

St. Vincent de Paul Parish Religious Formation Grades 1-8 Family Handbook 2018-2019



PARENT'S PRAYER

Loving God, You are the giver of all we possess, the source of all of our blessings. We thank and praise you. Thank you for the gift of our children. Help us to set boundaries for them, and yet encourage them to explore. Give us the strength and courage to treat each day as a fresh start. May our children come to know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. May your Holy Spirit help them to grow in faith, hope, and love, so they may know peace, truth, and goodness. May their ears hear your voice. May their eyes see your presence in all things. May their lips proclaim your word. May their hearts be your dwelling place. May their hands do works of charity. May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord. *Amen.*

14330 Eagle Run Dr.

Omaha, NE 68164

Phone: (402) 493-1642

Website: www.svdpomaha.org/faith-formation/children

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PHILOSOPHY

The Religious Formation Program at St. Vincent de Paul exists to help the faithful of all ages by providing relevant, meaningful formation and spiritual programs.

We support parents, the primary religious formation educators, in the spiritual development of their children. By incorporating prayer, fellowship, service and teaching, we hope to nurture and support a deep, growing, personal relationship with Jesus and His Church.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Spiritually

- To provide an atmosphere wherein the disciple (child) can grow in his/her relationship with Christ and with others.
- To provide spiritual opportunities that will instruct the disciples (children) in Catholic teachings and traditions.

Intellectually

- To develop a Religious Formation program within each grade level that will meet the religious formation, creative and personal needs of each individual.
- To create an atmosphere of learning wherein the disciple (child) can develop and achieve his/her God-given potential.

Emotionally

- To extend out Catholic charity to include all persons by treating them with courtesy and kindness, and above all to respect each disciple (child) as a person.
- To work toward helping each disciple (child) recognize their own self-worth and to foster within them a good self-image.

St. Vincent de Paul Parish
Religious Formation Office
(402) 493-1642
14330 Eagle Run Dr.
Omaha, NE 68164
(Located in the Upper Commons of the School)

Wednesday Class Sessions

1. 4:30pm-5:45pm Class Session. All Grades (Grades 6-8 open for families with younger children only) OR
2. 6:15pm-7:30pm Class Session. All Grades.

Pastor
Associate Pastor

Rev. Daniel J.Kampschneider
Rev. Eliot Schwer

Parish Office

14330 Eagle Run Dr.
Omaha, NE 68164
(402) 496-7988

Director of Religious Formation

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REGISTRATION & PROGRAM INFORMATION

REGISTRATION

Registration takes place each April for the following fall. Every child must be registered each year in order to arrange for resources, materials and catechists. Parents/guardians will be notified of registration through our family communications (email), Parish Bulletin and Parish Website.

A \$30 Non-Refundable Deposit is required at the time of registration. The balance of the fees must be paid when classes begin, unless you have made special arrangements with the Director of Religious Formation.

New children may be registered at any time throughout the year.

A late fee will be assessed after the due date (for returning families).

ADMISSION

Each child will be placed at the grade level that he/she attends in public school unless there are special circumstances. All families registering for Religious Formation must be registered St. Vincent de Paul Parishioners.

CLASS SIZE

St. Vincent's Religious Formation Program attempts to keep classes as small as possible. The maximum students per classroom will be 10-15.

Christian Initiation of Children (CIC)

This is a program for students 2nd grade and older, who are un-baptized coming into the Church for the first time or who are baptized but have had little or no religious formation nor received the sacraments. These classes are held on Wednesdays. Each family will meet with the Director of Religious Formation for full information.

HOME PROGRAM

For families who wish to teach religion to their children at home, we offer a program resource that is consistent with standards for each grade level. Contact the Director of Religious Formation to register and for more information.

SPECIAL NEEDS

There are children of God who, because of a disability, may not be able to participate in the regular Wednesday evening classes. At this time, we assist families on a case by case basis. If you have any questions regarding this program, please call the Religious Formation Office at 493-1642.

What You Need to Know When Coming to Class

ARRIVAL

Children should enter the building and wait in the Upper Commons until the bell rings:

- by 4:25 p.m. for the first session
- by 6:10 p.m. for the second session

SAFETY

Doors will be locked during class time. You (or your child) may gain access by using the call button at the far right school door. You (or your child) must check in at the Religious Formation Office before proceeding to a class room if you are tardy.

DROP OFF PROCEDURE

The safety of our children and families is a top priority. We have set the following policy for the drop-off of children for Wednesday Religious Formation Classes:

Children arriving by car should be dropped off in ONLY the designated drop off lane, on the curbside in front of the school. No children should be dropped off in the parking lot.

