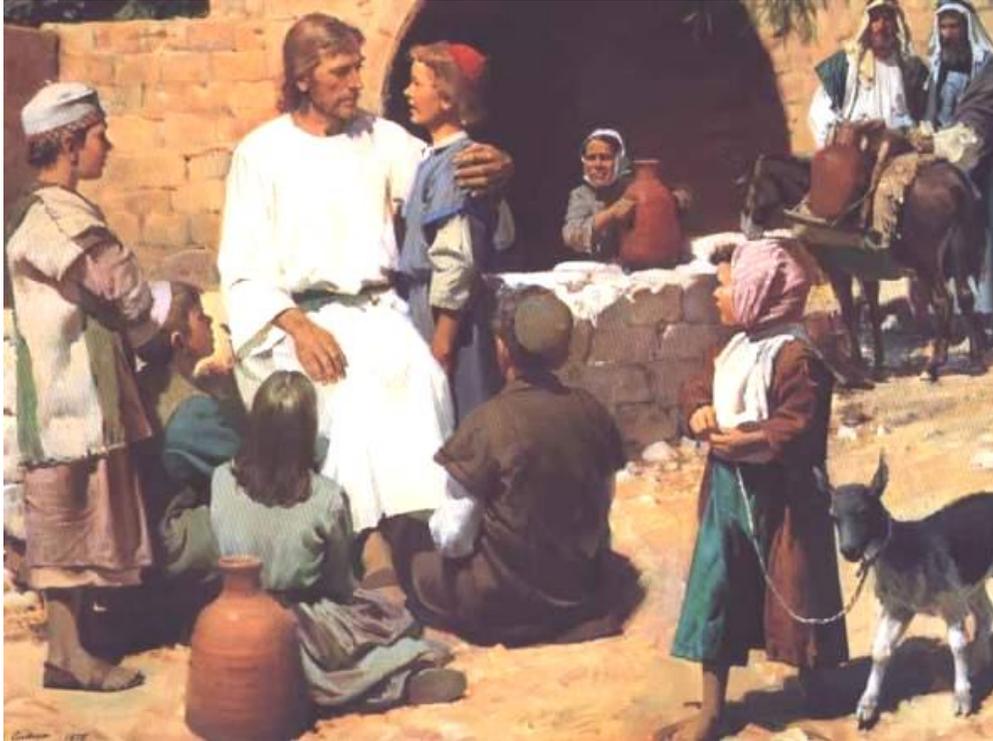


FAMILY HANDBOOK

2018-2019



SAINT LEO THE GREAT CATHOLIC CHURCH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM and SACRAMENT PREPARATION OF CHILDREN AGES 7-17

**Director of Religious Education (DRE):
Annemarie Jardon (AJardon@stleocatholicchurch.org)**

**Religious Education Assistant:
Gisela Saldana (reassistant@stleocatholicchurch.org)**

**Office Phone: 239- 992-0901
Office Fax: 239 992-5282**

**Mailing Address: 28290 Beaumont Road, Bonita Springs, FL 34134
Physical Address: 28384 Beaumont Road, Bonita Springs, Florida**

September 14, 2018

Welcome Letter

Welcome to a new school year of Religious Education at Saint Leo the Great Catholic Church.

As parents, it gives us joy to give our children wonderful gifts. Of course, the more special the gift, the more we want our child to appreciate it. It would be a tragic waste to give our children precious gifts without teaching them their use and value.

At their conception, we gave our children the gift of life. Baptism gives our children a second birth, a birth into the life of Jesus Christ and the Church. At their Baptism, our children receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence and Wonder and Awe. These marvelous gifts help the baptized person cooperate with God's unique plans for him/her. When these plans are followed they conclude in the gift of an eternal life of peace and joy in union with God in Heaven. Surely Baptism is one of the best gifts we could ever give our children! Such a marvelous gift deserves to be treasured by the recipient.

At St. Leo Religious Education, we work with you to help your child unwrap the gift of Baptism so that your child will come to know and value their life in the Catholic Church. In our classes, your child has the unique opportunity to experience the Church within a community of fellow young believers. It is our hope that your child will gain strength and support for his/her spiritual journey from the friendships formed in our classrooms. As your child grows in knowledge, we offer your children the opportunity to be prepared to receive even more of God's life-giving gifts, the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Our Triune God is the most generous Giver of gifts. In John 10:10, Jesus tells us "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Let us work together, to help our children know and treasure the abundant, life-giving gifts which Our Lord wants to give all of us. These gifts are our eternal treasure if we will simply receive and unwrap them.

