

# Parent / Student

Handbook



## Religious Education Program 2010-2011

# St. Thomas of Villanova Church

## Mission Statement



*Thomas of Villanova is an Augustinian,  
Roman Catholic Community.  
As the body of Christ,  
we share our time, talent and treasure  
to fulfill our Baptismal Commitment.*

*Following the example  
of  
St. Thomas of Villanova our patron,  
we strive to love and experience God  
through*

*worship,  
social justice,  
education  
and  
evangelization.*

## Philosophy

The ***Religious Education Program*** is committed to educating our youth in the Catholic heritage, to form them according to the gospel values and develop in them a full sense of participation in our Catholic community.

The ***Religious Education Program*** supports parents, who are the primary educators, by fostering the faith of their children and assisting them on living it daily.

It is through this proclamation of God's Word, within this worshipping community of St. Thomas of Villanova Church, that we strive to serve one another and the world in which we live.

## Role of the Parents

**According to the Church, parents are the first to communicate the faith to their children and to educate them.** By word and example, they form their children in the Christian life. It is the parent's responsibility to create an atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and humanity, that a well -rounded personal and social development will be fostered in the child.

**"The family forms the basic societal unit from which cultures and societies develop. From New Testament days, the Church holds the Christian family as the most basic unit of church life, too. It "constitutes a specific revelation of and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason it can and should be called a *domestic church*"**

**Parents can assure proper attitude formation of the child by being living models of the Christian life.** Parents who give first place to Christ in their lives, teach their child the most important lesson they will receive.

**The vital influence of parents on the religious development of children must be recognized.** This school can only support and strengthen the values and heritage that are already being fostered in the home.

**There must be consistency between what happens in the home and what is taught in the Religious Education Program.** Our program is based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ as implemented by the Catholic Church and we assume that these are the reasons you are sending your child to this school.

**Parents who choose to send their child to this Religious Education Program are obliged to read this handbook entirely and carefully. After doing so, please sign and return the form located on the last page to your child's catechist.**

**For more information about the Domestic Church go to:**

<http://www.fisheaters.com/domesticchurch.html>

**For Practical Advice for Parents On Preventing Child Sexual Abuse go to**  
*Parent Guidelines for Child Safety* on the main page of Religious Education.

# Administration

**Director:** Ernie Sherretta, D. Min. 610 525-4801 ext 204  
email: [rel.ed@stv.comcastbiz.net](mailto:rel.ed@stv.comcastbiz.net)

**Secretary:** Helen Savini 610 525-4801 ext 211  
email: [savini@stv.comcastbiz.net](mailto:savini@stv.comcastbiz.net)

## Office Hours

**Mon.-Fri. 9 AM – 4 PM    Wednesday until 6 pm    Sunday 8:30 am -11:30 am**

## Class Time

Grades 1-6, Jr High	Sunday	10:10 am – 11:25 pm
Grades 1-6	Wednesday	4:30 pm – 5:45 pm

**Classrooms are located in the Parish Center.**

## Class Cancellation or Snow Emergency

Classes will be canceled in the event of snow, icy weather or another emergency. Since the REP does not have a SNOW #, please listen to **KYW radio**. Parent Contacts or The PHONE TREE computer Messaging Program may call each family to notify of any cancellation.

## Calendar

The *Religious Education Program Calendar* of scheduled classes is distributed at the Orientation Meeting and is on the parish website under Catholic Education.

# Communication

- **Please provide us with you most current email address.**  
**Most of our communication will be via email to lower the costs of using paper and postage.**
- **Please be sure that all your phone numbers and emergency contact information listed with us is current and that you or another responsible adult can be reached during class time in the event of an emergency. We do not have the facility to care for a sick child.**

## **Student Book Bag and Folder**

Each student receives a **book bag** to hold the textbook and a **two pocket folder** to hold important flyers and other papers. Parents should **check** this folder after each class to collect whatever flyers, bulletins etc. are being sent home. Often these flyers contain current information about events, assignments, collections and other communications from the parish, the catechist, or the Director.

## ***Take Home Pages***

These pages in your child's textbook, ***Blest Are We, Faith and Word***, open every chapter and are used to introduce your child to the chapter's topic and provide you with an opportunity to interact with your child in the process of faith formation.