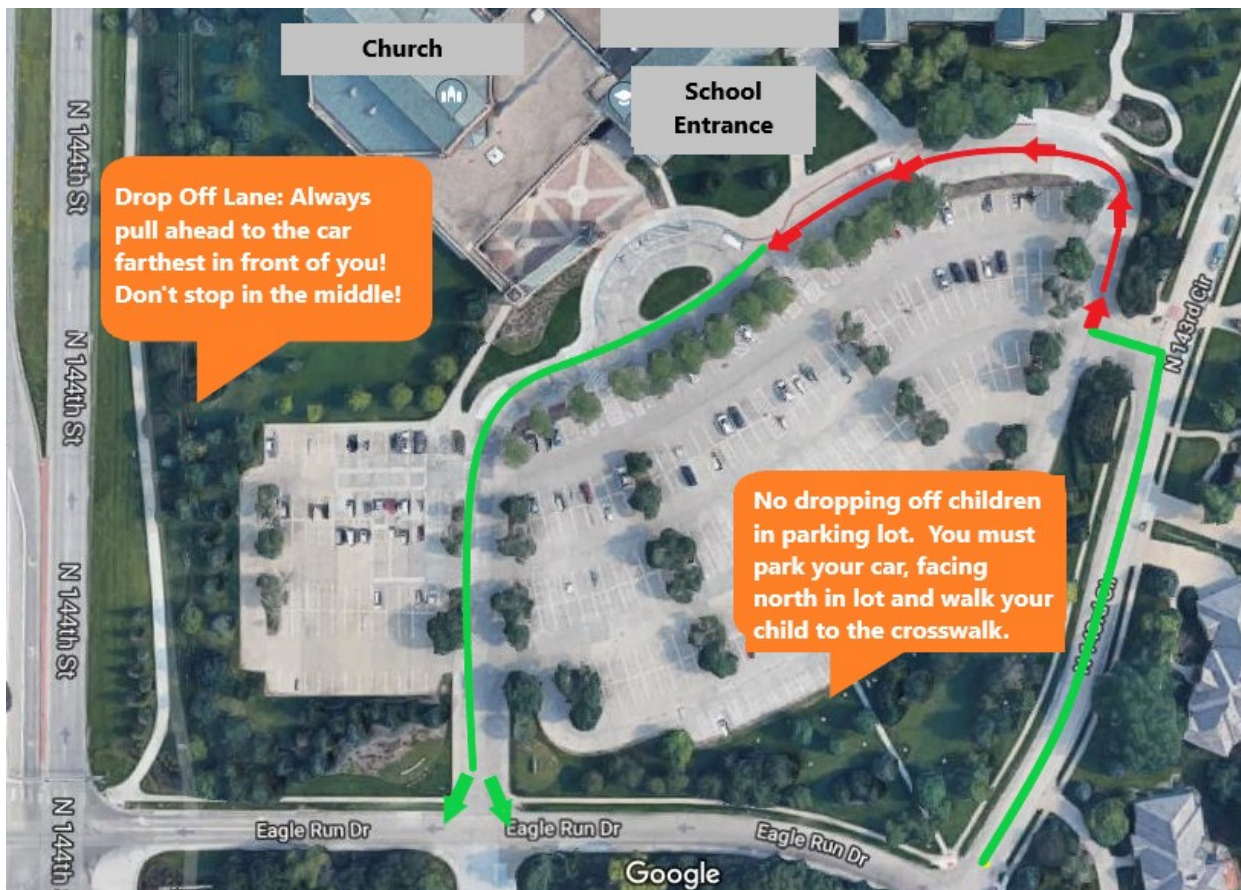
If you don't want to wait in the drop off lane, you must park your car in the parking lot; walk your child to the crosswalk. If there is no traffic helper in place yet, walk your child across the crosswalk.

The drop off lane will be open ONLY for drop off times: 4:15pm-4:30pm and 6:00-6:15pm. After these times, the lane will be blocked on both the east and west pmsides, allowing no curbside traffic. If you arrive after the lane has been blocked off, please park your car and escort your child to the crosswalk.

When parking in the lot, all vehicles must park facing north, toward the school/church building. Vehicles may not back out of parking spaces. Therefore, parking is allowed in the front row ONLY if the vehicle is backed in and facing south.

See map below.

