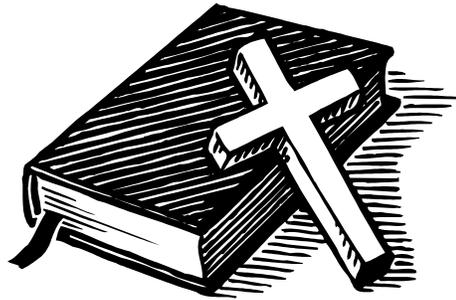


# ASCENSION

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS



**2018-2019**

## PARENT HANDBOOK

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Ascension Religious Education Program assists parents, as the primary educators of their children, in providing the knowledge, experiences, and skills needed to become faithful and fruitful disciples of Jesus. We enable parents and children to live out their baptismal call to discipleship by providing opportunities for faith formation through prayers and liturgy, moral formation, catechetical instruction, and service. In collaboration with parents and volunteer catechists, we initiate the child into the Catholic Christian community and into participation in the Church's mission of working for the Reign of God.

**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION  
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
2001 Woodman Drive, Kettering, OH 45420  
Phone: 254-0622**

**E-mail: [reoffice@ascensionkettering.org](mailto:reoffice@ascensionkettering.org)**

**Web page: [www.ascensionkettering.org/religious-education/](http://www.ascensionkettering.org/religious-education/)**

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September, 2018

Dear Parents,

We welcome you and your children to the 2018-19 Religious Education year! This year's catechetical theme is "Enlisting Witnesses for Jesus Christ", reminding each of us to witness our love of Christ to others, especially for our children through our roles as catechists and parents.

It is in the family, described by the Second Vatican Council as the "domestic church", that children, through word and witness, first learn to encounter the Living Christ through the things we do as family — reading scripture stories, establishing traditions, praying and coming together as parish community.

During this year, we encourage you to continue to reflect on the Sunday Gospel at home in preparation for celebrating Sunday liturgy using the parish bulletin. Each Sunday we offer reflection and discussion on the next week's readings.

A second and very essential teacher of the faith is the parish itself. For that reason, it is important to gather with the community at Sunday liturgy to listen to God's Word and to break bread together in unity. The parish community, in turn, supports the important faith formation you have begun at home with its rituals, education, and service opportunities that will help your child grow and mature as a member of the community.

We especially thank our volunteers who help our children grow in knowledge of their faith — to "Enlist them as Witnesses for Jesus Christ". May we all work together this year as we attest to our greatest and most powerful strength, our living and active faith in the ongoing presence of God in our lives.



Rev. Edward Pratt  
Pastor



Susan M. Graham  
Coordinator of Religious Education

## Education Commission

The Education Commission meets monthly to evaluate parish education programs and policies and present recommendations to the Parish Council. Meetings are open to all interested parish members. Please contact a committee member if you have an item you wish discussed.

### RE Parents

Christa Siefring (776-7075)  
Jim Shuler (426-0260)

### School Parents

Bridget Ebbert (264-5337)  
Irena Joseph (252-3193)

### At Large Member

Anne Petratis (258-38/25)

### Youth Ministry Member

### Ex-Officio Members

#### CRE

Sue Graham  
254-0622

#### Youth Ministry

Jeanne Fairbanks  
253-5171 X111

#### Principal

Susan DiGiorgio  
254-5411

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The policies contained in this handbook were approved by the Education Commission, and may be amended from time to time. Parents will be notified in writing.

## 2017-2018 Calendar

	<b>EC-Sun</b>	<b>Elem-Mon</b>	<b>MS-Sun</b>
Sep	16	18	16
	23	24	23
	30	--	30
Oct	--	1	--
	7	--	7
	14	15	14
	21	22	21
	28	29	28
Nov	4	5	4
	11	12	11
	18	19	18
	--	26	--
Dec	2	3	2
	9	10	9
	16	17	16
Jan	6	7	6
	13	14	13
	20	--	20
	27	28	27
Feb	3	4	3
	10	11	10
	17	--	17
	24	25	24
Mar	3	4	3
	10	11	10
	17	18	17
	24	25	24
	31	--	31
Apr	--	1	--
	7	8	7
	14	15	14
	28	29	28
May	5	6	5
	--	13	--
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

## **SCHEDULE OF TIMES**

Early Childhood Program  
(3,4,5 year olds, Kindergarten)  
Sundays during 10:30 Mass

Elementary Classes  
(Grades 1-5)  
Mondays, 4:15-5:30 p.m.

Middle School Classes  
(Grades 6-8)  
Sundays, 9:45—11:15am

Children's Catechumenate (RCIA)  
Sundays 9:30-10:30

## **ADMISSION/REGISTRATION**

### **NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Ascension Parish Religious Education Program does not discriminate against students on the basis of race, sex, national origin, or handicapping conditions.

