

**Home School Religious Education  
Handbook  
2018-2019**



***1229 E. Lancaster Ave.  
Rosemont, Pa 19010***

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

*St. Thomas Of Villanova Parish  
Mission Statement*

*St. Thomas of Villanova is an Augustinian,  
Roman Catholic Community.  
As the body of Christ,  
As a Stewardship Parish  
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 vibrant 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 program 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 Home School their child in our 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 the Director.**

**For Practical Advice for Parents On Preventing Child Sexual Abuse go to the Parish website section for Religious Education and scroll down.**

## Administration

**Pastor:** Fr. Joseph Genito, O.S.A. 610 525-4801  
[pastor@stvparish.org](mailto:pastor@stvparish.org)

**Director:** Tara A. Penza 610 525-4801 ext. 204  
[rel.ed@stvparish.org](mailto:rel.ed@stvparish.org)

**Admin Asst:** Janine Bowers 610 525-4801 ext. 211  
[admin.rep@stvparish.org](mailto:admin.rep@stvparish.org)

**Parish Office Hours** Mon.-Fri. 9 AM – 12 PM, 1 PM – 4:30 PM

## Home School Religious Education Requirements

### *Parent/Guardian Orientation Meeting*

Each year the Director of Religious Education conducts an Orientation Meeting for parents/guardians who have been approved for Home School Religious Education. A Home School parent must attend one of the scheduled Home School Orientation Meetings with the Director in September. All textbooks and guidelines will be discussed and distributed at this meeting.

### *Student Evaluations*

Each Home School student's progress in the REP is evaluated twice during the school year. Each student in grades 2<sup>nd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> are required to come to the Parish Center to take a mid-term test. These dates will be determined by the DRE (Director of Religious Education). These mid-term tests are based on the first 2 Units in the textbooks and are good indicators of the student's growth in religious formation. We encourage Home School students to take the Chapter Test at the end of each chapter. This provides a review of concepts studied and simple evaluation of whether or not the student has a good understanding of the lesson.

**If parents/students are struggling with the curriculum, it is their responsibility to contact the DRE for assistance. Parents should inform the Director of their child's progress.**

## ***Prayers***

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 needs to memorize to enhance their knowledge of the Catholic Faith and to proceed each year to the next level of faith formation. These will be distributed at the Parents Information Meeting and can also be found at the back of this Handbook.

## **Curriculum**

All text book materials are published by **Sadlier and/or Loyola Press** and approved by the **Office of Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia**.

Students in grades K-5 receive a **We Believe - Catholic Identity** textbook. The **We Believe** series empowers students to uphold their faith and go out into the world as Catholics—proud of who they are. The ***Catholic Identity Edition*** will:

- Build Catholic Identity around core Catholic beliefs, practices, and principles so all students can truly embody their faith
- Include flexible models of implementation that serve the changing needs of schools, parishes, and busy families.
- Involve families with tools to enrich their identity as a Catholic family in today's world
- Provide online resources to engage students and take-home support materials. For families.

***Sadlier provides a Take Home Family Page*** per chapter. This is a great way to share what your children are learning with the whole family. There are additional chapters that present, **Prayers, Feasts and Liturgical Seasons** and a summary of ***Catholic Teachings***.

Parents will receive the **We Believe Family Book** which contains the necessary information to teach from the student textbook. Parents are asked to return the Family Books (not the student textbooks) to the Director upon completion.

The **Archdiocese of Philadelphia Religion Curriculum Guidelines** for each grade are listed below, and is adhered to in our REP.

## Religion Guidelines

Below is a synopsis of the core content guidelines for each grade level as established by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and applicable to St. Thomas of Villanova REP.

### **Kindergarten**

The Bible, Creation, The Holy Family, Mary, Christian Community, Prayer, Sacraments, Liturgical Year

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Intro to Hail Mary and Our Father

### **Grade One**

God the Father, Creation, Living in God's World, God the Son-Jesus Christ, God the Holy Spirit, Sacraments of Initiation, Mary, Liturgical Year, Prayer

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father

### **Grade Two**

Holy Trinity, Sacraments of Initiation & Healing, The Mass: 2 Parts – Liturgy of the Word & Liturgy of the Eucharist, Topics related to The Mass, Mary, Liturgical Year, Prayer, Review of steps in receiving Sacraments of Reconciliation & Eucharist

Prayers: Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition

### **Grade Three**

The Trinity, Sacraments, God's Law, Christian Community, Mary, Liturgical Year.

Prayers: Grace at Meals, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition

### **Grade Four**

God the Father, Jesus Christ our Redeemer, Holy Spirit, Creed, Commandments, Grace, Sin, Conscience, The Beatitudes, Mary, Liturgical Year

Prayers: Grace, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition, Intro to Nicene Creed

### **Grade Five**

Sacraments of Initiation, Sacraments of Healing, The Sacraments at the Service of Communion, Mary, Liturgical Year, Holy Spirit, The Bible

Prayers: Grace, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition, Nicene Creed, How to Pray the Rosary

### **Grade Six**

The Bible, Jesus as our Lord & Savior, The Church – Our Community in Spirit, Sacraments, Saints, Morality and Living our Faith.

Prayers: Grace, Hail Mary, Glory Be, Our Father, Act of Contrition, Nicene Creed, The Rosary

## **Archdiocesan Approved Textbook Series**

Grades K – 5<sup>th</sup> grades use Sadlier's, "**We Believe – Catholic Identity**", which inspires your students to learn and live their faith and go out into the world as Catholics – proud of who they are. This new Catholic Identity Edition will build Catholic identity around the four pillars of faith as presented in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Creed, Workshop & Sacraments, and Morality & Prayer. This series also involves families with tools to enrich their own identity as a Catholic Family in today's world. Grade 6 will be using Loyola Press's, "**Finding God**", which will provide the necessary faith lessons leading up to Confirmation Preparation in the following year.