## **Parent/Guardian Orientation Meeting**

Each year the REP conducts an Orientation Meeting for parents/guardians during the Opening Session in September. This meeting is required for all parents/guardians.

## **Consultation with your child's Catechist**

Direct communication with the student's catechist is a necessary component of the catechetical process. Parents are encouraged to meet with their child's catechist and discuss any concerns or information that will enhance the learning experience. Learning disabilities, emotional and health problems are especially noteworthy.

### **In the event of a serious problem or concern, parents should:**

1. Contact the catechist immediately to discuss the situation to their satisfaction and if not satisfied, **then:**
2. Contact the Director to arrange for a conference with the parent, teacher and Director.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## ***Arrival/ Drop Off***

Students are asked to arrive at the **Parish Center Hallway** on the first floor **via the Main doors** of the Parish Center which face the Rosemont Chapel no earlier than 5 minutes before the scheduled start of class and remain there until the catechist arrives.. Drivers transporting students to the REP are asked to **follow the traffic pattern as indicated in the back of the handbook and drop off students at the Drop Off Area near the Chapel Portico area.** (See ***Drop Off Traffic Pattern*** at the end of this handbook.)

## ***Dismissal/ Pick Up***

**Sunday Students** are dismissed from the classroom. Parents are expected to come in the Parish Center using the main doors. Please wait in the Main Center Hall until 11:25 am before going to the classroom.

**Wednesday Students** are dismissed from the classroom. Parents are expected to come in the Parish Center using the main doors. Please wait in the Main Center Hall until 5:45 pm before going to the classroom.

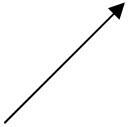
### ***Early Pick Up***

Parents who wish to pick up a student before the scheduled dismissal time must report to the **Center Hall** reception desk and sign the ***Early Pick Up Log*** and an ***Early Release Form*** to take to the student's catechist before the student will be released from class.

### ***Lateness***

Late arrivals disrupt the learning process of the class and the late individual. **Constant lateness** will require a conference with the student, parents and Director before resuming attendance at class. **Constant lateness** will prevent the reception of a Perfect Attendance Award since such an award is for attendance during class time.

### ***Absences***



Please **report each absence** to the office by advance note or by calling **the Director's Phone on the day of class: 610 525 4801 ext. 204**. During the weekday you can call Helen Savini at ext. 211. This procedure is for the safety of each child and a courtesy to our volunteer catechists.

If we do not receive a note or call in the event of an absence, **you will be contacted by phone to verify the absence.**

**Parents/Guardians/Students are expected to contact the catechist for missed work and assignments.**

### ***Excessive Absences***

**Three or more** absences a year may necessitate any of the following: special make up classes on a weekday afternoon, home schooling by the parent and evaluation by the Director, or the repetition of the year's work. **This is especially applicable to a grade year preceding the celebration of First Eucharist and Confirmation.**

### ***Homework***

Homework is an important part of the student's learning process especially since formal instruction is only 1 hour per week. **Homework is an extension of the week's lesson, preparation for the next lesson and a culminating activity for the concept of study.**

**\*TEXTBOOKS and ACTIVITY PAPERS** are important components of the learning experience. **Each student is required to have these materials for each class unless otherwise directed by the catechist.**

### ***Outside the classroom activities***

Field trips, prayer services, service opportunities and other planned activities are important elements of religious education. **Special permission slips and parent/guardian notification are required for off site events.**

### ***Completion / Dismissal / Withdrawal***

Once a student is registered in the REP, he/she is expected to **attend until the celebration of Confirmation** and is automatically re-registered each year with the reception of the signed ***Stewardship Covenant*** statement.

The **REP** attempts to meet the needs of all its students. Special consideration is given to students with learning or other disabilities.

The **REP** reserves the right to **terminate** a student due to chronic disruptive behavior, excessive lateness, a violation of any of the REP ***Student Guidelines*** and /or constant failure to cooperate with the policies and procedures of the program.