In Faith, Hope and Charity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Annemarie Jardon". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Annemarie Jardon
Director of Religious Education

Table of Contents

Mission Statement	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	5
Goals of the Religious Education Program	...	...	.....					5
Role of the Religious Education Office	...	.....	.....	.....				5
Role of Catechists	....	.....	.....	...	...	...	.....	6
Role of Parents	.....	...	...	...	...	...	.....	6
Class Schedule	.....	...	...	...	...	...	.....	6
Registration	.....	...	...	...	...	...	.....	7
Update of Information	.....		...	...	...	...	.....	7
Class Fees	.....	...	...	...	...	...	.....	8
Classes for Students Attending Catholic Schools	...	...	.....					8
Parents and Catechists	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	9
Attendance	.....	...	...	...	...	...	.....	9
Arrival and Dismissal for Grades One through Eight	.....						.....	9
Arrival for Grades Nine through Twelve	....	...	...	.....				10
Dress Code for classes	....	...	...	...	...	.....	.....	10
Discipline	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
Consequences	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	11
Attendance at Sunday Mass	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	11
Prayers	...	...	...	...	...	...	.....	12
Sickness, Injury, Medications, Allergies, and Emergencies	.....							12
Protecting God’s Children Touching Safety Program	.....	....						13
Sacramental Preparation	...	...	...	...	...	.....		17
Baptism	...	...	...	...	...	.....		17
First Reconciliation/Communion	...	...	...	.....				18
Confirmation	....	...	...	...	...	.....		20
Parent/Guardian Questions Form	.....	...	...	...	.....			23

Mission Statement

The Religious Education Program of St. Leo Catholic Church is dedicated to evangelizing young parishioners in the Catholic Faith so that through their communion with Jesus Christ, they may participate more fully in the life of the Church.

Goals of the Religious Education Program

- To proclaim the message of the Gospel by providing a program of formal religious instruction based on Scripture and Tradition
- To support and encourage parents in their role as primary religious educators of their children
- To provide for the experience of Church as a community
- To promote positive Christian character by emphasizing responsibility toward God, others, and self
- To build a strong Catholic identity
- To initiate children into the rich liturgical and sacramental tradition of the Church
- To deepen the prayer life of our children
- To enable children to live lives in accordance with the moral teachings of the church
- To inspire a missionary spirit in children and prepare them to witness to their faith in word and deed through acts of service

Role of Religious Education Office

- To provide a course of study and employ texts that are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church
- To offer sacramental preparation to children and youth
- To communicate with parents on a regular basis through the monthly newsletter
- To provide a calendar of classes for the school year
- To provide online access to registration forms
- To provide parents with handouts to assist them in teaching Catholic doctrine, prayers, and virtues to their children
- To maintain accurate student records, allowing access only to appropriate parents or legal guardians
- To insure that any classroom visitor have been approved by the DRE/CRE and conforms to the Diocesan Safe Environment Guidelines
- To implement all applicable Parish and Diocesan Guidelines in the classroom or during activities whenever children are present

Role of Catechists

- To provide a classroom experience that enables each child to learn the Gospel message of Jesus and apply the teachings of the Catholic Church in their lives
- To encourage students to learn the common prayers used by Catholics
- To assign homework appropriate to the age level of the students
- To provide a safe environment for each child by personally complying with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policy
- To provide Safe Environment Training to the students, appropriate to their need and level of understanding

Role of Parents

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states “Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children in the faith, prayer, and all the virtues.” (2252)

Parents whose children attend the program are asked to fulfill the following expectations in order to promote the spiritual growth of the children and youth in the program:

- Take responsibility for their role as primary educator
- Model a positive Catholic lifestyle, continually growing in their relationship with God
- Attend Mass weekly with their children
- Teach their children the traditional prayers of the Church at home (see **Prayers** pg. 12)
- Bring children to their assigned classroom on time, dressed appropriately, and ready to participate
- Communicate with and support their children’s catechists and the DRE, especially in areas of discipline and homework
- Read the monthly newsletter, attend meetings, and be attentive to announcements in the parish bulletin

Regular Class Schedule

Students in grades one through twelve are strongly encouraged to participate in our Religious Education Program which provides age-appropriate catechesis from experienced catechists.

First through Eighth Grade Classes

Meet weekly from September 26 – April 24, on Wednesday evenings 6:15 – 7:30.

Ninth through Twelfth Grade Classes

Confirmation 1 classes meet weekly from September 16 – April 28 on Sunday evenings 5:50 – 7:00.

