

St. Agnes Catholic Church
CCD Program Handbook



**St. Agnes Catholic Church
Religious Education Office
1910 North Randolph Street
Arlington, VA 22207
703-527-1129**

Dear parents of children in Religious Education,

I want to welcome you to a new year of our Religious Education program. Although we always remember that you, as parents, are the primary teachers of your children in everything, especially the faith, our CCD program is designed to teach children, who are already baptized, a continuous education of the Catholic faith. We are blessed to have outstanding parents and catechists who make this important task of bringing children closer to Christ and His Church possible.

I would like to encourage you to work with your children at home, help them with their weekly homework and review the material they have covered in class. In particular, it is very important to pray regularly with your children, so that they will not only learn their prayers, but that prayer will also become an important part of their daily life and help you all in your relationship with our Lord.

Also, it is of course, vitally important that you attend Mass with your children every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation.

The *Parent-Student Handbook* explains our program, philosophy, and expectations.

After reviewing it and the CCD calendar, please sign and return the THREE release forms:

Photo, press, audio and electronic media release

St. Agnes CCD phone directory

Handbook Acknowledgement form

The Handbook includes:

- Mission Statement
- Parents' Role
- Student's Role
- Policies and Procedures
- Program Curriculum
- Attendance Policy
- Religious Education Calendar for 2020/2021 School Year

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or problems. My email is dff@saintagnes.org.

Marie Macnamara
Director of Faith Formation

Mission Statement

The mission of our Religious Education Program at St. Agnes Catholic Church is to look upon each child as created in the image and likeness of God and as a reflection of His goodness. Our program exists to evangelize the students and their parents in the gospel of Jesus Christ in order to deepen their awareness and understanding of God's loving presence in their lives, to strengthen their relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to provide them with opportunities to live and give witness to their Catholic faith.

The core elements listed below form the foundation and strength of the St. Agnes Religious Education Program. Through the application of these we seek to cultivate the hearts, minds and souls of our students to become the person God called and created them to be.

Parents' role:

Parents are a child's first teacher. Love of God, prayer and the Catholic Faith are taught to a child in their home and these lessons are reinforced by their parent's example. The St. Agnes CCD program and the Faith Formation office strive to work alongside parents to help them educate their children with a formal, structured and planned program of catechesis and formation. This program should complement, not replace, the Catholic lessons children should receive in the home.

All Christian education finds its source within the sacramental life of the Church. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that children are given the opportunity to go to Confession and attend weekly Sunday mass. Knowledge of the Catholic Faith that is not upheld by the practice of the sacramental life is empty knowledge. CCD classes complement the sacraments and mass but do not replace them. Please ensure that your children participate in the life of the Church.

Student's Role:

Students are expected to be punctual and prepared for class. Students should arrive 5 minutes before the start of class and have completed any homework assigned. Students should be respectful to their teacher and fellow students and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to a classroom environment.

Policies and Procedures:

1. Students are reminded that all property and possessions found in the classroom are to be left untouched.
2. No food or drink, including chewing gum is allowed in the classrooms because of food allergies.
3. Items that could cause injury to a student or others (including dangerous toys) are not permitted in the building.
4. All students in grades Kindergarten, First and Second grade must have a parent, guardian or older sibling escort them to and from the classroom.
5. 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 who will attempt to integrate the child into the classroom. If unsuccessful, the DFF will enlist the support of the parents to rectify the situation.
6. If a child must leave class early, a parent is required to pick him/her up from the classroom.

Dress Code:

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, bare midriffs, (girls) or low hanging pants (boys) are not permitted. Hats must be removed before entering the building.

Electronic devices:

Students who bring cell phones to class must keep these devices turned off and out of sight. At no time during class are students permitted to use these devices.

Class Cancellations:

Please note that Religious Education classes follow the Arlington County school closings for Inclement Weather.

In the event of inclement weather, check WTOP for St. Agnes CCD class closing.

