

# St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Religious Education Handbook

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**Approved for 2018-2019**

## *Parish Mission Statement*

*Saint Thomas Parish is committed to facilitate the lifelong spiritual growth of its members through the celebration of the sacraments and catechesis to deepen their faith in God, through the word of God and by serving others with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

*Dear Students,*

*I am happy to greet you all at the outset of this academic year of Faith Formation. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man." Our prayer and plan for you is the same: make you grow in wisdom and age and favor with God and man. This is what your loving parents, your teachers, and me long for and strive for for you. Be open to the grace of God. Let God be operative in you.*

*Dear Catechists and Parents,*

*When our knowledge increases day by day in science and technology, we should also increase the same with our sacred scripture, traditions, the sacraments and the Church. We should learn to balance knowledge of sciences with our catechesis. Sunday school is only a reminder that we must spend quality time deepening our faith. One of the major problems of the Catholic faith is that we take our faith for granted. Jesus compares faith to a mustard seed; like the seed it is to be planted carefully and nurtured cautiously. It needs regular watering, fertilizing, and protection from worms and weeds. God is the Father, is the Farmer and everyone who is involved in faith formation participates in the work of the Father. The goal of Catechism is the conversion and growth in the spirit of the whole person: mind, body and soul to God. Catechism is Christ centered; it is living and learning in the midst of a Christian community that shares, nurtures and strengthens the faith of the individuals who make up the church.*

*I appreciate all of you who are involved directly or indirectly in this great ministry of Faith Formation.*

*May God bless you,  
Fr. George J. Nangachiveettil*

## General Information

Welcome to the St. Thomas the Apostle Religious Education Program. Faith Formation addresses the lifelong process by which we may come to know and love the Lord as true disciples of the faith through the teachings of Jesus Christ, Sacred Scriptures, Church Doctrine, the Sacraments, Church traditions, life experiences, and prayer. The following information is intended to provide parents with a comprehensive overview of the RE program and requirements. We strive to provide a high-quality program that will evangelize to create disciples of the Catholic faith and Jesus Christ. This handbook is for your guidance in understanding the goals of our program.

### Meeting Times

Preschool\* through 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students meet Sunday mornings from 9:15 – 10:30 a.m.

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students will be enrolled in the Confirmation program and will follow the schedule provided to them at the first parent/student meeting.

Post-Confirmation students will meet Sunday evenings from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. and will follow the schedule provided.

All schedules will be available on the parish website.

Retreat dates for all grades and programs are TBA. Parents and students will be notified as soon as the dates are confirmed.

**Please have your child to class on time. Late students disrupt class and lose precious class time for everyone. Please do not pick your children up before the end of class. This is also very disruptive. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!**

**\*Preschool students must be four years old at registration, and they must be potty trained.**

### Tuition Fees

The 2018-2019 tuition fees for **registered parishioners** are **\$70.00** per child for students in Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Fees for students enrolled in the Confirmation program will be **\$90.00 per child**. Fees will not exceed **\$260.00 per family**. At least half of the total must be paid by December 1st. Tuition fees are due in full by March 31. Unpaid balance reminders will be sent in January. Payments towards balance can be made throughout the year and will be recorded for your convenience. Please notify the Administrator of Faith Formation if the fees present a financial hardship. Catechists will receive a 50% discount inclusive of Post Confirmation Religious Education classes.

Fees for Post Confirmation Religious Education will be \$70 per student paid in full at the beginning of the program year and **are not subject to the family maximum of \$260.**

Tuition for **non-registered parishioners** is **\$135.00** per student PreK through Post Confirmation.

Required Registration Forms:

- Registration Information Form
- Permission to Use Photographs
- WCD Policy
- Driving Compliance
- Baptismal Certificate on File

## Attendance

Regular class attendance is very important. If your child misses a class, please check with his/her catechist to find out what was covered in that class. If your child misses more than two classes in a row without adequate notification, you will be contacted regarding the absences.

In order to receive the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion in 2nd Grade, and in combination with other requirements, students must attend at least 75% of Religious Education classes at St. Thomas during 1st grade or satisfactorily complete a similar program at another church or school, to be approved by the administrator. In order to enter the Confirmation program in 9th and 10th grade, and in combination with other requirements, students must attend at least 75% of Religious Education classes at St. Thomas during 8th grade or satisfactorily complete a similar program at another church or school, to be approved by the administrator.