Drop off Procedure:



Key:

- Follow the line for drop off lane
- Drop off here only where the red line

PICK-UP PROCEDURE

At dismissal time, parents/guardians must come in to the building, meet their child(ren) in the upper commons, and then walk with them to their vehicle.

Parents will be responsible for crossing and guiding their students to their vehicle after class.

Children will NOT be allowed to leave the building without an adult. Please discuss this with your child. (This includes ALL grades 1-8).

Carpool arrangements are welcome whereby a parent can walk not only their children out, but those in their carpool.

Parents/guardians who are unable to leave their vehicle are asked to partner with another parent who can guide their child(ren) safely to them in the parking lot.

NOTE! The Religious Formation Office is happy to assist anyone who cannot leave their vehicle nor find another parent to walk their child to their vehicle. Please call us to make arrangements.

ABSENCES & TARDINESS

Please call the Religious Formation office (402-493-1642) or email mylinhl@svdpomaha.org prior to class time if your child will be absent from class on a Wednesday. The Religious Formation Office will contact parents/guardians any time the child does not have an excused absence, we have not received a call or an email from you.

If your child is tardy, please direct them to check into the Religious Formation Office before they proceed down to their class room.

EARLY PICK-UP PROCEDURES

If your child needs to leave Religious Formation early, parent/guardian must send a written note with the child when they come to class. At the designated pick up time, parent/guardian must present a valid photo ID and come into the Religious Formation Office to pick-up and sign out the child. For safety considerations, children will not be allowed to go outside to wait alone.

CALENDAR

The Religious Formation calendar is published annually and is available on the parish website and in the Religious Formation Office. Dates and events may be subject to change as necessary. Timely notice will be provided when possible.

COMMUNICATION

The Family Newsletter will be sent every two weeks on Friday via email to the email addresses you provided on your registration form. Please notify the Religious Formation Office for any change in information so we can keep our records updated. The Family Newsletter will also be published on the Parish website under Faith Formation/Children. To receive a hard copy of the newsletter, please contact the Religious Formation Office.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The decision to cancel Wednesday classes will be made (at the latest) by 2:00pm on the day of class, unless the public schools have cancelled classes on Wednesday due to weather. In that case, there are no classes on that Wednesday.

Notification of cancellation will be publicized by:

1. Parent email
2. The answering machine at the office will state classes have been cancelled (402-493-1642)
3. Parish's Website and Facebook Page

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents/guardians are asked to participate actively in the Religious Formation Program because parents are the primary educators of their child's faith. Each family should incorporate meaningful religious rituals in their homes, attend weekly Mass together and in the reception of Sacraments.

Throughout the year parents/guardians will be asked to fill volunteer needs such as traffic helper, hall helper, substitute catechist, chaperones, etc.

CATECHISTS/VOLUNTEERS

Catechists have participated in "Safe Environment For All God's Children" training and undergone a background check. Parents and catechists are partners in supporting each other in their efforts to provide religious formation for the children. Catechists are parents, grandparents of children in Religious Formation and members of the parish community who generously give of their talents and time.

Catechists are required to attend orientation and in-service programs during the year to help them work effectively with the children.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES/CELL PHONES

No electronic devices/ cell phone use is allowed during class time. If children bring these items to class, they must be placed in a location designated by the catechist. If misused devices will be confiscated and held in the Religious Formation Office until a parent/guardian retrieves the item.

DRESS CODE

Children are expected to dress in an appropriate and modest manner. Wearing ball caps during class is not allowed. T-shirts, pants, shorts and shoes should conform with your child's school dress code. No bare midriffs, bare shoulders, or spaghetti-strap tops are allowed.

DISCIPLES BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

Disciples (children) enrolled in the Religious Formation program are expected to maintain high standards of behavior. Our purpose is to encourage and strengthen each child's character in accordance with Catholic principles.

Our team consists of catechists and assistants who give of their time, talents, and energies and deserve the utmost respect, consideration, and support at all times.

Conduct unbecoming a Catholic will not be tolerated. Catechists who see a need for correcting inappropriate behavior are asked to do the following:

1. The catechist will correct the child.
2. If there is not improvement and the inappropriate behavior continues, the catechist will correct the child again.
3. If the behavior continues for a third time the catechist will refer the child to the Director of Religious Formation. Continued inappropriate behavior will result in the parents being notified.
4. The catechist and the Director of Religious Formation will discuss the conditions for the child's return to the classroom. The parent may need to accompany the child to the classroom and attend classes with the child until the behavior problem is resolved.