Confirmation 2 classes meet weekly from September 23 – April 7 on Sunday evenings 5:50 – 7:00.

Registration

The Religious Education Program of Saint Leo the Great Parish is supported by the parishioners of the parish, therefore children of registered families receive priority in registering for classes. Children of non-parishioners are admitted on a case-by case basis based on the information supplied via the Application as a Non-Parishioner form. All students must be re-enrolled for each year of Religious Education they attend and are typically placed in the grade in which they are currently attending in school however student placement is at the discretion of the DRE. Saint Leo Parish makes no discrimination on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, or tuition assistance.

Registration takes place in May, and June of the year in order to schedule classes for the upcoming school year. If space is available in a particular class, a brief registration period will be open shortly before the start of classes.

In order for their children to be admitted, the parents must:

- Accurately complete and return all appropriate registration forms which are available online and in the parish office
- Provide a copy of a legal birth certificate for school-aged children requiring Baptism
- Provide the parish with a copy of the child's Baptism Certificate and other Sacraments they may have received, if not on record at Saint Leo
- Notify the Religious Education Office of any custody issues that may impact on the child while enrolled in classes at Saint Leo and provide documentation as necessary
- Notify the Religious Education Office of any Special Education needs that the child has so that appropriate accommodation may be provided
- If applicable, provide proof of attendance of Religious Education at another parish.
- Pay the established fees (see below)

Update of Information

- It is the responsibility of parents to notify the DRE immediately of any changes in family information (address, phone number, email), emergency contacts, or medical conditions (allergies, dietary restrictions).

Class Fees

Grades One through Eight:

- One child in the family enrolling in Religious Education class\$ 50
- Two children in the family enrolling in Religious Education classes.....\$ 75
- Three or more children in the family enrolling in Religious Education classes.... \$ 100

Sacramental Preparation Grades Two through Eight:

- Baptism (this donation is collected separately at the parish office)..... \$ 25
- First Reconciliation/First Communion (during second year)..... \$ 35

Grade Nine through Twelve

- Each student if student has received First Communion..... \$ 50
- Each student if student has NOT received First Communion..... \$ 85

No student will be prevented from attending because of a parents’ inability to pay. A payment agreement may be drawn up extending payments to the end of November. If necessary, a parent may submit a “*Letter of Hardship*” to the DRE explaining why it is impossible to pay for the child’s classes.

Fees collected for the Religious Education Program do not cover the cost of educating the children and are therefore considered donations to Saint Leo Parish. As a result, they are not refundable.

Discounts are available to the children of parents who volunteer as catechists in our program. A 100% discount is provided for children of lead catechists and a 50% discount is provided for children of assistant catechists. For questions and details, please see the Religious Education Staff.

Classes for Students Attending Catholic Schools

While children of all parishioners are welcome to attend Religious Education at St. Leo, those students attending Catholic schools are only required to attend the sacramental preparation classes of a desired sacrament. Baptized Catholic school students who have reached the Second Grade should enroll in First Reconciliation/First Communion Preparation Classes. Catholic school students in Tenth Grade should enroll in Confirmation Preparation Class. Students are required to be enrolled in their second year in a Catholic School or Religious Education Program previous to enrolling in the sacramental preparation class.

Parents & Catechists

The parish makes every effort to select Catechists who are capable of handling the responsibility involved in this ministry. Saint Leo Parish offers training courses to increase the skills needed for the catechists to be successful. While the DRE supervises the catechists in order to help them fulfill their responsibilities, parents are asked to recognize the challenges involved in being a volunteer catechist and support them whenever possible. If any problems regarding a class arise, parents are asked to first contact the catechist to discuss the situation. If that does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, parents are encouraged to contact the DRE/CRE. All parishioners have the right to final recourse to the pastor of the parish.

Attendance

Children who are enrolled in the parish catechetical program are expected to be in attendance for each scheduled class. It is the responsibility of parents to insure their child's presence on a regular basis.

- For Wednesday and Sunday evening classes, if a student exceeds five absences in the school year, he/she will not receive credit for the work completed. A written warning will be provided to the parent after the third absence for those students preparing for sacraments.
- **Confirmation Level 2** students who are absent for more than 3 classes may jeopardize his/her readiness for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Students should not miss any classes during the second semester.
- For the sacramental preparation classes of First Reconciliation or First Communion which takes place on Sunday mornings, no more than one absence will be acceptable.