### **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT**

A custodial parent/guardian is required to 1) sign the registration form, 2) provide emergency care instructions, and 3) sign the handbook receipt to acknowledge he/she has read, understands, and supports the policies contained in the handbook. The Coordinator needs to be informed by the custodial parent of the rights of the non-custodial parent.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

At the time of registration for the first time, the parent shall submit the child's baptismal certificate, as well as documentation of reception of First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation, if applicable.

### **REMEDIAL PROGRAMS**

Students who enroll after an extended period of time without formal religious education will be assessed by the Coordinator to determine appropriate placement. Some special sessions, or the completion of the children's catechumenate process, may be required.

## **REGISTRATION TIMES**

Registration may be accomplished during scheduled registration times in Apr./May and Aug., or at other times by appointment in the Religious Education Office. Students may attend class on the first scheduled class following the date of registration. This allows time for the appropriate enrollment procedure and catechist notification prior to class attendance.

## **RETENTION POLICY**

Placement of students who are retained in their regular school grade will be determined by the Coordinator in consultation with the parents.

## **RECORDS**

Attendance records and progress reports will be kept on file in the Religious Education Office. Records will be forwarded by mail to a new parish at the request of the parent/guardian.

## **CHANGE OF INFORMATION**

Please inform the Religious Education Office if the information on the Registration or Emergency Medical form changes.

## **FEES**

Ascension Parish provides a significant portion of the costs for our Religious Education Programs. Families with children registered in the programs are requested to pay a portion of the costs.

### 2018-2019 Religious Education Fees

one child: \$85

two children: \$170

each additional child: \$40

Sacramental Formation Fee: \$25 for grades 2, 7, & 8

Replacement Fee for Lost Textbooks: at cost

Transfer Fee: \$10.00

## **PAYMENT OF FEES**

Fees are due at the time of registration. Please make checks payable to "Church of the Ascension." Students will be placed on class lists according to date of payment.

Families experiencing special need may contact the Coordinator or Pastor to discuss their situation and request full or partial waiver of fees. No student will be refused admission because of inability to pay.

## **REFUNDS**

Families who withdraw their children from the program prior to the start of the school year will be entitled to a full refund, minus the transfer fee, upon notifying the Religious Education Office.

## ATTENDANCE

### ORIENTATION

Families are requested to attend the Orientation for the Religious Education Programs in Sept. Catechists will be present to meet the parents. Textbooks will be on display for all grades; textbooks for Gr. 1-6 may be distributed, per the assigned catechist.

### ATTENDANCE

Regular class attendance is anticipated and necessary for continuity. If absence occurs, please send a note to the catechist at the next class attended. A parent will be contacted by the catechist if no note is received after two consecutive absences. Attendance records will be kept in the Religious Education Office. **Perfect attendance** will be rewarded at the end of the school year.

### TARDINESS (Elem and MS programs)

Because of the short amount of class time and concentrated teaching involved, classes must begin promptly. Tardiness is extremely distracting to both the catechist and the other students. Students who are tardy must report to the office before going to class.

### EARLY DISMISSAL (Elem and MS programs)

As with tardiness, the early dismissal of a student is distracting to the catechist and other students. In addition, a most important part of the lesson may be taking place toward the end of class time and will be missed by the student.

Parents are asked to demonstrate a commitment to their children's formal religious education, even when it involves conflicts with other activities. Should an early dismissal be unavoidable, the parent/guardian must **SEND A NOTE** to the catechist prior to class and come to the office at the designated time to **SIGN THE STUDENT OUT**. We will then call the student to the office.

**VISITORS** — All visitors must report to the office.

## COMMUNICATION



Our handbook is online ([ascensionkettering.org/religious-education](http://ascensionkettering.org/religious-education)). The monthly newsletter, *Parent Page*, as well as any other parish information and flyers, are also sent home via email to each family.

If you do not have regular internet access, please notify the RE Office and we will be happy to send you a paper version.

We encourage you to keep in contact with the child's catechist. Catechists will send **PROGRESS REPORTS** home twice a year (Jan. and Apr.) for all students in Grades 1-8.

## **SAFETY/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **ARRIVAL/PICKUP**

Drivers must observe extreme caution in the parking lots and respect traffic cones for the safety of the children. All students must ENTER and LEAVE by the main entrance door of Ascension School. At dismissal, elementary students will remain on the blacktop in front of the main door until met by a parent. Students should arrive no earlier than ten minutes before their scheduled class time. **Parents of Early Childhood** students shall bring children to the classroom door and pick them up there after class. Notify the Office if you leave the premises (are not at Mass).

### **CANCELLATION**

If classes are cancelled because of weather or other emergency, the following radio/TV stations will be notified - WHIO TV7, WHIO Radio, WDTN TV2. A Flock Note message may also be used to notify parents of any class changes or cancellations. If Ascension School closes, do not assume that there will be no RE classes; classes are on unless announced otherwise.