**Withdrawal** from the program for any reason requires a **written notification** from the parents/guardians to the Director. Without this written notification, transcripts of a student's records cannot be sent to another parish.

### ***Student Evaluations***

Each student's progress in the REP is evaluated twice during the school year. These **Progress Reports** are given in **January and May** and are good indicators of the student's growth in religious formation. Comments from the teacher, student and parent are expected as part of this evaluation.

### ***REP Perfect Attendance Award***

This award is given to each student in grades K- Jr. High who attends **every scheduled** class of the REP during the scheduled time of the calendar year. **Constant lateness can prevent the reception of this award.**

### ***Memorization***

Memory is a God-given gift which should be developed for the good of the individual and the community. At each grade level there are prayers and other important concepts and lists that the student should memorize to enhance their knowledge of the Catholic Faith. These are located at the front or back of each grade's textbook.

## ***Student Guidelines and Responsibilities***

1. Students are expected to behave in a Christian manner. **Respect** and a **willingness** to learn are qualities that are expected of each individual involved in our school. Disruption or unruly conduct has **no** place in our program.
2. All students are to respect their property as well as that belonging to others. **Vandalism** and **stealing** of any kind will not be tolerated and are reasons for dismissal.
3. Students are expected to arrive at class **on time** each week and sit at the assigned place. Students are not permitted to roam around the room or hallway. Students are also expected to bring **textbook, pencil/pen and anything else required** by the Catechist. Students who fail to do so may be refused entrance into the class.
4. Students are expected to **enter** and **leave** the building in an **orderly** and **quiet** manner. **Walking is the norm**. Students are expected to follow the traffic patterns located at the end of this book and must always be **cautious** when crossing the parking area.
5. Students may **not enter** classrooms **unless** a catechist/aid is present in the room. Students are to wait in the **Parish Center Hallway** until they are told to go to their classroom by the Director.
6. Students are required to **wear appropriate attire** to class and REP events. Sport uniforms and sport shoes are not permitted. **Hats** of any kind and shirts or clothes with words/phrases contrary to Christian values are not permitted worn in the buildings.
7. **Homework** and other class assignments are to be **completed** on time.
8. **Eating, drinking or the chewing of gum** is **not** permitted in any of the buildings without the permission of the Director.
9. Alcohol, drugs and weapons or other illegal materials are **not permitted** on parish property.
10. In the event of a **FIRE** or fire drill, students will follow directions posted in each classroom and exit in an **orderly** and **quiet** manner.
11. If an **emergency** requires a catechist to leave the room unattended, students **must remain seated** and **quiet** until the catechist or adult returns.
12. Students are not permitted to open or close windows, move furniture or other objects without the supervision of the catechist or another adult..

# Curriculum

All text book materials are published by **RCL Benziger** and approved by the **Office of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia**.

Students in grades K- Jr. High receive a *Blest Are We: Faith and Word* textbook with 20 chapters, and two *Take Home* pages per chapter, a section on **Prayers, Feasts and Seasons** and a summary section titled "*Our Catholic Heritage*" at the end of the book that presents **What Catholics Believe, How Catholics Worship, How Catholics Live, and How Catholics Pray**. Parents should take time to review the textbook and use the *Take Home* pages on a regular basis. To review the Scope and Sequence chart of the curriculum for these textbooks go to [www.blestarewe.com](http://www.blestarewe.com) . Below is a very brief summary of the curriculum. The Archdiocesan Guidelines for each grade can be found on the Religious Education section of the parish website: [www.stthomasofvillanova.org](http://www.stthomasofvillanova.org)

## Grade 1

This grade focuses on the theme of the **Holy Trinity**. The children are taught that **God, our Creator** made each person special. They learn that **Jesus, the Son of God**, is our friend and brother and that he is human just as we are. They also learn that the **Holy Spirit** is our source of strength, peace and joy.

## Grade 2

In grade two, the emphasis shifts to a study of the sacraments as the children review **Baptism** and prepare for the celebration of **Eucharist** and **Reconciliation**. Their understanding of the Trinity grows as they see God presented as the loving Father who forgives them, Jesus as the one who gives us the gift of himself, and the Holy Spirit as one who calls us to serve others.