Arrival and Dismissal for Grades One through Eight

Classes are held in the Education Building and children must be delivered to their classroom by their parent or guardian into the care of their teacher. To insure the safety of all children, parents are asked to park in designated parking spaces and escort their children to their classrooms in time for the start of classes. The gate will be opened five minutes before classes start and closed ten minutes after. Children will not be admitted to class once the gate is closed.

When the Catechist dismisses the class, parents or legal guardians must present their *Pink Guardian Pass* and pick their children up promptly at the end of the session. Children will only be released to older siblings who are fourteen years of age or older. Please note that only the issued *Pink-Guardian Pass* is acceptable (not a cell phone image) – this is emphasized in the interest of maintaining a safe environment for all children. If a child is not promptly picked up, the parent will be called and the child will remain with a catechist or the DRE until the parent or an approved adult arrives. If we cannot reach a

parent, or the designated emergency contact, within thirty minutes following the end of class, our only recourse is to call the police. According to Diocesan Safe Environment procedures, parish personnel are not permitted to drive students home.

Arrival and Dismissal for Grades Nine through Twelve

Students are expected to arrive for class on time. Attendance is taken for each class session. After three absences parents will be notified. Upon dismissal, students are to be picked up promptly. If a student needs to remain after class we will notify the parent/guardian directly.

Dress Code for Class

All students should respect our parish property as the sacred space it represents and dress in a way that is consistent with that respect. Minimally, students' dress should be consistent with local school dress codes, including, but not limited to:

- No bare skin exposed at the waist, back, cleavage, or shoulders
- The length of shorts, skirts, or dresses should pass the "fingertip test." (If your fingertips touch your skin when your arms are held straight down at your sides)
- No hats, bandanas, hoods, or other head covering, are allowed
- No imprinting on clothing that would be offensive, especially in a Catholic environment
- No visible piercing on any body part, other than the ears
- Safe footwear is to be worn at all times, no bare feet, rubber flip-flops or bedroom slippers

Discipline

The Discipline Policy is based on the premise that order contributes to a safe program. Behavior which is destructive or disruptive will not be tolerated. Students are expected to carry out the following responsibilities:

- Show respect to catechists, other students, and program personnel
- Obey teachers promptly and willingly
- Arrive on time so as not to interrupt the class
- Follow teacher directives for cell phones
- Use their voice and act in an appropriate and safe manner
- Raise their hand and wait to be called upon before answering
- Not use foul or disrespectful language
- Be present only in the areas of the building permitted at any specific time

Consequences

If a child fails to fulfill these responsibilities:

- On the first occurrence the child will be reminded of and warned that their conduct is not in accordance with proper Christian behavior.
- On the second occurrence the parent of the child will be notified in writing by the catechist and is expected to speak with their child about the unacceptable behavior.
- Upon the third occurrence, the child and parent will be required to meet with the DRE for an appropriate solution.
- If the unacceptable behavior continues, the child will be dismissed from the class.
- If a child's one-time behavior endangers themselves or others, he/she will be immediately removed from class, the parent will be contacted, and the child will remain with the DRE until the parent picks up the child. The parent and DRE will discuss the situation and possible solutions before the child returns to class.

Attendance at Sunday Mass

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." (1324) The Eucharist (Mass) is central to us as Catholics and attendance at Mass is our greatest privilege. When we participate in the Mass, we sacramentally enter into the Paschal mystery of Christ and thus engage in the highest form of prayer, which not only is the highest worship of God, but also the source of the most abundant blessings. Since God has given us this great privilege as a gift, it is our greatest responsibility as Catholics to accept and celebrate this gift regularly. For this reason, weekly attendance at Sunday Mass is the expectation for participation in the Religious Education Program. As mentioned earlier, parents should provide an example to their children in attending Mass regularly.

Regular attendance at Sunday Mass is necessary for preparation for sacraments; particularly for First Communion and Confirmation. Therefore, students who are in second year preparation for sacraments will be given a supply of personalized and dated Mass Attendance Postcards at the beginning of the school year. Students are required to drop their personal postcard into the collection basket at Mass at St. Leo during the collection. If the student attends Mass at another parish, they are to obtain the Sunday Bulletin from that parish and, after writing their name clearly on the bulletin, have it signed by the celebrating priest. The student must turn in the signed bulletin to their teacher at the next class.

Students will only be given one set of personalized postcards. If the student attends Mass at St. Leo but does not bring their postcard to Mass, they will need to follow the procedure of writing their name on a parish bulletin and having the bulletin signed by the celebrating priest. Students who do not attend Sunday Mass regularly will not be considered ready to advance into classes for sacraments.