### **FIRE/WEATHER EMERGENCY**

Students will be instructed by the catechists about the proper procedure to follow in an emergency. Emergency fire exit signs are posted in each classroom. In the case of a weather emergency, students will be directed to a downstairs shelter area.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Each student is required to have on file an Emergency Medical Information form signed by the parent. In case of illness or an accident, first aid could be administered and action taken according to the instructions given on the form.

### **FIELD TRIP PROCEDURES**

The parent must fill out the archdiocesan field trip form before a student will be permitted to go to an activity off the parish property. Drivers must be twenty-one years of age and show proof of a valid driver's license and insurance.

### **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

Program administrators are required by the Ohio Revised Code and by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Decree on Child Protection to report suspected or actual child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities. All adults working with children in our parish programs are REQUIRED to attend an orientation on the Decree on Child Protection (VIRTUS Session) and have a criminal background check completed.

## **AIDS POLICY**

As part of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ascension Religious Education Programs adopts the following policy regarding AIDS: Each instance of AIDS involving a student or volunteer shall be treated as a strictly confidential and individual matter. Decisions regarding AIDS shall take into account Christian concern and compassion, community health and well being, and individual privacy and needs.

## **PREGNANCY POLICY**

A student who becomes involved in a pregnancy during the school year will be treated with understanding and compassion. The decision regarding the student's continued involvement in the program will be made after consultation with the pastor, coordinator, parents, and student(s) involved. Each case will require individual consideration, taking into account the common good as well as the welfare of those immediately concerned.

## **SEARCH AND SEIZURE POLICY**

If a student is suspected of possessing drugs, weapons, or stolen property, the coordinator retains the right to search the student in the presence of an adult witness and seize the property.

# **DISCIPLINE**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

It is the responsibility of the parent to help the child grow in self-discipline. The child should accept responsibility for his/her actions, and his/her behavior should not infringe upon the rights of others. Classroom behavior should be characterized by genuine Christian care and respect.

## **DRESS CODE**

Students are to wear clothing appropriate to a place of learning and not a place of recreation. This applies to classroom sessions and all related activities (retreats, field trips, etc.) Christian morality teaches that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. All learners are entitled to an environment as free from distractions as possible. If the RE staff determines that a student is inappropriately attired, the parent will be called to bring a change of clothing. We encourage neatness, safety, good grooming, and common sense when choosing clothing to be worn at school.

- \* Hats must be removed once a student enters the building.
- \* Outerwear should be removed and placed on the chair when in the classroom
- \* Attire that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco, discrimination, hate, or has sexual connotations shall not be worn.
- \* Clothing must cover the shoulders, torso, and undergarments.
- \* Skirts and shorts must be no shorter than mid-thigh
- \* Pajamas are not permitted.
- \* Students may not wear clothing or shoes that pose a safety hazard.

## **BUILDING RULES**

- \* Use the property with respect.
- \* Earphones will be removed.
- \* Walk at all times.
- \* Bringing snacks or drinks into the building is prohibited except for special situations cleared by the office.
- \* Chewing gum is prohibited.
- \* Wait in the hallway until the catechist/assistant arrives.
- \* Climbing on the outside retaining wall is prohibited.

## **CLASSROOM RULES**

- \* Show respect for yourself and others.
- \* Listen and follow directions.
- \* Respect school property/property of others.
- \* Be prepared for class, including bringing book/Bible.
- \* Do all assigned work.
- \* Use of cell phones is prohibited.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS (Gr. 1-8)**

- \* Verbal correction by catechist or other adult
- \* Continued negative behavior results in time out in the classroom or office; parent notification
- \* Second time out results in parent conference
- \* Continued negative behavior may result in suspension/removal from the program

**The Coordinator retains the right to omit one or more of the above steps when deemed necessary.**

The following list of serious negative behavior is not all-inclusive and may result in immediate suspension:

- \* drug/alcohol/substance possession or use
- \* harassment/abuse of others
- \* stealing
- \* destruction of parish/school property
- \* fighting
- \* crude or offensive language
- \* possession, use of, or threat to use a weapon
- \* forgery of parent's signature

## **INTERNET ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY**

The use of new technologies presents new possibilities and challenges for the mission of the Church and Catholic education. RE students have the opportunity to use the school computers, under the supervision of the catechist. Internet access in the school is strictly limited to educational use. Students are not allowed to access personal accounts at school. The user agrees to not submit, publish, and/or display any defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, obscene, profane, sexually oriented, threatening, racially offensive or otherwise illegal material; nor shall the user encourage the use, sale, or distribution of controlled substances.

## PROGRAMS

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Early Childhood program is recognized as a religion readiness program to prepare the child for concepts developed during the elementary years. Participation in the Early Childhood program does not fulfill one year of religious education instruction prior to the program year of preparation for reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

Three, four, and five year olds (by Sep. 30, 2018) and children enrolled in private, public, and Ascension kindergarten classes are invited to participate in the Early Childhood Program. The program meets weekly during the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass in assigned classrooms in Ascension school.