## **Faith Education is a Blessing**

Writing of catechesis in 1979, Pope John Paul II, offered a description of the model teaching home: "Education in the faith by parents, which should begin from the children's tenderest age, is already being given when the members of a family help each other to grow in faith through the witness of their Christian lives, a witness that is often without words but which perseveres throughout a day-to-day life lived in accordance with the Gospel. This catechesis is more incisive when, in the course of family events (such as the reception of the sacraments, the celebration of great liturgical feasts, the birth of a child, a bereavement), care is taken to explain in the home the Christian or religious content of these events" (*Catechesi Tradendae* 68).

Catholic home education is a blessing to which some families have corresponded generously. No individual or family can remain faithful apart from communion with the Catholic Church. We find Jesus Christ sacramentally present today in the person of the priest who celebrates the sacraments, in the worshipping assembly, in the Word of God and in the most Blessed Sacrament- the Eucharist.

REP Homeschooling gives the Church a wonderful opportunity to consider the interdependence of the members of the Body of Christ. In humility, we acknowledge our need for each other, and God's goodness in providing for our need through the Church, His holy people. No educational program can succeed without the cooperation of families. Yet no family can succeed apart from communion with the Church. Communion is not an abstraction; it is not merely a contractual bond with a creed and a catechism. The work of education calls families and pastors to cooperate in authentic love and unity. If these are our intentions, God will provide all that we need.

## **St. Thomas of Villanova Guidelines for Religious Education Home Schooling**

When parents decide to be responsible for the religious education of the child(ren), they will need to meet the following criteria:

1. Parents must be registered in the parish and declare their option for home schooling.
2. Certificates of Baptism must be submitted to the Director of Religious Education upon request.
3. An interview should take place with the Director of Religious Education and Parents, discerning the reasons for not including their children with others of the parish.
4. The Director of Religious Education may meet periodically with the home catechists and child(ren) to review the progress of the program.
5. The home catechists will follow the curriculum chosen by the DRE for all students of the parish Religious Education program, which is the approved curriculum of the Archdiocese, unless otherwise specified.
6. The students (grades 2-6<sup>th</sup>) will come in to the Parish Center on specified dates and take the mid-term, administered by the DRE. If the student does not pass the test, the DRE will send back the test to be corrected at home by student and returned to the DRE to be placed in the students file. An End of Year Test is to be administered when the text book has been completed. 1<sup>st</sup> Grade students and parents will meet at the end of the school year to evaluate progress and readiness for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.
7. In order for students to move up to the next grade level in REP, the Mid-Term and Final Home School Tests must be completed and in their files.
8. The parents and children enrolled in home schooling who desire to receive Sacraments will participate in the Immediate Preparation Program in the parish (including all parent meetings, retreats and practices). The readiness of the child(ren) for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation and Penance will be mutually determined by the home catechist, DRE and pastor or his designee. (Canons 843.2, 890)
9. Reception of the Sacraments must take place in the family's parish of registration and at the scheduled dates and times, unless prior permission has been given by the Pastor.
10. Home School families are encouraged and expected to participate in parish activities, and parish stewardship (sharing their time, talent and treasures), as stated in our Stewardship/Re-Registration Covenant.

**Please note:** The catechesis taught in the home is *only* for the children living in that home.



**St. Thomas Of Villanova  
Religious Education Program Home School Agreement**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I agree to complete my child's appropriate grade level curriculum as determined by the St. Thomas of Villanova Office of Religious Education.
2. I understand that I will receive the appropriate curriculum materials needed to effectively home school my child. The materials provided are the same texts and supporting documents that are in use within the formal Religious Education Program (REP) and will be grade specific for each student.
3. I agree to return the Family Book Guide to the Religious Education Office at the end of the school year.
4. If this is a sacramental preparation year for my child, I understand that it is my responsibility to obtain the dates and times for all parent meetings, practices, and retreats and I agree to attend or have my child attend all appropriate meetings, practices and retreats relating to the preparation required for reception of sacraments.
5. I understand my child will be evaluated (written test or oral review) by the Director of Religious Education when he/she has completed the curriculum and prior to the reception of a sacrament. Parents are responsible for bringing their child in to the Parish Center for the scheduled Mid-term, and submit the Final exam at the end of the year.
6. I understand that if, after careful and thoughtful reflection, a student who is preparing for the reception of a sacrament has not demonstrated a reasonable level of understanding regarding the curriculum, the Pastor may defer the student's reception of the sacrament.
7. I understand that if, after careful and thoughtful reflection, it is determined that a student has not successfully attained a reasonable level of understanding regarding the curriculum that he/she is studying, the DRE may recommend that the religious educational needs of the student may be better served in the classroom religious education program at the grade level specified by the DRE.
8. I understand that as a Stewardship Parish there are no fees for REP for active families. We have agreed to the Stewardship Covenant and pledge to share our time, talent and treasure with St. Thomas of Villanova.
9. I understand that REP home schooling students are encouraged to attend all prayer services, special lessons and receive the sacrament of Penance with the REP community.

Reason(s) for Home Schooling:

---

---

---

---

---

Goals for the Faith Formation of my child(ren):

---

---

---

---

---

I agree to comply with the program guidelines and time line as described above:

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DRE Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Office use only:*

Mid-Term Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pass \_\_\_ Fail \_\_\_ Final Exam rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_ Pass \_\_\_ Fail \_\_\_

Final Evaluation and Recommendations:

---

---

---

This student has successfully completed the \_\_\_\_\_ grade religion curriculum.

DRE initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_