Prayers

As the primary educators of their children, parents are entrusted with the special privilege and responsibility for teaching their children to pray. Familiarity with traditional prayers is a significant element of the catechesis offered in the parish Religious Education classes. While the staff and catechists of Saint Leo are sensitive to the cultural variations amongst those participating in our program, all children are expected to learn their prayers in English.

- Children in the First Grade are expected to learn the Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.
- Children in the Second Grade are expected to learn all of the above prayers plus the Act of Contrition.
- Children in the Fourth Grade are expected to learn all of the above prayers plus the Apostles Creed.
- Children in Confirmation Classes are expected to learn all the above prayers plus the Nicene Creed.

Sickness, Injury, Medications, Allergies, and Emergencies

If a child is sick, for their own safety and as a sign of respect for their classmates and catechist, they should not attend class. If the child has already missed a significant number of classes, the parent should discuss the situation with the DRE/CRE.

If a child becomes ill while in class, the parents will be contacted according to the information provided on the *Medical Authorization for Minor* form. If the parents are unavailable, an attempt will be made to reach the designated Emergency Contact. The DRE/CRE will make every effort to keep the child comfortable until picked up, but no medication of any kind (including prescription and over-the-counter) will be administered to, or taken by, the student during the parish religious education program unless the parent has provided a written request with directives to the DRE/CRE.

If an injury occurs, first aid will be administered and the parents will be contacted. If the injury requires immediate medical attention, the DRE/CRE will call the appropriate emergency services, followed by a call to the parents.

Protecting God's Children Touching Safety Program

All children who are enrolled in Religious Education classes in grades 1-12 will receive Touching Safety Program Lessons as required by the Diocese of Venice.

The following pages provide an overview of the program and are provided to you by request of the Diocese of Venice.



Protecting God's Children®

Overview of the Touching Safety Program

The job of ensuring children's safety is a challenging undertaking. The prevention of child sexual abuse requires more than adult awareness, education, and training about the nature and scope of the problem. We must also give our children the tools they need to overcome the advances of someone who intends to do them harm. The *Teaching Touching Safety* program guide (*Teaching Touching Safety Guide*) is a tool designed to assist parents and teachers in this important task. The Touching Safety program is a vehicle through which parents, teachers, catechists, and youth ministers give children and young people the tools they need to protect themselves from those who might harm them.

The Touching Safety Program Lessons were Created for Four Specific Age Groups:

Grades K through 2

Grades 3 through 5

Grades 6 through 8

Grades 9 through 12

Each year, the program provides a theme that introduces and builds on the basic concepts of the *Teaching Touching Safety Guide*. The material is developmentally appropriate for each age group and includes content and activities that reinforce the message.

The materials for teachers include everything needed to prepare for and present each lesson—including additional information to help teachers better understand the context of the materials they are about to present. For example, teachers have access to a glossary of terms for all the lessons. They also have handouts and other reference materials—such as information on how to respond to disclosures, how to report suspected abuse, and other supplemental materials.

The lessons are organized in a three-year cycle so each child experiences a totally different lesson plan each time the materials are presented and so each child receives the full range of information from the *Teaching Touching Safety Guide* in small, “digestible” bites, over a three-

year period. Then, as a child advances to the next age group, there are a whole new set of age appropriate lessons that explore the major topics in increasingly greater detail. Your diocese may choose to present one lesson in the fall and one in the spring or to present both lessons at the same time.

The themes covered (in an age-appropriate way, of course) in each of the three years (year four is optional) are:

Year 1 Lesson 1: Touching Safety Rules—Students learn simple rules about what to do and how to react when someone’s touch is confusing, scary, or makes the child or young person feel uncomfortable. Young people start to deal with the real risks they face when they are out in the world and on their own, and they begin to learn where to draw boundary lines in relationships.

Lesson 2: Safe Friends, Safe Adults, and Safe Touches—Children, young people, and their parents establish basic guidelines for working together to make certain *which* friends and other adults in their environment can be trusted to act safely and in the best interest of each child or young person.

Year 2 Lesson 3: Boundaries—Students learn about personal boundaries and how identifying and honoring those boundaries can give a child or young person the self assurance needed to speak up when someone tries to step over the line.

Lesson 4: Telling Someone You Trust—Children and young people learn who to tell when something makes them feel uncomfortable or confused. This lesson also begins to explore the phenomenon and power of “secrets” in a child’s life at various ages.