## Grade 3

The Church is the focus of study in grade three. The students learn about the traditional marks of the **Catholic Church: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic** and some of the beliefs held by Catholics as presented in the Apostle's Creed. All seven sacraments are studied and there is an exploration of a variety of ministries within the Church.

## Grade 4

In the fourth grade, the students study morality. This is accomplished through an extension of the concepts learned in third grade plus a study of the **10 Commandments and the Beatitudes**. Throughout this year students look at the lives of individuals who exemplified the moral values learned this year.

## Grade 5

Grade five centers on a study of **grace** and all **seven sacraments**, which are presented as sacred signs, gifts of life, as well as celebrations. Trinity and Church are presented as they relate to the sacraments. The **Liturgical Year** gets much attention this year.

## Grade 6

The **Old Testament** is the basis for the sixth grade curriculum. Students learn that it is in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures that we find **Salvation History**, the roots of our Christian faith. God is taught as the Creator who cares deeply for His people and interacts in their lives. Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

## Grades 7/8

**Jesus and the New Testament** is the focus of grade seven. Students learn about the mystery of the **Incarnation**, the meaning of the **Kingdom of God** and how to live the Christian life by participating in the **Paschal Mystery** and proclaiming the **Good News** as confirmed believers. An alternative to the traditional textbook approach for parish junior high program uses **Student Books** that present one of 11 themes in magazine format and can be covered in six sessions each. Themes for the 7th grade include: ***Who is Jesus; Who am I; What Does It Mean to Be a Catholic; What Does the New Testament Say; and What Are the Sacraments All About.*** Themes for 8th grade include: ***Our Church Yesterday and Today; The Challenge of Relationships; Responding to Social Issues; The Question of Morality; and The Way of Prayer.*** The themes can be used in either grade.

## Special Education Classes

Arrangements on or off site\* can be made to instruct students who have special needs due to a disability. Materials are chosen to suit the needs of the particular student or group of students.

**Any such material will be approved by the Office of Catholic Education.**

\*A student may be required to attend another parish better staffed to meet the needs of some disabilities.

## Home Study Program

Families who wish to instruct their children in their home in place of attending the scheduled REP Program will be provided with the ***Home School Religious Education Orientation Manual which contains Parish Guidelines, a Home Program Guide*** booklet for the respective grade level and additional materials once they have paid Home School REP Tuition and attended the orientation meeting. Students in this program will be evaluated by the Director twice a year, once in January and once in April.

## Worship

***Students in the REP are expected to attend Sunday Mass each week.***

Opportunities for **the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation** are scheduled in the Rosemont Chapel after the 9 am Mass on Saturday mornings and on a scheduled evening in Advent and Lent in the Villanova church.

**Prayer services** may be arranged by each grade or classroom as needed. Catechists will inform parents of such events by a letter.

**For information about Sacrament preparation and celebration go to:**

[http://www.stthomasofvillanova.org/celebrating\\_sacraments](http://www.stthomasofvillanova.org/celebrating_sacraments)

# Service and Ministry

The Religious Education Program encourages students and families to participate in the many opportunities provide by the parish. The *Faith in Action* pages in the student textbook are valuable lessons about the Christian's responsibility to serve.

Individual classes may arrange for projects or collections with permission from the Director.

**Check the parish website for all of the service and ministry opportunities**

[www.stthomasofvillanova.org](http://www.stthomasofvillanova.org)

