expected that all children enrolled in our program and their families participate in Mass every week.
- B. Pray with your child and teach them how to pray.
- C. Encourage your child to discuss his/her thoughts on Religious Education lessons with you.

Religious Education Staff

Each class is staffed by a Catechist. Our Catechists are volunteers who generously share our Catholic faith and Tradition with our students. Most are not teachers by profession. However, all have a willingness to share their faith to help our children grow in the love of Jesus. All our Catechists are required to:

- Be in good standing with the Catholic Church.
- Attend Catechetical meetings.
- Comply with the Diocesan requirements which include a Criminal Background Check, VIRTUS's Protecting God's Children training, Mandated Reporter Training from the State of Illinois, and Archdiocesan Standards of Behavior for Church Personnel Working with Minors and Vulnerable Adults.
- All catechists are encouraged to seek certification through the Archdiocese of Chicago.

According to the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Chicago there are six tasks of Catechesis:

- 1. Promote knowledge of the faith** – Teach the “basics” of the faith as revealed in the signs of creation, Sacred Scripture, Catholic tradition, and human experience.
- 2. Liturgical Education** – Teach about the form and meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments and help individuals prepare their minds and hearts to enter into these mysteries of our faith.
- 3. Moral Formation** – Teach the moral teachings of the Church, which are the fulfillment of the Commandments.
- 4. Teaching to Pray** – Teach that a “climate of prayer” and participation in prayer invites individuals into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- 5. Education for Community Life** – Teach that the human person needs to live in society. Society is not optional, but a requirement of human nature.
- 6. Missionary Initiative** – Teach that all Christian service is an expression of love and is performed by Christians for the purpose of building up the Kingdom of God on earth.

Transferring from other Rel. Ed. Programs

Students who are transferring into our program from another parish should obtain a transfer letter from their former parish indicating that the child has successfully completed a year (minimum) of religious education.

Classroom Behavior

We require that all students behave in an appropriate manner to create a productive learning environment. Disrespect towards catechists, fighting, using foul language, defacement of church property, carrying harmful objects, and stealing are considered unacceptable behaviors. Additionally, we have a zero-tolerance policy on bullying. To provide an environment that promotes maximum learning, good discipline in the classroom is a necessity. Though Catechists have skills that help promote an orderly and structured atmosphere, discipline problems may still arise. It is the practice of the Religious Education Program to attempt to solve them using a Christian Reconciliation Model.

Registrations & Non-Discrimination Policy

All new and returning students will need to register each year, for religious education. It is the parent's responsibility to notify our office of any changes to the information provided during registration. If the Child is making First Communion & Reconciliation or Confirmation during the current school year, a sacramental registration form needs to be filled out. Please, note that students must receive two years of preparation to make these sacraments.

Our Program admits students of any sex, race, color or nationality and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in our Parish.

Textbooks

Our textbook series for grades 1 through 8 is entitled, "Alive in Christ" published by Our Sunday Visitor. A student textbook is included in the tuition fee; if lost or misplaced, please, ask the teacher for an extra one otherwise access <https://osv.com> and order the book as soon as possible.

Arrival/Dismissal

When you are dropping off or picking up your children, please pull into a parking space. This is an act of courtesy to others, and it will alleviate the traffic jams that tend to occur at arrival and dismissal times. The main door opens five minutes before the start of class, children cannot enter into the building before class. If a Catechist is not present at the time that the class begins, students are asked to wait in the hallway in an orderly and quiet manner. Children are not to enter an unattended classroom for any reason.

Rel. Ed. fees 2021-2022

This school year, fees are \$200.00 dollars for one child and \$225.00 dollars for two or more children. An additional sacramental fee of \$60.00 dollars is required for children making their First Communion & Reconciliation, or Confirmation. Religious Education class fees and sacramental fees can be paid online. Please, check our website. Parents for whom tuition would cause a severe financial burden should contact the Director to set up a payment plan. No child will be refused admission to the Religious Education Program because of inability to pay tuition.

Building Security

To provide a SAFE ENVIRONMENT for the children, we do have a surveillance system outside of the building only. The building will be locked when classes are in session. Parents are not allowed to enter the building without authorization.

Class Cancellations

If for any reason, especially during wintertime, classes need to be cancelled, you will be notified via e-mail if classes need to be cancelled.