BUILDINGS AND PARISH PROPERTY

Children are expected to assist in the good order of building and parish property. Those who deface tables, walls, desks or any other property (i.e. books, Bibles,) within the school building, church building or deface the grounds of the building will be subject to disciplinary action. We must be good stewards of these resources. Please encourage your child to:

1. Conduct themselves properly in the restroom.
2. Deposit waste papers, etc. in proper receptacles.
3. Respect the property of others.
4. Refrain from chewing gum in the building.

POLICY REGARDING DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

If a child enrolled in the St. Vincent de Paul Religious Formation Program is found in the possession of drugs, controlled substances, and alcoholic beverage, whether it is in the act of using, passing, or selling the drug, he/she will be subject to the following regulations:

1. The catechist will refer the child to the Director of Religious Formation.
2. The parents will be called immediately.

*Police will be contacted when there is suspected violation of criminal laws concerning drugs and alcohol.

POLICY REGARDING WEAPONS/PROHIBITED OBJECTS

Children are forbidden to knowingly and voluntarily bring to Religious Formation Class and/or to possess, handle, transmit, or use, any instrument on parish grounds, or at parish events that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon. Any object that could be used to injure another person may be considered a weapon.

The following are examples of prohibited objects that students are forbidden to knowingly and voluntarily bring to school and/or to possess, handle, transmit, or use in school, on parish grounds or at parish/school events:

- Knives of all types
- Dangerous instruments
- Guns of all types
- Lead pipes, chains, chuck sticks
- Throwing stars, darts, metal knuckles, blackjacks
- Unauthorized tools
- Fireworks, explosives or other chemicals
- Controlled substances and/or drug paraphernalia
- Alcohol, tobacco, matches or lighters
- Laser pointers

1. The catechist will refer the child to the Director of Religious Formation.
2. The parent/guardian will be called immediately.

*Police will be contacted when there is a suspected violation of criminal laws concerning weapons.

POLICY REGARDING BULLYING

Bullying disrupts our ability to form the faith of our children, threatens public safety by creating an atmosphere in which such behavior can escalate into violence, and is prohibited.

Bullying means any intention, hostile or offensive verbal, written, graphic, demonstrative, electronic, or physical act that has the purpose of exerting domination over another child through the act of intimidating, frightening, oppressing, or adversely controlling the child on parish grounds.

This may include, but is not limited to verbal, graphic, written, or electronic activities such as name-calling, taunting, blackmailing, inciting to fight, terrorizing, physical or demonstrative activities such as poking, blocking or impeding, following, hair pulling, mock hitting motions, intentionally bumping, tripping and damaging clothing..

Conduct unbecoming a Catholic will not be tolerated. Catechists who see a need for correcting inappropriate bullying behavior in the classroom are asked to do the following:

1. The catechist will notify the Director of Religious Formation.
2. The Religious Formation Director will notify the parent/guardian.
3. The catechist, parent/guardian and the Religious Formation Director will discuss conditions for the child's return to the classroom.

PARENTAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

A parent or guardian who has a question or concern regarding a situation involving his or her child is urged to follow these procedures:

1. Contact the child's catechist to discuss the situation and work with the catechist to arrive at possible solutions. Appointments with the catechists must be made by writing a note requesting a conference, emailing the catechist or by calling the Religious Formation Office and asking that the catechist return the call as soon as possible.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved with the catechist, the parent or guardian should then request a conference with the Director of Religious Formation. After discussing the situation with both parties, the director will act as a facilitator making every effort to resolve the problem and initiate reconciliation between the two parties.
3. If resolution and reconciliation have not been achieved after discussing the problem with the catechist and the director, and the parent or guardian still feels that the complaint has not received proper consideration, the pastor will be asked to assist in resolving the situation and achieving reconciliation.

*Every effort should be made to resolve questions, concerns and problems at the earliest possible stage in a manner appropriate for Christians.

VISITATION

Parent/guardians and other visitors are always welcome and encouraged to visit the classrooms. To ensure the safety of our children we require each parent, volunteer or visitor to sign in at the Religious Formation Office.

PARENT NIGHTS

Parents are invited for a special faith sharing night with each of their children's class(es). Each grade level has a separate night for this event. Children look forward to their parents/guardians attending with them. Please make every effort to attend this night with your child or find an adult significant in your child's life to attend in your place.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

Emergency information is on file in the Religious Formation Office. The information must be kept current at all times. If there is a change in your child's health information (allergies, medications, etc.) or contact information, please inform the Religious Formation Office.