Attendance:

Regular and consistent attendance in the CCD program is essential in helping students master knowledge of their faith. Poor attendance can negatively impact a student's ability to master this knowledge. Parents set a good example by **making class a priority**. Please inform the Catechist or the DFF if your child/children will be absent.

Tardiness:

Tardiness can be a serious disruption to the class. We only have one and a quarter hour per week, so we appreciate your cooperation in getting your child/children to class **ON TIME** each week.

Early withdrawal from class: If your child needs to leave class early on occasion, the parent must inform the catechist at the beginning of class and must come to the classroom to pick up the child.

Learning Disabilities/Health related problems:

If your child has a learning disability 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.

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 – Circle of Grace. This is a program with 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. These lessons are presented in the fall of the school year. Parents will be provided with an Opt-Out form by the Director of Faith Formation if they do not wish their child to participate in this program.

Textbooks/Online program:

Kindergarten students do not have a textbook. The catechist follows the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. This program uses Montessori teaching principles to present the most essential realities of the Catholic faith to young children. Specifically designed materials and inspiring presentations help children explore areas of faith formation appropriate to their developmental age.

1st through 6th grade use the Faith and Life Series published by Ignatius Press. Children will not receive a textbook, parents will receive instructions to log in once registration has been completed.

7th grade uses the Chosen program published by Ascension Press.

8th grade is a once a month class program taught by our Pastor using the Holy Bible.

The following is a brief outline of the essential elements of each grade level curriculum:

Kindergarten

Goal: To provide students with a basic introduction to God, the life of Jesus Christ, and the Church and prayer.

Themes:

- = The Life of Christ
- = The Wonder of the Kingdom of God
- = The Plan of God/History of the Kingdom of God
- = Sacraments
- = Moral Formation through Parables
- = The Holy Bible, including Old and New Testament lessons.

Grade One

Goal: To give the child a basic introduction to God, the life of Christ, prayer.

Themes:

- = 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

Sequence of lessons:

Chapters	Lesson
1-8	Old Testament, God as Creator, Heaven as Home and the effect of original sin, the world awaits a Savior
9-21	The Incarnation, Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus
22-28	The Holy Spirit, the Church, Mary

Grade Two

Goal: To prepare second grade students for Confession and Holy Communion and to help them appreciate God’s love for them as manifested in these two sacraments.

Themes:

- = 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

Sequence of lessons:

Chapters	Lesson
1-16	God's law and obedience in love
17-23	Forgiveness of sins through Christ's sacrifice
24-34	Preparation for heaven by reception of Jesus in Holy Communion and through a life in the Church

Grade Three

Goal: 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

Themes:

- = 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

Sequence of lessons:

Chapters	Lesson
1-7	Old Testament and covenant
8-14	Obedience of God's laws; Jesus' mercy in Confession
15-25	Life of Christ and Jesus in the Sacrifice of the Mass
26-30	Membership in the Church, relationship with Mary and the Communion of Saints

Grade Four

Goal: To help the students understand their purpose in life and to come to an awareness of God's plan in history and society in order to lead all to Heaven, our true, eternal home.

Themes:

- = 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

Sequence of lessons:

Chapters	Lesson
1-14	BC (before Christ) – from the Fall and the first murder to sin and God's calling of the Israelites and their leaders
15-30	AD (<i>Anno Domini</i> or In the Year of Our Lord) – Jesus as the center of all history and the power of grace through the sacraments to do good

Grade Five

Goal: 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 in order to avoid errors that lead to a loss of love of God.

Themes:

- = Thorough study of the Creed and the basic tenants of Catholicism
- = Emphasis on an understanding of theological definitions through the words of the Gospels, the prophets, and the prayers of the church

Sequence of lessons:

Unit	Lesson
1	God, the Father of all: The Old Testament and man's participation in and loss of God's life
2	God, the Son and Redeemer: Jesus Christ as true God and true man and His fulfillment of God's law
3	God, the Holy Spirit and Sanctifier: the universal call to holiness and witness in the church

Grade Six

Goal: 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.