In addition to regular attendance at Sunday Mass, Mass on Holy Days of obligation (6) and RE classes, it is strongly encouraged that students attend Stations of the Cross, Rosary (Mondays at 7:00 pm, Oct and May before each Mass), Vespers, and First Friday Adoration at least once each during the year to honor and preserve our Catholic faith and culture. Reconciliation is also required at least once a year in accordance with Catholic doctrine.

## Mass Attendance

Students should attend Mass on a regular basis. If your child is enrolled in a sacrament class, they **must attend on a regular basis.**

## Sacrament Requirements

Students enrolled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade will receive **First Reconciliation and First Communion.** They must be baptized prior to the reception of these sacraments and have attended a Religious Education or Catholic school program the year prior to enrolling in a sacrament preparation class. This requirement is met by attending at least 75% of the classes during the first-grade year at St. Thomas. Students who attended another program the year prior should notify the administrator and provide a letter of good standing from the former parish. A copy of their Baptismal certificate must be given to the Administrator with the child's registration form. Students must attend at least 75% of classes and Sunday Mass on a regular/weekly basis, attend all retreats and parents must attend all scheduled parent meetings/retreats.

Ordinarily, students enrolled in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades will be enrolled the Confirmation preparation class. This is a two-year program. Students must have attended a Religious Education or Catholic school program the year prior to enrolling in the Confirmation program. This requirement is met by attending at least 75% of the classes during the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year at St. Thomas. Students who attended another program the year prior should notify the administrator and provide a letter of good standing from the former parish. A copy of their Baptismal certificate must be given to the Administrator with the child's registration form. Students must attend at least 75% of all Faith Sharing sessions, complete thirty hours of community service (at least twenty hours through planned program service projects and at least ten from other sources), attend all parent/student meetings and attend the St. Meinrad retreat at the close of their second confirmation year. Students will attend Sunday Mass on a regular/weekly

basis. Confirmation students will be required to participate in the RE Winter Retreat in February or VBS in June but are encouraged and invited to attend both. Attendance at these experiences is encouraged to foster a sense of community within the St. Thomas youth demographic and to shape disciples of the faith for the future. Parents are required to attend the Confirmation parent meeting at the start of each program year with their student.

Failure to comply with the above rules may result in a delay of reception of the said sacrament.

Students for who have made their Confirmation previously at another parish are welcome to enroll in the Post Confirmation religious education class upon proof of reception of sacrament of Confirmation.

### **Parental Expectations**

Parents are required to attend all meetings/retreats/activities that pertain to their child's enrollment status. Information crucial to family formation will be provided at these meetings to aid in understanding the St. Thomas RE program, student progress, and our Catholic faith. Mandatory meetings/retreats/activities for parents include but are not limited to: Parent/Student Confirmation Meeting at the beginning of program year, Confirmation poster making, First Communion banner making, beginning of year RE meeting, First Communion/Reconciliation retreats, and parent meetings, midyear parent meeting, etc. Parents are the first and best catechists for their children. In addition to regular Mass attendance on Sundays and Holy Days and assuring regular class attendance, parents should be engaging their children in regular discussion, behavior modeling, and formation. Family formation is an integral part of the religious education process.

### **Catechist Expectations**

Catechists should be practicing Catholics in good faith following the laws of the Catholic Church and attending Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days at St. Thomas.

According to The National Directory for Catechesis the "Six Tasks of Catechesis" are:

- To Promote Knowledge of the Faith
- Liturgical Education
- Moral Formation
- Teaching to Pray
- Education for Community Life
- Missionary Initiative

## Materials

Textbooks are provided to students in PreK – 8th grades. If your child loses a textbook or other resource provided by the program, you may be assessed a fee to replace/purchase a new copy for \$20.00 or appropriate rate.

All school supplies are provided by the program.