Volunteer adult catechists, assisted by teen volunteers, plan and prepare appropriate experiences based on Pflaum Gospel Weeklies “Seeds” Program. The curriculum lays the foundation for the stories (Scripture), beliefs (Doctrine), and celebrations (Liturgical Year) of our Catholic faith.

Parents are asked to notify the office if they will be leaving the premises. If a parent is late picking up the child after class, the child will be brought to the office and may be picked up there.

### ELEMENTARY

Grades 1-5 use Pflaum Gospel Weeklies, a liturgically-based catechetical program that helps parents participate in their important role as the first educators of your children.

***The Gospel At Home:*** This simple resource connects you to your child(ren)’s lesson each week. Designed for busy families, *The Gospel At Home* provides a short description of the Sunday Gospel plus suggested activities and discussion starters for each age level. These easy-to-do ideas will bring families together to share what each member has learned about the Gospel that they heard on Sunday (and studied in class.) Available in English or Spanish.

**Sign up:** *The Gospel at Home* in your inbox at <http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/gospel-at-home/>

### MIDDLE SCHOOL

Grade 6 uses Loyola’s “Finding God” series. “Finding God: Our Response to God’s Gifts” is based on a spiral curriculum that integrates the fundamental themes of the catechism of the Catholic Church as well as Scripture and Catholic Social Teachings. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen.

Grades 7 and 8 use Loyola’s “Finding God”, Junior High text:

**Grade 7—Following Jesus**

**Grade 8— Celebrating Church**

Soundly grounded in Scripture and tradition, the “Finding God”, Junior High series is designed to offer meaningful faith experiences that are relevant to young people’s lives and to draw them into a closer, lifelong relationship with Jesus. The program includes culturally relevant material, making it easier for catechists to engage young people on their faith journey.

In addition, middle school students spend a portion of each class session discussing the Sunday Scripture readings.

## **RESPECT LIFE/HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

According to the Religious Education Policies promulgated by the Department of Educational Services through the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, we here at Ascension are charged with ensuring that, “all catechetical efforts should incorporate a respect life component that includes the Catholic perspective on sexuality.” Grades 6, 7, and 8 will use the *Theology of the Body for Teens* Curriculum, “Discovering God’s Plan for Love and Life”.

### **Grade 6—**

- Session 1: Who Am I? Discovering My True Identity
- Session 2: Our Story: God’s Plan, Human Sin, Jesus’ Love
- Session 3: Me, Myself, and I: Body and Soul

### **Grade 7—**

- Session 1: How Should I Act?
- Session 2: Sex, Love, & Chastity
- Session 3: To Use or Not To Use? That is the Question; the Opposite of Love

### **Grade 8—**

- Session 1: Vocation: God’s Call, My Response
- Session 2: Hope & Future: Daily Living Out the Language of the Body

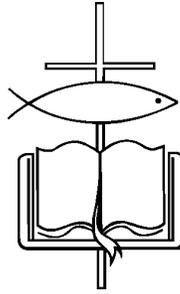
## **HIGH SCHOOL**

High school (Grades 9-12) religious education is one component of Ascension's total youth ministry program. Students meet in *HomeLife* groups in the catechists' homes or at Ascension. (Call the Youth Ministry Office at 253-5171, ext. 111). Confirmation preparation for high school students will be planned on an individual basis through the Religious Education Office.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

We welcome children with special needs to our program and will work with the parents and catechist to design appropriate learning experiences. Parents should bring these needs to the attention of the Coordinator at the time of registration.

## **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**



### **PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM OR RECEPTION INTO THE CHURCH**

An elementary, middle school, or high school age child must complete AT LEAST ONE full year of preparation prior to year of baptism or reception into the Church. This preparation will take place within the children's catechumenate process, adapted from the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The parent(s) of the child will participate with the child in the process. The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist will normally be received at the Easter Vigil Mass during the second year of preparation.

Instruction for the sacrament of Penance will take place during the process; opportunities for first reception of the sacrament will be available prior to the Easter Vigil for those already baptized and at a later time for the newly baptized.

### **CHILDREN'S CATECHUMENATE**

The Catechumenate (adapted for children) works with children and families on an individual basis. Options include meeting on Sunday mornings from Sep. through June. Students attend classes on Sunday mornings from 9:30am-10:30am, and then attend 10:30am Mass

Children in the process celebrate the RCIA rites at Mass in the presence of the community.

## **RECEPTION OF SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION, EUCHARIST, AND CONFIRMATION**

A child preparing for these sacraments must have completed a full year of religious instruction IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING the program year of preparation and reception of the sacraments. Normally this preparation will take place within the regular sacramental preparation programs (see pp.15-17). Students entering the program after an extended absence or without prior religious instruction may be required to complete the children's catechumenate process. Eligibility for sacrament preparation and reception will be determined by the Coordinator of Religious Education and/or the pastor of the Church of the Ascension.

A child entering Ascension's Religious Education programs from another parish will submit a letter/report from the previously attended program's director/coordinator stating that the child was a participating member of a class the current or previous year.

## SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Instruction for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) is required before a child receives First Eucharist (First Communion). Preparation normally takes place during second grade. Preparation for First Reconciliation for children is the responsibility of the parent, in cooperation with the parish.

The Sacrament of Penance preparation program consists of these components:

- ◇ regular attendance in Religious Education classes
- ◇ a session for parents on **Monday, Oct. 8** at 7:00pm in the Witzman Center. Books and calendars will be distributed at this time
- ◇ materials can be picked up the weekend of Dec. 15-16 for the final preparation at home for First Reconciliation
- ◇ children's attendance at the Zacchaeus Day activities during class on Monday, Jan. 14, 2019
- ◇ completion of a book (supplied by the parish)
- ◇ decoration of a candle (supplied by the parish) to be used at the First Reconciliation celebration
- ◇ celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation on **Saturday, Jan. 19, 2019**, at 11:00am in the church

## FIRST EUCHARIST

Instruction for First Eucharist (First Communion), in addition to participation in a First Penance preparation program, is required before a child receives First Communion. The preparation normally takes place during second grade. Preparation will be the responsibility of the parent in cooperation with the parish.

The First Eucharist preparation program consists of these components:

- ◇ regular attendance in Religious Education classes
- ◇ a session for parents on **Monday, Jan. 28, 2019**, 4:30-5:30pm or 7:00-8:00pm in the Witzman Center, regarding the preparations at home for First Communion
- ◇ completion of a book (supplied by the parish); books and calendars will be distributed at the meeting on Jan. 28
- ◇ completion of a family banner to hang in the church on First Communion Day, due **Apr. 13, 2019**
- ◇ participation in the "Jesus Day" retreat for children on **Saturday, Apr. 13, 2019** from 1pm—4pm in the school
- ◇ participation in a family session in the church on **Friday, Apr. 26, 2019**, 6:30-8:00 p.m.
- ◇ celebration of First Communion at one of the following: 5pm and 12:15 masses on the weekends of **May 4/5 and May 11/12, 2019.**



## CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Instruction for the Sacrament of Confirmation is required before a student is confirmed, usually in the eighth grade. The Confirmation preparation process begins at the end of the sixth grade year and lasts through Grades 7 & 8. Preparation for students above the eighth grade will be considered on an individual basis and will be accomplished through a special process (see p.16).

**Note: The Confirmation Orientation meeting for incoming Grade 7 students is scheduled for Monday, Sep. 10, 2018, at 7:00pm in the Witzman Center.**

**The Confirmation program consists of the following for incoming seventh graders**  
(to be confirmed in 2019)

- ◇ candidate's regular attendance in religious education class (at least 80%).
- ◇ attendance by parent and student at an orientation session before beginning the preparation process. (see above; call the RE Office to schedule a makeup session)
- ◇ sponsor information due Oct. 8, 2018
- ◇ candidate's and parent's/sponsor's participation in the Rite of Invitation during the 8:30am Mass on Jan. 27, 2019; and sponsor meeting following at 9:30am; candidate's session at 9:30am in the school cafeteria.
- ◇ attendance by student at the CHOSEN sessions on Feb 10 and 14, and Mar 3, 10, and 17 at 6:30pm in the school building, as well as the fall sessions on Aug 11, 18, and 25, and Sep 8, 15, and 22.
- ◇ attendance by student and parent at information session on **Monday, May 20, 2019** at 7:00pm in the Witzman Center
- ◇ Candidate's participation in the Confirmation Retreat on Aug. 2-3, 2019, at Maria Stein.
- ◇ Candidate's completion of a minimum of two approved short-term service experiences and the completion of the Christian Service Reflection Form, reflecting on the service before Confirmation in Oct. 2019.

**The Confirmation program consists of the following for current eighth graders:**  
(to be confirmed in 2018)

- ◇ candidate's regular attendance in religious education class (at least 80%).
- ◇ candidate's participation in the Confirmation Retreat weekend, Aug. 3-4 2017 at Maria Stein
- ◇ candidate's attendance at CHOSEN sessions on Aug. 19 and 26; Sep 19, 16, 23, and 30.
- ◇ sponsor reflections due Sep. 10 (#2), Oct 8 (#3), Oct. 29 (#4)
- ◇ candidate's participation in the Penance Service and Confirmation practice on Saturday, Oct. 6, 2018 from 9am—noon in the church (Sponsors, 10:15am-noon for practice)
- ◇ candidate's completion of approved Long-Term service, and completion of the Christian Service Reflection form reflecting on the service before May 6, 2019
- ◇ celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation during Mass at 7pm. on **Thursday, Oct 11, 2018**

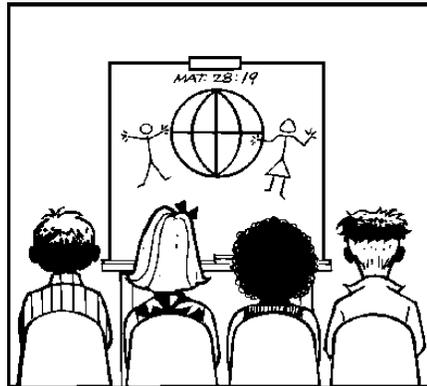
### **CONFIRMATION PREPARATION FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS (Grades 9-12)**

The student must have attended the regular program for one year immediately prior to the sacramental preparation year and must participate in the Youth Ministry HomeLife program during the year of sacramental preparation. Participation in all Confirmation preparation activities is expected (page 16-17). In addition, participation in classroom Confirmation preparation sessions will be determined on an individual basis.