## Emergency Information

### Shelter in Place

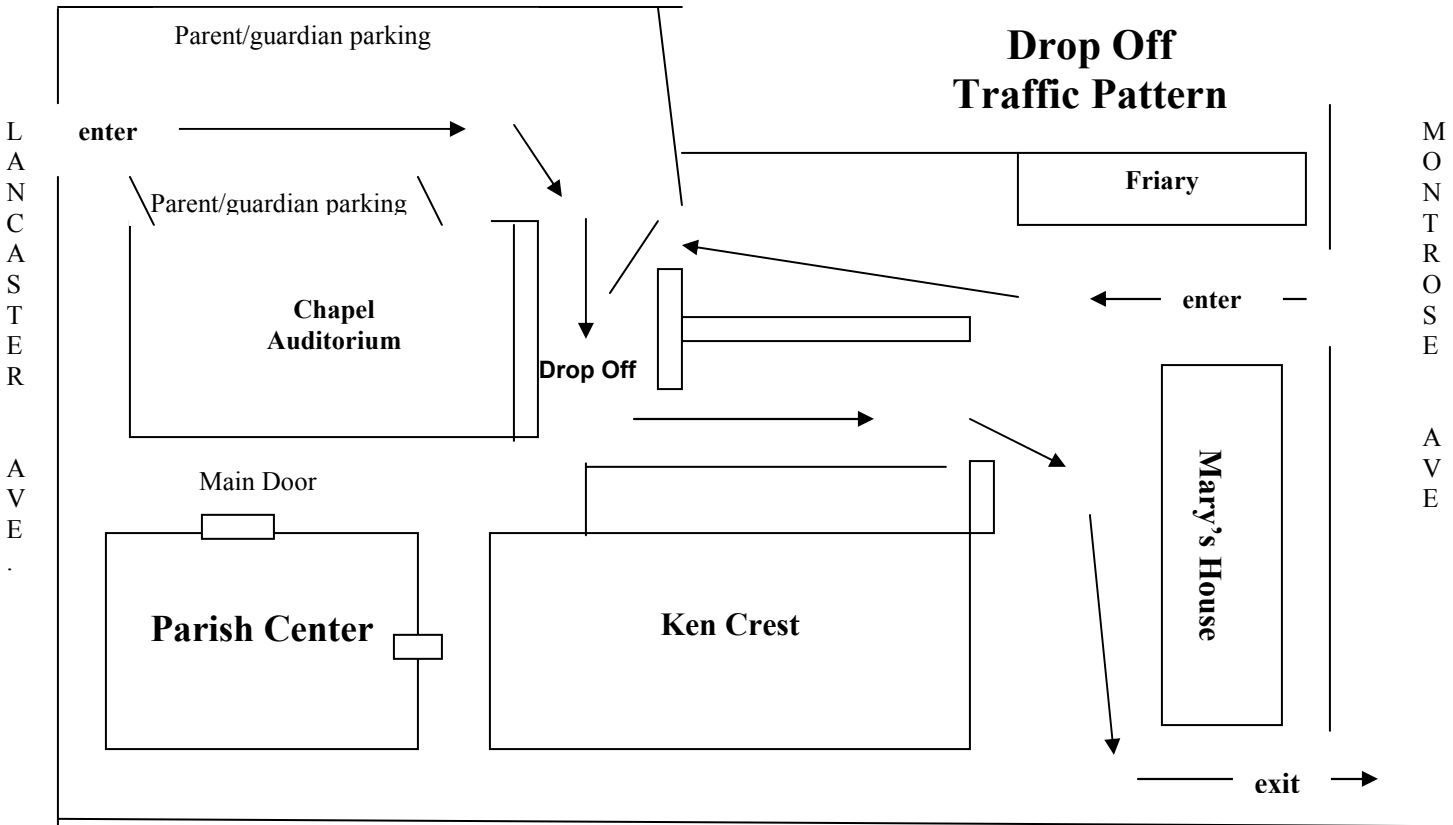
- Shelter in Place is a plan to avoid exposure to chemical/biological releases.
- This plan is implemented as directed by the police/fire department.
- The Parish Center is locked down and sealed- no one enters or leaves the premises to avoid exposure.
- Students will be escorted to a central, safe location: first floor hall- as directed by the Director.
- The building is equipped with emergency food and water supplies.
- The Parish Center is equipped with emergency supplies, including first aid kits and “go bags”, (which have essential information in them—student lists, emergency contact information, flashlights, and security plans).
- Students are not released until directed by the police/fire department.
- Pick up will be at the usual place.

### Evacuation of the Building

- In the event of a fire or other emergency that requires the students and teachers to leave the building, all will be evacuated to the area between Ken Crest and Mary's House. In cold or rainy weather all will go into Mary's House to await pick up.
- Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of such an evacuation.