Currently, our RE program uses Pflaum Gospel Weeklies (PGW) as the main support resource in our PreK through 8<sup>th</sup>-grade classes. PGW cover the Gospel reading for each week along with social justice teaching, Church news, and other topics that pertain to our Catholic faith. All grade levels reflect the same information in an age appropriate format. PGW can be used for family formation throughout the week in the home and are conducive to discussion with multiple age levels. Catechists will send the PGW issue home with students at the end of each class. During periods of school breaks or holidays, PGW issues will be sent home prior to the break so that faith formation can be continued in the home with no interruptions. Pflaum Gospel Weeklies website can be accessed at [www.pflaum.com](http://www.pflaum.com) for additional resources. PGW are assigned accordingly:

Seeds – Preschool

Promise – Kindergarten-1<sup>st</sup>

Good News – 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>

Venture - 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>

Visions – 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup>

The second grade/sacramental prep class will use Signs of Grace as the main curriculum resource in conjunction with the St. Thomas Sacramental Prep lesson plan.

Conventional textbooks are also used within the classrooms.

A Bible will be given as a gift from the Religious Education program to all 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students and will be used in classes henceforth. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>-grade classes will have special emphasis on use of and knowledge of the Bible. Bibles will not be stored for students as our storage space is limited but students will be expected to bring bibles to every class unless otherwise instructed. Replacements can be purchased for \$20.

Catholicism for Dummies will be provided to all 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students as a reference for review of the Catholic faith during the second semester of the program year. The reference book will not be stored for students as our space is limited, but students will be expected to bring the book with them to every class unless otherwise instructed. This book will be helpful to them as they go through Confirmation preparation as well. Replacements can be purchased for \$20.

All classrooms will have a supply of Bibles and Catechisms for use during class.

## Communication

Information regarding class schedules, events, changes, requests, service and volunteer opportunities, etc. will be sent via email, USPS, classroom handouts, fliers, bulletins, Facebook, St. Thomas website, or pulpit announcements. Please check these sources regularly for the most up-to-date information.

## **Classroom Discipline**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. If a student is consistently disruptive, a phone call will be made to the parents. The teachers have a lot of material to cover in 1-2 hours, (depending on grade) and if they have to constantly correct a disruptive child, time is taken away from the other students.

## **Dress Code**

Students should be properly attired when attending classes. Basically, if an outfit is inappropriate for school, it is inappropriate for Religious Education classes. If a student is not properly attired, parents will be contacted and asked to bring appropriate attire for your child. Please give special consideration to attire for prayer services, participation in the Mass, sacraments, and other programs.

## **Prayer Services**

Students in grades Preschool – 8<sup>th</sup> will have prayer services during the year. These services will provide an opportunity for the children to plan as well as participate in the service. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend these services and share some “prayer time” with your children. Dates are included with the calendar. Students will arrive in the church and be seated by 10:00 for special announcements. All prayer services will begin at 10:05 am. Students will be dismissed back to their respective classrooms with their teachers for final thoughts and closing prayer with their teachers at approximately 10:25 a.m. Times are subject to change depending on the needs of the program.

## **Service Projects**

Besides learning about our faith, our students will have opportunities to “live their faith” through service projects. Service projects will be at various times throughout the year and information will be sent home from the catechist as it becomes available. Each class will do at least one service project a year and no more than three for the entire year. The RE program sponsors a child through the Unbound organization. Your child may participate in this project by bringing “spare change” for our sponsorship jar.

## **ACRE Testing**

Each year the Archdiocese of Indianapolis asks schools and parishes to administer the Assessment of Children/Youth for Religious Education in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades in January. This is a standardized test designed to evaluate the general knowledge and progress of students enrolled in Catholic education programs. The tests are analyzed, and the results are provided to assist in the improvement and strengthening of the weak areas of our program. Individual test results are available to parents upon request.

## **Safe and Sacred**

The Safe and Sacred program is an awareness training program for the protection of children. All adults who come in contact with children as catechists, staff, and volunteers are required to complete the training. The certification and background check are renewed every five years. All catechists are informed of the proper behavior to display while around children.

## **Circle of Grace**

Circle of Grace is the third component of Archdiocesan child protection program that teaches children to know that they are special and created in the image of God, helps them recognize behavior that is harmful to them and empowers them to tell their concerns to a trusted adult. Circle of Grace lessons are taught throughout the year by catechists and the Administrator of Faith Formation in Grades PreK through 12<sup>th</sup>. Information is sent home at the beginning of every program year to make parents aware of this continuing effort to protect children. Please contact the Office of Faith Formation for more information.