## **BIBLES**

Bibles will be available for use in the classroom for Grades 3-5. If you are interested in purchasing a Children's Bible, please stop by the Office for samples. Each student in Grade 6 will receive the Catholic Youth Bible. The translation is the New American Bible, which is used in the Church's liturgy. Students must bring these books to class each week through Grade 8.



## **ASSESSMENT OF CATECHESIS/RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (ACRE)**

As a means of providing information about areas of strength in our programs, as well as areas that may need attention or improvement, students in Grades 5 and 8 participate in the National Catholic Education Association's Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education (ACRE). The assessment is administered during a class session in late Jan.-early Feb. The assessment tool evaluates the student's basic religious knowledge, as well as religious beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceptions. Student scores for the Religious Knowledge section will be reported individually and mailed to parents.

## PRAYER/WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Throughout the school year, students will participate in weekly prayer in a variety of settings within the classroom. Formal worship experiences are planned for:

<u>Early Childhood:</u>	Oct. 28	All Saints Celebration
	Dec. 16	Advent Celebration
	Feb. 10	Love Sunday Celebration
	May 5	Last Day Celebration
<u>Elementary:</u>	Sep. 24	Opening Prayer Service
	Oct. 29	All Saints Day Prayer Service
	Nov. 19	Thanksgiving Mass
	Dec. 17	Advent Prayer Service
	Apr. 15	Lent Reconciliation Service
	May 13	End-of-Year Mass
<u>Middle School</u>	Sep. 23	Opening Prayer Service
	Nov. 18	Thanksgiving Prayer Service
	Dec. 16	Advent Prayer Service
	Apr. 7-14	Reconciliation
	May 5	End-of-Year Prayer Service



## SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

### COLLECTIONS

Elementary and middle school students are invited to share with those who are less fortunate.

- Grade 1: Helping Hands**
- Grade 2: Food Pantry**
- Grade 3: St. Vincent dePaul Society**
- Grade 4: Network of Care**
- Grade 5: Marianist Mission**
- Grade 6: Catholic Social Services Refugee Settlement Program**
- Grade 7: Elizabeth's New Life Center**
- Grade 8: Catch the Building Spirit- Habitat for Humanity**



In addition, parents are encouraged to help their children participate in the parish's outreach: monthly food collection (3rd Sunday of each month), Giving Tree (Advent), Operation Rice Bowl (Lent), and Freedom Tree (July 4<sup>th</sup>).

### **MINISTRY OF SERVING**

Boys and girls in Grade 4 and above are invited to participate in the ministry of serving during the parish's Sunday Eucharist celebrations. Training for servers will be offered at a time to be announced.

### **YOUTH MINISTRY**

Sixth, seventh and eighth grade students have the opportunity to get involved in activities offered by Ascension's Youth Ministry Program. Activities are promoted through the monthly *Parent Page*, the Parish website, and classroom announcements.

### **OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

Catechists, with the help of parents, are encouraged to plan activities to be of service to those in need in our parish or local community. Parents are encouraged to include their children in participation in parish service opportunities, such as the Food Pantry, Mother's Day Rose Sale, and Coffee & Donuts

## **VOLUNTEERS**

**Catechists:** The catechists participating in our Religious Education Programs are all volunteers. These catechists are dedicated to the Christian ministry in which they are involved. We provide training workshops and courses for our catechists to acquaint them with the various aspects of our programs and to prepare them for this teaching ministry. Each catechist is encouraged to become certified through the Archdiocese of Cincinnati or to be working toward certification.

**Assistants:** Responsible teens volunteer as assistants in the Early Childhood Program. Teen and adult volunteers provide assistance in the elementary and middle school classrooms, the RE office, and in other facets of the programs.

**Volunteer Forms are available in the Religious Education Office.**

We are always interested in working with people who wish to volunteer in our programs.

## **PARENT/STUDENT SIGNED AGREEMENT**

The custodial parent/guardian and STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-8 must sign and return the RE Handbook signature page (the last page of this document), indicating that they have read, understand, and support the policies contained in the handbook. Parents are asked to review the contents of the handbook with their children before classes begin.

## GROWING PEACE AT ASCENSION

The Religious Education Programs will again be "Growing Peace at Ascension." In an effort to promote the Christian virtues of peace and nonviolence in the family and the classroom, as well as in the world around us, the program will be re-introduced on opening day and continued throughout the year.