# Emergency Dismissal

- We must have a number where you **can be reached during class** in the event that your child is sick or hurt while he or she is here.
- In the event of a civil or other emergency parents/guardians will be notified immediately.
- In the event that a student experiences sickness or a medical emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. **Please be sure that all your phone numbers and emergency contact information listed with us is current.**



## Catechists and Room Assignments 2010-2011

### Session I      Sunday      10:10 AM – 11:25 AM

Grade	Room	Catechist
REP S1A	PC 5	Mrs. Marguerite DeSanctis
REP S1B	PC 2	Mrs. Melanie Lalicker,
REP S2A	PC 6	Mrs. Megan Clementi
REP S2B	PC 7	Mrs. Trisha Macrone
REP S3A	PC 10	Mrs. Bonnie Mohler
REP S3B	PC 9	Ms. Patricia Flaherty
REP S4A	PC 8	Ms. Dianne Salter
REP S4B	PC Mez	Mrs. Jill Adams
REP S5	PC Hall	Mr. Dean Miller
REP S6	PC 1	Mr. David Grimmig
REP S7/8	PC YR	Mr. Don Robertson

### Session II      Wednesday      4:30 PM- 5:45 PM

Grade	Room	Catechist
REP W1	PC 8	Mrs. Elizabeth Zodda
REP W2	PC 10	Mrs. Eileen Filip
REP W3	PC 7	Mrs. Pat Temple-West
REP W4	PC 2	Mrs. Lynn Gibbs
REP W5	PC 6	
REP W6	PC 1	Mrs. Mary Behler

**PC=** Parish Center    **PC Hall=** (lower level)    **PC Mez=** Main Stair Landing

**YR=** Youth Room (lower level)

**PC 1, 2, 5** are on the first floor    **PC 6, 7, 8, 9, 10** are on the second floor

# Religious Education Program

## Volunteer Positions 2010-2011

**Please READ CAREFULLY and indicate your choice of volunteer position on the form below and return to the Director.**

**Catechist- (Adults) We need catechists for : Sundays and Wednesdays**

**Responsibilities:** This position requires an adult to prepare and teach a lesson to a group of 12-15 students and enable them to learn about the Catholic Faith. Materials and training are provided.

**Qualifications:** This person must be a practicing Catholic and share it with others. They should have an ability to communicate with and manage a group of students. **Attendance at training sessions, catechist meetings and positive PA background checks are required.**

**Commitment:** Sundays from **10:10 AM – 11:25 AM** or Wednesdays from **4:30 PM– 5:45 PM** September to April and at least one hour of preparation each week, for at least one year.

**Classroom Aide- (Adults and Teens)**

**Responsibilities:** This position requires a person to assist the catechist in the classroom and at times in their own home preparing activities or correcting papers. The aide records attendance, distributes and collects papers, assists individual students and helps to supervise the classroom.

**Qualifications:** This person should have the ability to establish a good rapport with students while maintaining a low profile as they assist the catechist. Organizational, clerical and creative skills are an asset. **Orientation training sessions and positive PA background checks are required.**

**Commitment:** Sundays from **10:10 AM – 11:25 AM** or Wednesdays from **4:30 PM– 5:45 PM** September to April

**Center Hall Receptionist- (Adults)**

**Responsibilities:** This position requires a person to greet all visitors, to collect the absentee slips from each classroom, record the attendance for that session, to verify an absence or notify a parent about an ill child during class hours and assist with some light clerical matters.

**Qualifications:** This person should have the ability to supervise the main reception area of the Program on Sunday mornings, and possess basic organizational and clerical skills.

**Commitment:** Once every 5 weeks, Sunday from **10:10 AM – 11:25 AM** or Wednesdays from **4:30 PM– 5:45 PM** September to April **PA background checks and child Safety certificate are required.**

### Religious Education Program Volunteer Form 2010-2011

Name of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_  Adult  Teen  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sunday 10:10 AM – 11:25 AM  Wednesday 4:30 PM – 5:45 PM

**I would like to volunteer for the following position(s).**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_  Adult  Teen  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sunday 10:10 AM – 11:25 AM  Wednesday 4:30 PM – 5:45 PM

**I would like to volunteer for the following position(s).**  
 \_\_\_\_\_