## **Rosary Workshop Sunday and Peace Workshop Sunday**

These workshops are an annual part of our program held every October and February to teach more in-depth devotion, social justice, or give added emphasis on a particular part of the Catholic faith. All youth of St. Thomas PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are welcome to participate in these programs regardless of their RE enrollment status.

## **Winter Retreat**

Every year the Office of Faith Formation will try to provide a retreat experience for the purpose of strengthening the youth community of St. Thomas. The retreat will be for all youth of St. Thomas grades PreK through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Prayer, object lessons, Circle of Grace, music, and fellowship are just a few examples of areas to be explored during this weekend retreat. A goal of the retreat is to have a more intensive spiritual experience than can be had during a weekly class, to shape disciples of our faith for the future.

## **Vacation Bible School**

VBS will be held in early June for the youth of St. Thomas and the surrounding community. An emphasis on Catholic customs and devotions will be a prominent part of the program.

## **Alter Service, Children's Choir, Etc.**

Server training and an invitation to join the children's choir along with other ministry and service opportunities will be offered to the students annually and when appropriate throughout the program year.

## Youth Mass

A Mass celebrated for and led by the youth of St. Thomas will take place periodically throughout the year to train and enlighten the parish youth on ministry and the traditions of our faith. These occasions are but not limited to the Winter Retreat, VBS, Christmas Eve, First Communion, and Baccalaureate.

## Dismissal

**A parent or older sibling must** pick up students in PreK through 4th grade. If someone other than a parent or sibling is picking up, please contact the catechist or administrator prior to pick-up time.

Students in morning classes should exit the building through the double doors, if they are attending 10:45 Mass or through the south door if they are going home. **Please watch for children in the parking lot; they don't always remember to watch for you!**

## Cancellation Due to Bad Weather

In case of inclement weather, you will be contacted by your child's teacher prior to the start of class. A cancellation notice will be sent through email by 7:00 am and also be posted on the parish Facebook page – St. Thomas the Apostle, Fortville, Indiana.

## Wireless Communication Device (WCD)

A “wireless communication device” is a device that emits an audible signal, vibrates, displays a message or otherwise, summons or delivers a communication to the possessor. The following devices are examples of WCD's: cell phones, Smartphones, Ipads, Wi-Fi enabled or broadband access devices and other devices that allow a person to record and/or transmit, on either a real time or delayed basis, sound, video or still image, text, or other information.

Students may possess WCD's provided they are powered completely off (i.e., not just placed in vibrate or silent mode) and stored out of sight during class times. The use of any communication functionality of the WCD is expressly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, wireless Internet access, peer-to-peer networking, or any other method of communication with other devices or networks.

WCD's, including but not limited to those with cameras, may not be possessed, activated, or utilized at any time in any situation where a reasonable amount of personal privacy exists.

Students are prohibited from using a WCD in any way that might reasonably create in the mind of another person an impression of being threatened.

Possession of a WCD by a student is a privilege that may be forfeited by any student who fails to abide by the terms of this policy.

Violation of this policy will result in confiscation of the WCD. WCD's will be returned to the parent following payment of a fine (monies to be donated to our Sponsored Child). Multiple infractions will result in the WCD being completely prohibited from the premises. (\$5 per infraction)

## Phone calls

If a student needs to make a call regarding illness, transportation, etc. they must see the Administrator to use the telephone.

## Tobacco, Drugs & Alcohol

Under no circumstances will students be allowed to have possession of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs at **any** church-related activity. This includes Religious Education classes, Confirmation sessions, field trips, National Catholic Youth Conference, retreats and the St. Meinrad Retreat Weekend. Any student found in possession of these items will be sent home after a call is made to his/her parents.

## Program Changes

Periodically, the St. Thomas Religious Education Program may be subject to changes affecting curriculum, schedules, and program requirements as per budgetary restrictions, safety, recommendations of the pastor, RE Committee, Administrator of Faith Formation, or catechists. Your understanding of these unforeseen circumstances or sudden changes is greatly appreciated. The Office of Faith Formation will publicize any changes in a timely and transparent manner. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Religious Education Office Hours

The Office of Faith Formation is open on Sundays from 8:30 to 10:30 am during class times and during the week Tuesday through Thursday 9:00 am to noon or by appointment. The office has a 24-hour voicemail service. Messages received will be returned as soon as possible. The Office of Faith Formation phone number is (317) 485-5103. This is the only number answered on Sundays – please do not call the parish number. The office e-mail address is [religioused@stthomasfortville.com](mailto:religioused@stthomasfortville.com). You may schedule appointments with the Administrator by phone or via e-mail.