Special Notices

At times, Special Notices are issued for making announcements or changing procedures. We ask you to please: make sure your child has not received any message from the Rel. Ed. Office and/or check your email or read the weekly Religious Ed Newsletter posted in our website to keep you updated.

Class Schedule

Rel. Ed. Classes, First Communion and Confirmation preparation classes for all grades are on Sundays from 9:15 to 10:15 AM. Please, be on time!

Class Attendance

Religious Education should be a priority. Given the amount of time in the Religious Education teaching schedule, attendance at all classes is essential for all students. Communication is important. We understand that sometimes kids get sick, kids are overwhelmed with school, parents need to work overtime, etc. Please, send an email to eescamilla@stgertrudechicago.org and let us know that your child is missing class. Missing more than five classes or being frequently tardy, the child might need to repeat the year.

Calendar

A calendar with class schedules and important dates will be posted in our website. The calendar will be always available.

Portable Electronic Devices

Cell Phones and earpads are NOT to be used during Class time. They are a distraction to the learning process.

Dress Code

We ask that children dress appropriately for religious education classes as well as for Mass.

Medication

We do NOT administer prescription or non-prescription medication to any child. Parents are asked to administer any medication before or after any class and to make the catechist aware of any possible side-effects. Parents are permitted to enter the building and administer the medication to their children with previous authorization.

Parent Meetings

Meetings for parents will keep you updated and will guide you throughout the whole preparation program. Your presence is always important. Meeting dates and schedules are specified in the religious education calendar.

First Communion Requirements

Any student who wishes to receive the Sacrament of communion in St. Gertrude Church in 2022 must:

- have received the sacrament of baptism and reconciliation.
A copy of the Baptismal certificate is needed if the child was not baptized at St. Gertrude Church.
- have completed at least 2 years of preparation for the reception of the sacrament.
- have regular participation at Mass. Sunday Mass is an important part of building the child's faith, especially during the preparation period for receiving Holy Communion. The presence of children while worshiping God will remind us of Jesus' humbleness and Joy! You are more than welcome to participate in any Mass on Sunday or the Saturday Vigil Mass.

Mass schedule at St. Gertrude: Saturday Vigil Mass 5 PM

Sunday Mass 8:00 and 10:30 AM

Gym Mass: Sunday 10:30 AM (Sept -Jun)

- Must fill out and submit the sacramental registration form found in our website.
- The attire for First Communion is simple and age appropriate. The attire should not distract from the focus of receiving the Sacrament. Dress code is going to be given in due time during a parent meeting. To keep the solemnity of the First Communion Mass, photos are not allowed before and/or anytime during Mass.

Sacrament of Confirmation Requirements

Any student who wishes to receive the Sacrament of confirmation in 2022 at St. Gertrude's Church must:

- have received the sacrament of baptism, reconciliation and eucharist. A copy of the Baptismal certificate is needed if the child was not baptized at St. Gertrude Church.
- have completed at least 2 years of preparation for the reception of the sacrament.
- have completed necessary ministerial (service) hours during 1st and 2nd year preparation.

Candidates should talk to their parents and sponsors about choosing ways to serve. While we will not require a specific number of hours, you should keep in mind that this is an important part of Christian living. Students must complete a minimum of three service projects each year. A service log for each project needs to be completed.

Types of Service:

Family Life:

These are things that you do to help your family:

- At least once a week, take an extra household chore that you would not normally do.
- At least once a week, organize a dinner menu, shop, and cook dinner with your mom or dad.
- Regularly help a sibling, friend, neighbor, or a schoolmate with his/her homework.
- Monitor the recycling system at home.
- Serve as a family “energy watchdog” by shutting off lights, radios, and TVs when they are not in use.
- Organize a family fun night to help your family relax after a busy week.
- Family History Project: Spend time talking to your relatives and record your family's history.

Parish life:

These are things that you do to help your parish. You can become involved in a parish ministry: Kids Word, Heart-to-Heart, or the Religious Education Program.

- Serve as a greeter at Mass.
- Assist the Kids Word Program during the 10:30 Sunday Mass in church.
- Volunteer to be a catechist's aide, etc.