Year 3 Lesson 5: Grooming—Recognizing risky adult behavior: Part I—Students learn about the types of behavior that may indicate that an adult is grooming the child or young person for something more than friendship. It also helps students learn to trust their own instincts about what is “okay” and what is “not okay.”

Lesson 6: Grooming—Recognizing risky adult behavior: Part II—Reinforcing and building on the lessons from Year 2, this lesson deals with peer groups and other influences (including grooming by an abuser) that prevent children and young people from reporting inappropriate behavior. It also helps children and young people develop their own decision-making process to use in these situations.

Year 4 Lesson 7: Internet Safety—Assisting children and young people in recognizing the risks of providing personal information to anyone on the Internet and to help them realize how hard it is to know who someone really is when the only avenue of communication is the Internet.

Lesson 8: Creating and Following Family Rules—Educating young people about Internet safety and teaching them the importance of creating and following family rules in the effort to keep everyone safe.

Basic structure of the lesson plans:

This program and each included lesson are founded on the principles of appropriate relationship boundaries in the broader context of Christian values. All lessons are age-appropriate, and help children and young people develop the vocabulary and boundary distinctions necessary to

empower them to begin to recognize inappropriate behavior by others, while practicing appropriate relationship boundaries in their own lives. Each lesson takes approximately 45 minutes to an hour to complete.

Each lesson for each age group includes the following:

Instructions to help the teacher, catechist, or youth minister prepare to deliver the lesson.

Helpful teaching support from the Catechism to give the teacher or catechist a framework for how to keep the lesson within the context of Church tradition and theology.

A learning goal, including expected learning outcomes for students.

An overview for creating a successful learning experience for the specific age group.

Key vocabulary words and definitions that apply to the lesson. These words empower children and young people with the distinctions they need to help recognize inappropriate behavior by those with whom they interact.

Suggested activities, with instructions (and appropriate handouts for students as needed).

A closing group prayer that reflects the key message of the lesson

The lessons focus on an age-appropriate discussion of touching safety, relative to the specific roles that different people play in a child's life. All of the lessons stress the importance of keeping private body parts "private," and of telling a trusted adult about anyone's behavior that causes a child to feel uncomfortable or threatened. Additionally, a new set of introductory videos has been developed to make it easier and more comfortable for teachers and catechists to present the lessons to students.

The Purpose of the Introductory Videos:

Child sexual abuse is a sensitive topic. And, although the *Touching Safety* program lessons include activities that are simple and fun, it is not easy for some adults to initiate a preliminary discussion about sexual abuse. Even those who feel comfortable talking with their own children about these issues may find it challenging to talk about this subject matter in a classroom full of children or teenagers.

The new *Touching Safety* program video introductions are intended to relieve trainers of the responsibility for "breaking the ice" on this sensitive subject matter. The presenter on the video opens the discussion, covers some basic issues, and

allows the "live" trainer to use the activities and supplemental materials in the lesson plans to engage children and young people in meaningful discussions about recognizing and avoiding unsafe behaviors. So, while the video lays the groundwork, the trainer uses the activities to help students apply the message from the lessons to their daily lives.

Each video introduction is approximately six to seven minutes long. In each age-appropriate video, a presenter will speak directly to children or young people about the purpose of the program and the goals for the lesson, as well as what the children can expect from the activities and discussion. The presenter will introduce the touching safety rules and the concepts of “safe” and “unsafe” friends and adults, and provide some basic facts, vocabulary words, definitions, and discussion points that will be further developed through the activities and supplemental materials provided in the “live” portion of the training.

Three different age-appropriate videos are available-one each for:

Grades K through 5 (this video is used to introduce both the Grade K-2 lessons and the Grade 3-5 lessons)

Grades 6 through 8

Grades 9 through 12

Also, the videos are available in English and Spanish language versions. And, all Spanish videos were written and produced as Spanish language presentations, and not merely as voice over translations or subtitles.

For your convenience, the individual videos for each lesson (English and Spanish) are available on a single DVD

Sacrament Preparation

Maintaining records of the reception of the sacraments is the responsibility of each parish. Registered membership in Saint Leo the Great Parish is preferred for anyone receiving the sacraments at Saint Leo the Great.

Baptism

Baptism Class for Children Ages 7-17

Unbaptized children between the ages of 7 and 17 will be baptized together on **Sunday, December 2, 2018 at 12:45PM**. A single class in preparation for the sacrament will be held on **Sunday, November 18, 2018 from 10:45AM – 12:30PM in the Religious Education Building**, for the child, their parents, and godparents.