## Questions, Comments, Concerns

All concerns should be addressed with the Administrator of Faith Formation. Please do not voice complaints to **our volunteer catechists**.

## Adult Formation and more...

St Thomas offers several programs for adult formation and enrichment.

### *Sunday Morning Bible Study*

Come together for a self-guided discussion of the Sunday readings. Meets 9:15 to 10:30 between the morning Masses in parish hall room five. Babysitting is available upon request. Schedule coincides with the RE class schedule.

\*The Spiritual Life Committee also sponsors a weekly bible study group that meets Thursdays at 1:30 pm in the parish hall September to May. Topics and format vary.

### *Formed*

St. Thomas subscribes to Formed, an online resource for faith-based documentaries, lectures, music, books, and much more. Use the parish code to set up a personal account to access the materials.

Website: [formed.org](http://formed.org)

Parish Code: PJR9PB

### *St. Augustine Institute Kiosk*

A kiosk with books, DVD's, CD's, and more is available at the rear of the church with cash and carry options for enrichment.

### *Speakers and More*

Whenever possible the Office of Faith Formation will bring retreats, pilgrimages, speakers, and reflection opportunities to the parish. During Lent and Advent, the Spiritual Life Committee and the office of Faith Formation partner to bring enrichment opportunities to St. Thomas.

### *Ministry and Committee Service*

St. Thomas offers many opportunities to broaden the understanding of how parishes, the diocese and the Church itself function through ministry and committee service. Contact the Office of Faith Formation, parish office, or parish pastor to inquire about available opportunities.

### *Throughout the Archdiocese*

St. Thomas does its best to communicate opportunities to attend events, retreats, and services throughout the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Watch the Sunday bulletin, St. Thomas website, Criterion, and [www.ArchIndy.com](http://www.ArchIndy.com) for details. Please contact the Office of Faith Formation for assistance.

### Criterion

All registered parishioners are provided with a subscription to the Archdiocese of Indianapolis weekly newspaper the Criterion. The newspaper contains current events from around the archdiocese, nation, and world pertaining to the Church and its mission. Call the parish office if you are not currently receiving the paper.

Please consider participating in Faith Formation or parish programs and ministries:

Catechesis  
Adult Formation  
Youth Ministry  
Liturgical Ministry  
Spiritual Life  
Choir  
Women's Club  
Children's Liturgy of the Word  
And many others.....

## Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults

RCIA is available through St. Thomas. If you would like to become Catholic or just learn more about the Catholic Faith, RCIA offers the opportunity to explore a path towards conversion. Our cycle starts in September and continues through May with the Mystagogy. We have a team of talented mentors ready to support and guide you through the process. Reception of the Sacraments takes place at the Easter Vigil and is followed by a reception sponsored by the Religious Education Committee.

Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for children is also available for children not yet formed in the faith.

## Curriculum Guidelines

In accordance with the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis provides a set of curriculum guidelines for preschool through high school Religious Education programs in all parish to follow. Furthermore, these guidelines correlate with Circle of Grace lessons and sexuality teaching for teenagers. In an effort to simplify these guidelines and provide a comprehensive understanding of the mission of the teaching the Religious Education Program at St. Thomas, we have provided some important formation points for each grade on the following pages. For more information regarding the Archdiocese of Indianapolis curriculum guidelines, please follow the link below.