Community life:

These are things that you do to help create a better community. Part of serving a community is learning about its challenges and issues. Once you have learned about some of the challenges or issues, you can serve the community by raising awareness/speaking out about an issue and by providing for the needs of those in the community.

- Find a social justice issue that you care about and create a project/presentation on that issue.
- Collect aluminum cans and donate the money to charity.
- Make “Get Well” cards for children in hospitals.

Service Logs are due on January 29th. 2022 for those to be confirmed in 2022. The Service Logs for those to be confirmed in 2023 are due on May 16th. 2022.

- have attended the required Confirmation classes, meetings, and retreats. The Confirmation Retreats for those to be confirmed in 2022 will be held at the social hall. Part I, January 29th from 9 to noon. Part II, April 28th from 6 to 8 PM. More information will be posted in due time. See Calendar for classes and parent meetings.
- have regular participation at Mass. Sunday Mass is an important part of building your faith especially during the preparation period for receiving the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The presence of your family will bring joy to the whole community. You are always welcome to participate in any Mass on Sunday or the Saturday Vigil Mass.

Mass schedule at St. Gertrude: Saturday Vigil Mass 5 PM

Sunday Mass 8:00 and 10:30 PM

Gym Mass: Sunday 10:30 AM (Sept-Jun)

- be accompanied by one sponsor on the day of Confirmation. The sponsor should meet the following qualifications: A Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation; at least 18 years of age; and must not be the Candidate's Father or Mother.
- fill out and submit the sacramental registration form found in our website.
- The attire for Confirmation should not distract from the focus of receiving the Sacrament. Dress code is going to be given in due time during a parent meeting. To keep the solemnity of the Confirmation Mass, photos are not allowed before and/or anytime during Mass.

- Complete the following Confirmation forms, reports, and present records:
 - Statement of Intention – due on October 24th. 2021.
 - Saint’s name project (Confirmation Name) – due on January 29th. 2022.
 - Letter to the Pastor (Rev. Richard Prendergast) requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation - due on January 29th. 2022.
 - Sponsor Form - due on January 29th. 2022.
 - Sacramental Records Form - due on January 29th. 2022.
 - Service Logs – January 29th. 2022.

- have participated in the Essay Contest

Assignment: We have been experiencing a lot of different catastrophes all over: the pandemic, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, war, etc. What we also see on the news is “bad news” stories that tell of people expressing hatred, violence, discrimination, and other evils demonstrating the worst of humanity.

But there are many people who are making the world a better place... You! Write an essay sharing where is the good news withing the bad news. Explain how the good news you are sharing in your essay reflects the message of Jesus.

Entry: Entries should be 500–650 words. Spelling and grammar count.

Students may:

1) send Essay and Student Essay Entry to eescamilla@stgertrudechicago.org Student Essay Entry can be found on our website.

OR

2) mail a typed Essay and the Student Essay Entry to the following address:

St. Gertrude Church / Religious Education
1420 W Granville Ave
Chicago, IL 60660

Eligibility: Students in grades 7 and up are eligible.

Deadline: Entries must be submitted online or postmarked by MONDAY, DECEMBER 13TH 2021. The three best essays will receive a gift card and will appear on our website.

Family Resources

This is a selection of background information, prayers, and other material that supports the topics we will be covering.

The Trinity

God Our Father: Jesus taught us to call God “Father”, because of the loving care that his Father has for everyone and everything. Jesus told us to tell God our Father our needs in prayer, and that God would always be listening.

Jesus Christ: Jesus Christ is the Father’s greatest gift to us. Jesus Christ is God’s Son. Jesus has a divine nature and a human nature. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary. God’s Son becoming man is called Incarnation. Jesus gathered his followers into a group called disciples who became the Church after he ascended to his Father in Heaven. He taught his disciples how we are to live as Christians. Jesus suffered and died on a cross, and rose from the dead to free us from sin.

The Holy Spirit: Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to guide his church until the end of time. The Holy Spirit fills the Church with strength and wisdom. The Holy Spirit comes to us in baptism and other sacraments to help fill us with God’s life and lead us to be true followers of Jesus.

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer/Our Father

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed are you among woman and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

An Examination of Conscience for Children Using the 10 Commandments

The basic requirement for a good confession is to have the intention of returning to God with your whole heart, like the prodigal son (in Luke 15), and to acknowledge your sins with true sorrow before the priest, who is there to remind you of Christ. If you examine your conscience to uncover and reflect on your sins, you can then bring those uncovered sins before God in the Sacrament of Confession and ask for forgiveness.