Each new family will receive a booklet, "Families Creating a Circle of Peace" (replacement books are available at cost). All families are encouraged to sign a **Family Pledge**. Each family who signs the pledge may send in a "peace dove" with the family name on it; the dove will be displayed in the school.

Each class (Gr. 1-8) will sign a **Classroom Pledge**; a **School Pledge** will be signed by a representative from each class during a prayer ritual.

Catechists will be asked to nominate students they observe demonstrating one of the components of the pledge:

- \*Showing respect to others
- \*Respecting nature
- \*Communicating peacefully
- \*Playing non-violently
- \*Forgiving, listening
- \*Acting with courage

Nominees will be given a certificate of appreciation and will have their name entered in a monthly drawing.

In the past, students donated pennies to purchase and install a "peace pole" on the church property. Please be sure to visit the Mary Peace Garden with your child!



### **PLEDGE OF NON-VIOLENCE**

***To lessen the violence and spread the peace,  
We pledge:  
To communicate honestly and listen with care,  
To respect one another and nature as well,  
To forgive one another and make our amends,  
To play without violence and act with courage,***

***To stop the violence whenever we can.***

## YOUTH MINISTRY

**Jeanne Fairbanks**  
**Coordinator of Youth Ministry**

253-5171 ext. 111

[jfairbanks@ascensionkettering.org](mailto:jfairbanks@ascensionkettering.org) and [ascensionym.com](http://ascensionym.com)

### **Junior High Youth Ministry (JHYM)**

JHYM is open to all 6-8th grade parish youth and friends from both Catholic and public schools. We offer a welcoming and accepting environment rooted in our Catholic heritage and hope youth will feel at home with us. Quarterly events are planned and facilitated by the Coordinator of Youth Ministry and Parent Core Team. Junior High students are also invited to join the High School students for service events throughout the year, such as Share the Bounty, Cookies and Caroling and the Lenten Food Fast.

**High School Youth Ministry (HSYM):** is open to all 9-12th grade parish teens and friends from Catholic and public schools. We offer a welcoming and accepting environment rooted in our Catholic heritage and hope teens will feel at home with us. We form our Christian community through in-depth faith sharing, creative prayer, active learning experiences, and peer ministry. All our activities help teens ENCOUNTER Christ in their everyday lives, build a RELATIONSHIP with Him and with others, and teach them DISCIPLESHIP - how to put their faith into action each day.

HSYM LIFE Nights are each Sunday from 6:00-8:00 p.m., Sep. – Apr. LIFE nights involve faith formation, social, service and prayer activities, as well as both large and small group (LIFE group) elements. LIFE Nights/LIFE groups are open to all 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders and LIFE groups can be joined at any time during the year or during their high school career.

We also offer a variety of other HSYM events through the year, including guest speakers, games, scavenger hunts, retreats, service projects, interparish activities, regional rallies, national conferences and more. A booklet on service projects for the year is available from the RE, School, and Youth Offices.

### **Communication to Youth, Parents, and Parish**

Youth Ministry communications will be primarily electronic, and also published in the bulletin.

**Flyers and letters:** may be sent home in RE/school classrooms, and/or YM events

**Forms:** may be available at church doors and pamphlet racks

**Website: [ascensionym.com](http://ascensionym.com):** updates, calendar events, YM monthly newsletter, and forms

**Flocknote:** Sign-up for a free Flocknote account at [flocknote.com/ascensionkettering](http://flocknote.com/ascensionkettering) in order to receive the monthly newsletter and weekly updates through e-mail and text

## Whole Church Catechesis

Whole Church Catechesis is a parish renewal movement that draws the whole parish community into a faith journey of on-going learning and conversion. Every parishioner learns and shares about faith using the Scriptures drawn from the Sunday Mass assembly. Families are encouraged to spend some time each week prayerfully preparing for the next Sunday's gospel reading. Readings, a reflection, and questions are found on the front of the church bulletin and on the parish web site ([www.ascensionkettering.org](http://www.ascensionkettering.org)). Elementary RE classes will spend a few minutes reflecting on the Scripture each week in class. For a number of years, Middle School classes have had such a reflection as part of their class.

### Prayers and Guidelines for Young Catholics

According to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Graded Course of Study, students are expected to learn/memorize certain prayers, lists, and skills at the developmentally appropriate time. Because parents are their children's primary teachers and because classroom time is limited, parents are asked to accomplish this at home. To facilitate this, each new family is given a copy of "Prayers and Guidelines for Young Catholics", a booklet which contains most of the material in the lists below. Replacement copies are available at cost. Each prayer/list/skill is followed by a range of grade levels. The first number indicates the grade by which the material should be introduced, the second number indicates the grade by which the material should be mastered. For example, a child should be introduced to the Sign of the Cross no later than Grade 1 and should be able to say the prayer with appropriate gestures in Grade 2.