Themes:

- = 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

Sequence of lessons:

Unit	Lesson
1	Ten Commandments; forming a moral conscience and intimacy with God

2	The Holy Mass; emphasis upon the Real Presence, the sacrificial nature of the Mass and an explanation of each part of the Mass
3	The Last Things: Death, judgement, Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory. Emphasis upon the great happiness of Heaven

Grade Seven

Goal: 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.

Themes:

- = 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

Program Components

- Student Workbook provides the space for the Confirmation candidate to enter in and engage with the Chosen program, helping to reinforce the lessons given in the video presentation. It includes fill-in-the-blank questions, prayers, vocabulary, stories of saints, the Challenge of the Week, and more.
- Parent's Guide not only instructs the parents in their integral role with their child's Confirmation preparation but is an opportunity to revisit and rekindle their own faith. It includes an overview of a parent's role, guidelines for supporting their child's journey of faith, tips for talking with their child, and more.
- Sponsor's Guide not only instructs the sponsor how to fulfill their role but is an opportunity to revisit and rekindle their own faith. It includes an overview of a sponsor's role, conversation starters, top ten Catholic questions your candidate may approach you with, and more.

- DVD Set provides twenty-four lessons (approximately 15-20 minutes each) with some of the most powerful and compelling speakers in the Church. Videos in this set can be played in either English or Spanish (dubbed).

Grade Eight

Goal: 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 in order to face the confusion of secularism in modern-day society with greater confidence.

Themes:

- = 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

St. Agnes *Religious Education* (RE) Class Schedule – 2020-2021

(All Sundays in bold print, 10:10-11:25 a.m.)

September 2020				20 Open House/First Class	27
October 2020	4	11 <u>NO</u> RE Class Columbus Day Holiday	18	25	
November 2020	1 Daylight Saving Time ends Set clocks back 1 hour	8	15	22	29 <u>NO</u> RE Class Thanksgiving Holiday
December 2020	6	13	20	27 <u>NO</u> RE Class Christmas Holiday	
January 2021	3 <u>NO</u> RE Class Christmas Holiday	10	17 <u>NO</u> RE Class Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday	24	31
February 2021	7	14 <u>NO</u> RE Class Presidents' Day Holiday	21	28	
March 2021	7	14 Daylight Saving Time begins Clocks forward 1 hour	21	28 <u>NO</u> RE Class Palm Sunday	
April 2021	4 <u>NO</u> RE Class Easter Sunday	11	18	25	
May 2021	2	9 Mother's Day	16 Last Day of Class		

PHOTO, PRESS, AUDIO, AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA RELEASE

I authorize the **Catholic Diocese of Arlington**, its parishes, its schools, and/or the **Arlington Catholic Herald** to use and publish the photographs and/or videography for which I am featured, and/or audio recordings made of my voice.

I agree that the **Catholic Diocese of Arlington**, its parishes, its schools and/or the **Arlington Catholic Herald** may use such photographs, video, and/or audio recordings of me with or without my name and for any lawful purpose, including, for example, such purposes as news, publicity, illustration, bulletin and Web content.

I have read and understood the above.

Signature _____

Printed name _____

Address _____

Date _____

Signature, parent, or guardian _____

ST. AGNES CCD PHONE DIRECTORY

Dear Parents,

A new student directory has been created this year for the benefit and use of all CCD families. Included is your child(ren) name(s), address, parents’ names and contact information (phone and email). Neither this nor any other personal information related to students or parents is shared with individual or parties outside the St. Agnes CCD program.

Please indicate your desire regarding inclusion in the St. Agnes CCD Directory:

_____ **Yes**, please include information regarding my child(ren) and our family in this year’s student directory.

_____ **No**, I would rather not be included in the student directory.

**HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM
2020/2021**

After reading the Religious Education Parent-Student Handbook, we understand our responsibilities and will comply with all that is stated in the handbook.

Family Name (Parent's last and first names)

Student(s) Signatures(s)

Student	Grade	Date

Parent's/Guardian Signature(s)	Date