

PARENT HANDBOOK

2016 - 2017



Saint Leonard Faith Community

8100 Clys Road, Centerville, OH 45458

937-435-3626

slfc.dre@gmail.com

ST. LEONARD FAITH COMMUNITY MISSION STATEMENT

St. Leonard Faith Community is a freely formed Catholic community sharing in the Franciscan heritage. We are committed to creating, through active worship and the offering of our individual and collective gifts, a spiritual environment which opens us to the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit. Through a variety of ministries, we reach out to respond to the needs of others, with love. Our mission will be to live our Christian Faith, to grow spiritually, and to be actively involved in the community and St. Leonard Faith Community.

ST. LEONARD FAITH COMMUNITY STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

SLFC Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Office Phone Number: 937-435-3626

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Pastoral Administrator: David Weickert

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Director of Religious Education: Donna Leddy

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THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS

Jesus said to his disciples, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

The disciples became disciples through their personal experience of the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus’ commission to them called them to lead others to a personal encounter with the same Jesus they had come to know. Our ministry of evangelization and catechesis is the Church’s continuing response to Jesus’ commission. We, his disciples, are called to lead others to a personal encounter with the Risen Lord. In living our Christian faith, growing in relationship with Jesus, and serving the community in which we live, we answer the call to discipleship within the St. Leonard Faith Community and lead others to do the same.

The Ministry of Evangelization is the Church’s ministry of leading others to a personal experience of God’s love, forgiveness, and healing through an encounter with Jesus Christ.

The Ministry of Catechesis, from the Greek word meaning “to echo the teaching,” is the Church’s ministry of helping “individuals and communities acquire and deepen Christian faith and identity through initiation rites, instruction, and formation of conscience” (National Catholic Directory 5). We pass on our beliefs, rituals, prayers and practices in order to lead others to a full understanding of Christian discipleship as a way of life.

A DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIP

At Baptism, parents make a promise to God and the Church to undertake the responsibility of providing Christian formation for their children, and the Church promises to assist the parents in this responsibility. This partnership between parents and the Church requires ongoing communication, collaboration, and trust in God’s love and guidance.

The St. Leonard Faith Community Religious Education Program is committed to a dynamic partnership with parents in the religious education and spiritual formation of their children. As the primary educators of their children, parents model the saving love of Jesus Christ in their actions and words and teach their children from infancy throughout their lives.

Together with parents, the St. Leonard Faith Community hopes to instill and nurture in children and their families a love for Jesus Christ and His Church, a growing understanding and lifelong participation in the sacraments, and a habit of regular prayer and Christian Service.

At St. Leonard Faith Community, we understand the call to honor and sustain households of faith as we nourish the developing faith of children. The goal of St. Leonard Religious Education is to develop faith formation programs that evangelize and catechize both children and the adults with which they live.

THE GOAL OF CATECHETICAL MINISTRY IS TO MAKE DISCIPLES.

WHOLE COMMUNITY CATECHESIS: NURTURING THE SPIRITUALITY OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES

A Whole Community Approach to Children's Religious Education is a vision of faith formation that promotes the ongoing, lifelong, and intentional faith life of the community, especially the household within which each student lives. The community is the primary resource for the formation and catechesis of faith. The household of faith is the object of catechesis and faith formation. Opportunities for nurturing the spiritual and catechetical needs of parents and families is an important part of our ministry to children.

Family Catechesis: Family catechesis classes offer parents the opportunity to learn more about our Catholic faith and what it means to raise children in the faith. These classes will meet in the Auditorium or the classrooms off the same depending on number. Classes will meet from 9:00-10:15 AM and will experience and celebrate Feast Days or Liturgical seasons as families and communities on the following dates:

Sunday, October 30th- **All Saints**
Sunday, November 20th- **Advent**
Sunday, January 8th- **Epiphany**
Sunday, February 26th- **Lent**
Sunday, April 9th- **Holy Week**

VIBRANT FAITH @ HOME: Vibrant Faith @ Home is a website with resources for making your home a place of faith. To access the resources, create a free username at www.vibrantfaithathome.org, where you will find tools, tips, and resources to talk about your faith as a family, prayer together, ritualize important moments, and reach out in service. Vibrant Faith's simple, yet powerful, faith-forming activities are seasonally based with 60 brand new faith-forming activities uploaded each Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer.