An official birth certificate is required for the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Role of Godparents (Sponsors)

Each Baptism candidate should have a Godparent.

“One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient, but there may be two, one of each sex.”
(Canon 873)

To be admitted to undertake the office of Godparent, a person must:

1. be appointed by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing this, by the pastor; to be appointed, the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it
2. be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan Bishop, or unless the pastor considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made
3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken
4. not be excommunicated
5. not be either the father or mother of the person to be baptized

For the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism dress should be tasteful and keeping with the dignity of a liturgical event.

- The person being baptized should be dressed at least partially in white (dress shirt, blouse), with a hair style suitable for anointing of the forehead, and not wearing any distracting jewelry or religious articles.
- Sponsors should be dressed in a modest and dignified manner.

First Reconciliation and First Communion

Students preparing for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation/First Communion and Confirmation are required to participate in two years of religious education classes prior to receiving the sacraments. Normally children begin the preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation/Communion by enrolling in the First Grade of the Religious Education Program.

A Baptismal certificate is required for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion.

First Reconciliation and First Communion Preparation Classes

Meet weekly from Jan 27 – April 28, 2019, on Sunday mornings from 10:45 – noon.

- The Sacrament of First Reconciliation will be 6:30 PM, Tuesday, March 5, 2019.
- The Sacrament of First Communion will be 10:00 AM, Saturday, May 4, 2019 with a rehearsal the evening prior.

The Sacrament of First Reconciliation

In order to receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation, a child must:

1. have reached the age of reason, (age seven) and be able to distinguish right from wrong
2. have a basic understanding of the concept of sin and the difference between mortal and venial sin
3. recognize that the Sacrament offers God's forgiveness
4. be in their second year of Religious Education classes

In addition, the child is required to know:

1. the steps of the Rites of Penance and Reconciliation, and the various forms of celebration of the Sacrament
2. the conditions for approaching the Sacrament worthily (an attitude of sincere contrition, a firm purpose of amendment, and the willingness to do Penance)
3. the requirement to confess serious sin at least once a year (Canon 989)
4. the benefit of confessing venial sin regularly (Canon 988), which helps to form one's conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let oneself be healed by Christ, and progress in the life of the Spirit (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1458)
5. that the frequent reception of the Sacrament continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness and enables the individual to form his or her conscience and grow in grace

The Sacrament of First Eucharist

The child preparing for First Communion must have the following:

1. knowledge of the Church's belief about Jesus Christ
2. knowledge of the difference between Holy Communion (the Real Presence of Jesus Christ under the appearance of bread and wine) and ordinary bread and wine
3. the desire to receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist
4. completed the sacrament of Reconciliation

In order to receive the Sacrament a child must know:

1. the forms of reception of Holy Communion (in the hand, on the tongue, under both species)
2. the conditions for receiving Holy Communion worthily (in the state of grace and at least once a year during the Easter season)
3. the requirements of the Eucharistic fast (no food or drink -- except water or medicine for one hour before receiving Holy Communion)

For the celebration of the Sacrament, dress should be tasteful and in keeping with the dignity of a liturgical event, therefore;

1. For girls: a white dress, shoulders must be covered and the dress must be no shorter than the knee. A veil is optional.
2. For boys: black, blue, grey, or white dress pants with a white shirt and tie. Suit jackets are optional.
3. Appropriate dress shoes should be worn.
4. Objects such as purses, candles, rosaries, bouquets, should not be carried, nor gloves worn, as they may interfere with the reception of the Eucharist.

Those who receive their First Communion are invited to take part in the **May Crowning** which will be performed at the 9:30 Mass on **Sunday, May 5, 2019.**

Confirmation

The catechesis for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation consists of two consecutive years of Religious Education or Catholic school attendance. This catechesis normally begins in the 9th grade, with the reception of the Sacrament occurring at the end of 10th grade. The Confirmation Preparation Program directly leads up to the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Students up to the age of 18 are accepted into the Confirmation Preparation Program.

Confirmation Preparation Classes

- Meet on Sunday evenings 5:50 – 7:00 pm from **September 16** through **April 28**.
- Students in their second year are prepared for the Confirmation Sacrament Mass in classes that meet on Sundays 5:50 – 7:00 pm from **September 23 – April 7**.
- The date of Confirmation will be determined by the Bishop's Office; a rehearsal will be held the night before.