#### Prayers

Sign of the Cross	1-2
Our Father	1
Hail Mar.y	1
Glory Be	1
Meal prayers	1-3
Types of Prayer	3
Most Mass prayers	1-5
Act of Contrition	2
Memorare	2-5
Apostles Creed	3
Act of Faith	4
Act of Hope	4
Act of Love	4
Nicene Creed	5-8

#### Lists/Skills

Two Great Commandments	1-3
Rosary & Mysteries	2-6
Structure of Mass	1-8
Liturgical year	1-8
Persons of the Trinity	2-3
Ten Commandments	2-8
Seven Sacraments	3-5
Finding chapter & verse in Bible	4-6
Four Gospels	4-6
Corporal Works of Mercy	4-7
Spiritual Works of Mercy	4-7
Precepts of the Church	4-8
Gifts & Fruits of the Spirit	6-8
Virtues	6-8

## **\*You are the Church in Your Home\***

A family is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us and acts in the world. The early Church expressed this truth by calling the Christian family a Domestic or Church of the Home. As families, you carry out the mission of the Church of the Home in ordinary ways when:

- You believe in God and that God cares about you, in good times and bad.
- You love and value others. Children form a picture of God from the love they experience from their family.
- You foster intimacy. To share oneself and be accepted within a family is indispensable to forming a close relationship with the Lord.
- You evangelize by professing faith in God, acting in accord with gospel values and setting an example of Christian living for our children and for others.
- You educate, especially by example. Sometimes children listen and learn; sometimes they teach you. Our wisdom and theirs come from the same Spirit.
- You pray together, thanking God for blessings, reaching for strength, asking for guidance in crisis and doubt.
- You serve one another, sacrificing our own wants for the other's good. Our `deaths' and `risings' become compelling signs of Jesus' own life, death and resurrection.
- You forgive and seek reconciliation. When you do so, family members come to believe that, no matter what, they are still loved by their family and by God.
- You celebrate life, whether for birthdays, weddings, births, deaths, first day of school or graduation, new jobs, old friends, family reunions, surprise visits, holy days and holidays. You come together when tragedy strikes or in joyful celebration of the sacraments. As you gather for a meal, you break bread and share stories, becoming more fully the community of love Jesus calls us to be.
- You welcome the stranger, the lonely one, the grieving person into your home. You give drink to the thirsty and food to the hungry. The gospel assures us that when you do this, they are strangers no more, but Christ.
- You act justly in your community when you treat others with respect, stand against discrimination and racism, and work to overcome hunger, poverty, homelessness, illiteracy.
- You affirm life as a precious gift from God. You oppose whatever destroys life, such as abortion, euthanasia, unjust war, capital punishment, neighborhood and domestic violence, poverty and racism. Within your family, you make peace.
- You raise up vocations to the priesthood and religious life. This is especially fostered through family prayer, involvement in parish life, and by the way you speak of priests, sisters, brothers, and permanent deacons.

*Follow the Way of Love:*

*A Pastoral Message of the US Catholic Bishops to Families.*

*...published in 1994*



## *Parents' Prayer*

*God, You are Parent to us.  
You have made us in Your image and likeness.  
Help us to become more like You  
in our relationships with our children.*

*God, You are always there for us.  
Even when we turn away from Your love,  
You stay with us always.  
Teach us to be good parents.*

*Help us to be present to our children in good times  
and in bad times.  
May we support them and love them as You have loved us —  
unconditionally.*

*God, give us the strength and determination to be just and  
honest in our relationships with our children.  
Give us the patience and perseverance to face each day,  
knowing You are with us, as we try to become  
the parents we must become for our children.*



*As for me and my house,  
We will serve the Lord.  
Joshua 24:15*

**Please complete  
and return the  
signed form!**

## Ascension Religious Education Signature Page

### Student Directory and Email

Ascension Religious Education will publish family address and phone information *unless* families request that the information NOT be listed in the Student Directory.

Do not list phone number       Do not list address

As we use email to correspond with parents on a regular basis, please provide us with a current email address(s):

### Urgent Communications:

We use the Parish Flock Notes program to contact families; this requires a cell phone number so that we can send *text messages* as necessary. Please provide us with at least one cell phone number; you are welcome to list more. (These numbers will not be publicized in any way).

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### Internet Access

- A. Our family does not have regular internet access in our home, and wishes to receive a hard copy of the RE Handbook. (Sign below, then return this form to the RE Office.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

- B. Our family does have regular internet access in our home and is able to access the Religious Education website: [www.ascensionkettering.org/religious-education](http://www.ascensionkettering.org/religious-education), for the RE Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Compliance:** Our family has read the web version of the Parent Handbook. We are aware of and understand the contents of the Handbook. By signing and returning this sheet, we have agreed to accept the policies, rules, and regulations of the Ascension Religious Education Program. (Sign here ONLY if you have access to and have completely read the web version of the handbook.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date