<http://www.archindy.org/catechesis/curriculum.html>

## **St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education**

### **Preschool**

The learner will understand/be able to:

- The church building is a sacred place where we must act appropriately
- Jesus wants us to share with others
- We show our love of our family by helping at home
- Prayer is talking to God

Prayers to learn:

- Sign of the Cross

Parent Expectations:

- Regular discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

## **St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education**

### **Kindergarten**

The learner will understand/be able to:

- The Bible tells us about creation, the life of Jesus, and that caring for others is living God's love
- Mary and Joseph were Jesus' parents on Earth
- We are lovable
- Know the difference between right and wrong
- Pray together as a class, school community, family, and Church

Prayers to learn:

- Sign of the Cross
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points with your child
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education

## Grade 1

The learner will understand/will be able to:

- Jesus is the Son of God (Second person in the Trinity), that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God (Third person in the Trinity), and the Trinity is God
- The importance of the sacraments, with an emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist, in the life of Catholics
- In baptism, we become members of God's family
- We care for all people of different cultures and races at every stage of life
- Know and participate in the Catholic tradition of prayer, and that prayer is listening to and talking with God
- Recite the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, as well as mealtime, morning, and night prayers

Prayers to learn:

- Sign of the Cross
- Hail Mary
- Glory Be
- Our Father

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education

## Grade 2

The learner will understand/be able to:

- We believe in the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit
- Jesus died for us on the cross
- Jesus brings us God's forgiveness
- God loves us even when we hurt others
- The tabernacle in a Catholic Church is where the Eucharist is kept after the celebration of Mass
- In the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation, we say we are sorry for our sins and receive God's forgiveness
- In the celebration Eucharist the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ
- Know the Ten Commandments
- At Mass we gather together as God's family
- Baptism gives us new life

Prayers to learn:

- Sign of the Cross
- Glory Be
- Hail Mary
- Our Father
- Act of Contrition
- Confiteor

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points with children
- Discussion of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and their importance to you and why it is important for your child to receive these Sacraments
- Model the precepts of the church and the desired Catholic behavior and practices
- Assure regular attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education

## Grade 3

The learner will be able to understand:

- I am important. I am loved. I am created in the image of God. (Human Dignity)
- I need God as the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- All life is precious and a gift from God. Life in the form of humans, animals and plants is a gift from God. All life must be respected and valued. (Creation Care)
- I am called to show my love of God through my words and actions.
- The liturgical year/seasons of the Church
- Saints, sainthood, vocations, community and the people of the church
- The Seven Sacraments
- Precepts of the Church
- Holy Days of Obligation
- The Ten Commandments
- The Beatitudes
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- The Four Virtues

The GREAT COMMANDMENT: “You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.” AND “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Prayers to learn:

- Memorare
- Prayer to Saint Michael
- Prayer to Guardian Angel
- Confiteor
- Act of Contrition

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass Regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education

## Grade 4

The learner will understand/be able to:

- Basic dogma, doctrine and hierarchy of the Catholic Church
- Basic social justice
- God's expectations
- Mercy for others
- A deeper understanding of sin and how sin affects our relationship with God
- God will forgive me
- The Seven Sacraments
- Precepts of the Church
- Holy Days of Obligation
- The Ten Commandments
- The Beatitudes
- Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy
- The Four Virtues

The GREAT COMMANDMENT: "You shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength." AND "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Prayers to learn:

- Memorare
- Prayer to Saint Michael
- Prayer to Guardian Angel
- Confiteor
- Act of Contrition

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education

## Grade 5

The learner will understand/be able to:

- Structure and usage of the bible
- Focus on the New Testament, the Gospels, parables, etc.
- The life of Jesus is reflected in the cycle of the liturgical year
- How the scripture is used to form the parts of the Mass
- Actively participate in the liturgical responses at Mass
- Deeper understanding of the Ten Commandments and Sacraments
- How Jesus' devout Jewish faith is the basis for our Christian faith
- The Holy Spirit came to the Apostles at Pentecost
- Pentecost is the churches birthday
- The church is a celebrating community through seasons and feasts
- A deeper meaning or service and social justice
- God created people of different races and cultures; we must appreciate and respect those differences
- Begin to take on leadership roles amongst their peers and deepen their commitment to the parish community
- Will be able to pray the rosary
- Actively participate in the Mass with responses

Prayers to learn:

- Memorare
- Confiteor
- Act of Contrition
- Apostles Creed/Nicene Creed

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education

## Grade 6

The learner will be able to understand/be able to:

- Structure and usage of the bible
- Focus on the Old Testament and its historical aspects
- The roots of our faith are contained in the Old Testament (Seder Supper)
- Relate scripture to the world around them (Pflaum Gospel Weeklies)
- A deeper meaning of service, social justice and creation care
- Take on leadership roles amongst their peers
- Deepen their commitment to the parish community
- Make a spontaneous prayer

Prayers to learn:

- Memorare
- Confiteor
- Act of Contrition
- Apostles Creed/Nicene Creed

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

## **St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education**

### **Grade 7**

The learner will understand/be able to:

- Respond to general questions regarding their faith
- Have a favorite bible story, apostle, saint, etc. and know why demonstrating with details
- Express the desire to others to attend Mass and Reconciliation when needed
- Injustices, suffering and unfairness exist in our world and that we as Christians have a responsibility to respond
- They are capable of responding
- Catholic values and how they relate to their age group
- Honestly, love and respect others
- Give appropriate responses to societal pressures
- Moral decision making
- Independently think through a moral decision and demonstrate that decision through words and actions
- Prayer of imagination, especially in the form of meditation, is a natural part of our prayer life
- Take on leadership roles amongst their peers
- Deepen their commitment to the parish

Prayers to learn:

- Rosary
- Stations of the Cross
- Spontaneous prayer

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

# **St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education**

## **Grade 8**

Eighth Grade will be an intensive review of all aspects relating to Religious Education topics, the Mass and our faith in preparation for advancement into the Confirmation program. The goal will be to continue to give these students confidence as they grow in their faith and into young adults.

- Important stories
- Traditions
- Church Doctrine
- Ten Commandments
- Social challenges of their age group and of the Church as a whole
- Gifts of the Spirit
- Fruits of the Spirit

Prayers to learn:

- Review all traditional prayers

Parent Expectations:

- Discussion and practice of the above listed points
- Assure adequate attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings

## **St. Thomas Parish Curriculum Standards for Religious Education**

### **Sacrament of Confirmation**

Please see guidelines listed under Sacramental Requirements. The Saint Thomas Confirmation Prep Program follows the guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese of Indianapolis. Additional information will be provided at the mandatory parent/student meeting held prior to the start of the program year.

The learner will be able to:

- Justify the role of Scripture, Tradition, and Magisterium
- Recall and understand the teachings of the Nicene Creed
- Value and participate in different Catholic traditions of prayer
- Engage in Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy
- Defend church teachings
- Analyze options for Catholic vocation as called by the Holy Spirit
- Examine and participate in the Sacraments
- Comprehend the Mass and Jesus' presence as Word and Eucharist
- Examine the role of the individual in the Catholic Church
- Understanding the role of the Catholic Church in forming society
- Read the Criterion
- Demonstrate a leadership role within the youth demographic of the parish community and participate regularly in service and committee work

Prayers to learn:

- Nicene Creed
- Act of Contrition
- Lectio Divina

Parent Expectations:

- Discuss and practice of the above listed points with children
- Discussion of the Sacrament of Confirmation, its importance to you, and why it is important for your child to receive this Sacrament
- Model the precepts of the Church and the desired Catholic behavior and practices
- Assure regular attendance in class
- Attend Mass regularly
- Attend parent meetings
- Plan Youth Sunday Breakfasts and provide parent drivers and chaperones as needed

**The Mystagogy of Confirmation:**  
**A Post-Confirmation Religious Education – (Proposed)**

Join this newly developed class for teenagers who have recently received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Students can join this class immediately after reception of the Sacrament in the spring for the remainder of the program year. Students who wish to continue with classes the following year will register for the program in following August. Fees will apply at that time. Students will meet on TBA evenings in the parish hall from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Fellowship, guided discussions, scriptural study, speakers, and programs designed to engage youth will be presented with spirituality, humor, and FOOD!

Spring Call Out Meeting – after the Sacrament of Confirmation has been received.

When students reach the age of eighteen they are encouraged to join young adult or other adult ministries, parish organizations, and committees to broaden their involvement in the parish communities.

**Youth Ministry**

Youth Ministry continues to be an important part of the ongoing faith formation of our youth at St. Thomas. We are still in search of new leaders for this ministry. However, in the interim, the Office of Faith Formation will do its best to continue this mission. Your help, understanding, and prayers are appreciated. If you are interested in leading this essential ministry, or would like information, please contact the Office of Faith Formation.