The Sacrament of Confirmation

In order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, a Candidate must be:

1. A baptized Catholic who regularly receives Communion
2. Registered in a parish (both preparation for and celebration of the Sacrament will take place in that parish)
3. Enrolled in a catechetical program at a parish or in religion classes at a diocesan Catholic high school (in addition to the Sacramental Preparation program) which takes place at the parish of registration

The acceptance for reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be based on:

1. A candidate's expressed desire; a candidate must demonstrate a willingness to participate in the Confirmation process, and exhibit a personal commitment to their faith and a desire to be confirmed.
2. Regular attendance at and participation in the Sunday Liturgy.
3. The candidate's understanding and appreciation for the Sacraments already celebrated (Baptism, Eucharist, and Reconciliation), as well regular celebration of Reconciliation and Eucharist
4. The documentation of the candidate's reception of Baptism and First Communion
5. The candidate's history of formal and continuous faith formation. A minimum of two full years, usually during 9th and 10th grade, is required in Youth Group/ Religious Education / Catholic School

Confirmation Candidates must complete the following requirements in the time designated:

1. Submit the Sponsor Commitment Form by **October 7**.
2. Choose the name of a canonized saint of the same gender; research basic biographical details, as well as their namesake's contribution to the Faith; complete a one page essay which includes an explanation of why that saint was chosen; turn in the essay by **November 18**
3. Provide written documentation of at least ten hours of service by **October 21**
4. Attend the Confirmation Retreat on **February 16**.
5. Write a letter to the Pastor stating whether or not they have decided to be confirmed and submit the letter to the Religious Education Office no later than **February 24**
6. Complete at least twenty hours of community service (including a minimum of 4 hours of service to the Church) during the two years of religious education (preferably ten hours per year) by **March 31**.
7. Prepare for an exam based on the Confirmation Study Guide to be taken on **April 7**

A candidate's readiness for the sacrament will be determined by **March 7** after consultation between the Pastor and DRE. Students who are not ready to receive the sacrament should return the following year to complete the requirements and receive the sacrament at that time.

For the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation dress should be tasteful and keeping with the dignity of a liturgical event, therefore:

1. For ladies: a dress or professional suit, shoulders must be covered (spaghetti straps and bare shoulders are not allowed unless a shawl or sweater is worn) and the skirt must be no shorter than the knee
2. For gentlemen: a suit with jacket and tie or bowtie is preferred; however a dress shirt, slacks, vest and necktie or a dress shirt, slacks and necktie are acceptable.
3. Appropriate dress shoes
4. As the bishop will be anointing the candidate's forehead, it is also helpful that the candidates' hairstyle enable His Excellency to do so
5. This dress code applies to those being confirmed, as well as to sponsors or proxies

Role of Sponsors

Each candidate is to have **one male or one female sponsor** for Confirmation. The preference in Canon law (Canon 874) is that a Baptism Godparent be the Confirmation Sponsor to show the bond between the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Parents are not to be considered as sponsors. The sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this Sacrament.

The sponsor must:

1. Be sufficiently mature (having attained the sixteenth year) in his/her faith commitment, and should be actively expressing it within the Catholic community (Canon 874)
2. Belong to the Catholic Church and be fully initiated, having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist (Canon 874)
3. Be practicing the Catholic faith and in good standing with the Church
4. Act as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfill the obligations connected with this Sacrament
5. Not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed (Canon 874), need not be of the same gender as the candidate
6. Present a written statement of eligibility from his/her Pastor
7. Know the candidate and be able to help him/her on the spiritual journey, sharing faith and modeling the life of the mature Catholic
8. Encourage the candidate to grow in a faith relationship with Jesus
9. Assist and encourage the candidate with the study and practice of the Catholic faith
10. Accompany the candidate to special liturgies and events in the preparation program

In the event that the Sponsor is not available at the time of the conferring of the sacrament, a Proxy may be substituted providing the Proxy meets the above requirements.

Sponsors are asked to attend two events with the candidate.

On Sunday, **January 13** at the 5:00 Mass, the candidates will make a Declaration of Intent which sponsors are to attend. Following the Mass, there will be a Confirmation meeting for all students, parents and sponsors.

On Saturday, prior to Confirmation sponsors and candidates are asked to attend the sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) as candidates and sponsors need to be in a state of grace at the time of Confirmation.

Parents, you will be responsible for compliance with the policies of this handbook. If you have any questions or concerns we invite you to contact the Religious Education office either by phone, email or by returning this page with your remarks/questions in writing.

A question that I have is

A concern that I have is

Children's Names

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date



**Saint Leo the Great
Pray for us.**