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall not have strange gods before me.

- *Have I wanted more things, making things or money more important than God?*
- *Have I made an idol of sports or entertainment figures?*

2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 - *Do I use God's name carelessly?*
 - *Do I use God's name in anger?*
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
 - *Did I attend Mass on Sunday?*
 - *Did my behavior make it difficult or impossible for my parents to get to church on time?*
 - *Have I remembered to pray daily?*
4. Honor your father and your mother.
 - *Do I obey my parents?*
 - *Have I done my chores without complaining?*
 - *Do I do my chores without being reminded?*
 - *Have I been disrespectful to teachers, coaches, or others in authority?*
5. You shall not kill.
 - *Do I keep my patience, or do I lose my temper?*
 - *Do I hold grudges and try to get even with others?*
 - *Have I been unfair to others, especially those who are different than I am?*
6. You shall not commit adultery.
 - *Do I show respect for my body?*
 - *Do I respect the bodies of others?*
 - *Do I avoid harmful things like drugs, tobacco, and alcohol?*
7. You shall not steal.
 - *Have I taken something that belongs to someone else?*
 - *Have I "forgotten" to return something that I borrowed?*
 - *Have I used money responsibly?*
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - *Do I play fairly, or do I ever cheat at school or games?*
 - *Have I been honest, or have I lied?*
 - *Have I hurt someone by what I have said or done?*
 - *Have I copied someone else's homework?*
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
 - *Have I been jealous of the friends that someone else has?*
 - *Have I tried to be kind to others?*
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.
 - *Have I been jealous of the things that my friends have?*
 - *Have I nagged my parents into buying things because my friends have them?*
 - *Have I helped others when they needed help?*

Taken from Seven Frequently Asked Questions About Children and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, written for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee by Kathleen D. Beuscher, 2010

Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,

Maker of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial
of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Apostles Creed

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
He descended into hell;
on the third day He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church,

the communion of Saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

The Seven Sacraments

Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism
Eucharist
Confirmation

Sacraments of Healing

Reconciliation
Anointing of
the sick

Sacraments of Service

Marriage
Holy Orders

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom

Wisdom helps us make right decisions and guides us from doing wrong.

Wisdom is a gift people build up through experience. A wise person knows what to do in many situations. A wise believer sees the people and events of human history fitting together in the large plan of God's love.

Understanding

Understanding helps us discover what the stories in the bible, especially Jesus' instructions, have to teach us. Understanding is the gift of thinking and reflecting on

experience. People with understanding think things through for themselves and act on their insights.

Right Judgement

This gift helps us to lead others in knowing what is right and wrong and how to be courageous in doing what is right. Right Judgment is willingness to consider the insights and understanding of others about a situation and to work together towards a solution.

Knowledge

The gift of knowledge helps us to know Jesus as our friend. The gift of knowledge helps us to comprehend what is needed to serve God. The gift of knowledge helps us seek out the facts and information necessary to make wise and fair decisions.

Courage

This gift helps us to love God and others and to do what God wants us to do, even when we are afraid. Courage is strength to do what isn't always easy. Courage is to stand up for the unpopular. Courage is to speak the truth. Courage is to put oneself on the line for what is right.

Reverence

Reverence helps us to show our love for God, for God's people and God's earth in our words and actions. Reverence is the gift of honoring God and others. The pious person reveres and worships God. The pious person has reverence for all people with the respect he wants for himself.

Wonder & Awe

The gift of wonder and awe helps us put God in everything we say and do. It helps us show respect for God's holy name. It helps us respect all of creation. Fear of the Lord is the gift of wonder and awe at God's presence in creation and in us.

Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his/her spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently.

The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms (money) to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity (brotherly love); it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy seek to help alleviate human misery – material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness, and death. Everyone is obliged to perform the works of mercy, according to his own ability and the need of his/her neighbor. It is important to remember that ordinary deeds done every day to relieve the corporal or spiritual needs of others are true works of mercy, if done in the name of Christ. Taking care of children, teaching children and adults about the faith, caring for elderly parents or a sick child or spouse are some examples.