MEDICATION

Religious Formation children are present for 75 minutes a week. Any medication a child would need should be dispensed before or after class at home. The St. Vincent de Paul personnel will not dispense medication. Exceptions to the policy must be authorized by the Director of Religious Formation.

ILLNESS/INJURY DURING CLASS TIME

In case of illness or injury, parent/guardian will be contacted by phone to come pick up their child. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be called to pick up the child. No sick or injured child will be allowed to walk home.

In case of an emergency which requires immediate medical attention, the parent/guardian will be notified. If a parent/guardian cannot be located, the Director of Religious Formation will assume the parent/guardian's permission to take the child to the closest emergency service or to call for emergency help.

ASTHMA/ANAPHYLAXIS EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

Please note-we do not have a nurse on site.

If your child has an asthma/allergy reaction during Religious Formation class, this protocol will be followed:

- 911 will be called
- Epipen will be administered
- Parent/Guardian will be contacted.

NOTE: If your child has been prescribed an Epipen, please make sure we have one in our office or on your child during Religious Formation Class. Place your child's Epipen in a clear Zip Lock bag and write their name on it with permanent black marker. Bring it to the office on the first night of class, it will be returned to you on the last night of class if unused.

Parents of students with known diagnoses related to asthma and allergies are expected to ensure their children provide emergency medication available on site.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

Catechists are given instruction to provide quick, safe evacuation of the children due to emergencies such as fire, severe weather or bomb threats. Evacuation procedures are posted in each classroom. During an emergency, parents will need to check with Religious Formation staff before any child can be released. Children cannot be released directly by the catechist during an emergency situation.

SECURITY PLAN

St. Vincent de Paul Parish does have a Security Plan in place that is designed to ensure the safety of all its members in the event of an emergency. There are specific Building Security Procedures that Religious Formation will follow if needed.

CURRICULUM

RESOURCES

St. Vincent de Paul Religious Formation uses a variety of resources to teach our faith.

Grades 1-5: *Be My Disciples* from RCL Benziger

Grades 6: *Encounter* from Ascension Press supplemented with curriculum from *Be My Disciples* from RCL Benziger

Grade 7: *Chosen* from Ascension Press supplemented with curriculum from *Be My Disciples* from RCL Benziger

Grade 8: *Chosen* from Ascension Press.

CIRCLE OF GRACE

Circle of Grace is the curriculum developed by the Archdiocese of Omaha in response to the UCCB's Charter for Protection of Children and Young People. Circle of Grace is mandated to be taught yearly to all children in Archdiocesan schools, Religious Formation and Youth Ministry Programs in kindergarten through 12th grade. Parent information for this program is found at www.svdpomaha.org/faith-formation/children or in the Religious Formation Office.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The sacramental program includes participation of both parent/guardian and child. Parents play an essential role in sacramental preparation for their child. Parents, parish and Religious Formation work together to nurture and support the children to receive a Sacrament. Participation includes mandatory retreats, parent sessions, and practices. Regular Mass attendance is also extremely important.

Curriculum and guidelines for preparation are provided by the Archdiocese and the Parish.

FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST

Children in 2nd grade ordinarily receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. To receive these Sacraments, the children must have two years, or the equivalent of Religious Formation before receiving First Reconciliation or First Eucharist. Sessions and retreats are scheduled during the year to help children in preparing for these Sacraments, help parents prepare their child for receiving these Sacraments and help parents deepen and grow in their own faith.

CONFIRMATION

Children in 8th grade ordinarily receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Preparation for Confirmation begins in 7th grade and continues through 8th grade. Sessions and retreats are scheduled during 7th and 8th grade years, for children help in preparing for these Sacraments, help parents prepare their child for receiving these Sacraments and help parents deepen and grow in their own faith.

*Special arrangements will be made for children in other grades who need Sacramental Preparation. Please contact the Religious Formation Office for more information.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FIELD TRIPS

All children must have written permission from the parent/guardian before attending any activity away from St. Vincent de Paul. All Safe-Environment, Archdiocesan and Parish guidelines must be adhered to at all times.

LITURGY

Children's liturgies and prayer services will be held at appropriate times throughout the year. You will be made aware of these activities by email, so that you may attend. We encourage you to attend as many as possible.

RECONCILIATION DURING CLASSTIME

All children, Grades 2 through 8, will have an opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation during the Religious Formation class time. Individual reconciliations could take place at any time, at the request of a student, with the availability of a priest.

Parents are encouraged to help form positive attitudes toward the sacrament by going with their children to the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly. At a minimum, Reconciliation is to be celebrated in preparation for the season of Easter.