LOYOLA PRESS SUNDAY CONNECTION: God speaks to us in many ways, including through the Sunday Scripture readings. The Sunday Connection provides useful background and activities to better understand the upcoming Sunday's Scripture readings, helping you to connect the Scripture to daily life in a meaningful way.

<http://www.loyolapress.com/sundayconnection.htm>

THE GOSPEL AT HOME: This simple resource connects you to your child(ren)'s lesson each week. Designed for busy families, *The Gospel At Home* provides a short description of the Sunday Gospel plus suggested activities and discussion starters for each age level. These easy-to-do ideas will bring families together to share what each member has learned about the Gospel that they heard on Sunday (and studied in class.) <http://www.pflaumweeklies.com/parents/>

FAMILY SUNDAY MASSES: Family Sunday Masses, during which the Faith Community will celebrate families of all ages and sizes and types, will be held approximately once a month. These Masses will encourage the active participation of children and their families in the liturgy. Parents and children are invited to participate in the liturgy in a variety of ways, including greeting members and handing out bulletins, bringing up the gifts, and reading the petitions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES: Religious education and spiritual formation for students in preschool through eighth grade includes catechetical instruction, liturgical formation, moral formation, service and outreach, prayer, and community building. Parent involvement and participation is incorporated. **High School** will be offered chances throughout the year for mini courses. These programs will be 4-6 weeks long and will reinforce youth's relationship with God, the first will be a video series on the Mass called Altaration. More information will be available soon.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION: Family-focused sacramental preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist is the focus of part of our second grade curriculum. First Reconciliation is celebrated at the Advent Penance Service and First Eucharist is celebrated at a regular Sunday liturgy in the Spring, typically during the Easter Season. Confirmation at St. Leonard Faith Community is celebrated every other year with 7th and 8th grade youth or older who are ready to make the decision to confirm their Catholic faith. Requirements include active participation in PREP program and regular Mass attendance. Preparation will consist of service projects, a retreat, and both sponsor and parent sessions to be done at home.

SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM: Children with special learning or physical needs are welcome and included in our programs. Parents are asked to indicate their children's special needs at registration time.

HOME-BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM: Home-based religious education must follow Archdiocesan Guidelines for Home-Based Religious Education and must be in accordance with the Archdiocese's Graded Course of Study. Parents interested in this option should contact the Director of Religious Education.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD: Children's Liturgy occurs during the 10:30 a.m. Mass. Immediately following the Opening Prayer, children are dismissed to a nearby classroom where the Sunday Gospel and readings are proclaimed in a manner they can understand and enjoy. We enrich their worship with discussion, prayers, songs and activities, as well as raise awareness of God's love, the humanity of Jesus, the Seasons of the Church, the understanding of symbols in the Mass and the context of the Bible. Children return to Mass after the recitation of the Creed. Our program makes the children's experience of church meaningful, while helping them to grow in the faith of the Catholic Church and develop as full and active members of our Parish Community.

YOUTH MINISTRY : At present St. Leonard Faith Community Youth Ministry meets on Sunday Evenings 6:30-8:00pm in the Youth Room. Our Sunday meetings are a mix of learning about one another, sharing our stories and finding about and building our relationship with Jesus Christ. We are committed to helping our youth grow into dedicated and faithful members of the Catholic Church, through opportunities for leadership, varieties of prayer, and a sense of called service through Baptism and the Catholic Social Teachings.

SIX TASKS OF CATECHESIS

The Church, in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, identifies six Tasks of Catechesis in the process of evangelization. Our primary objective is “communion with Christ,” leading others to a personal relationship with Jesus. In so doing, we must be attentive to each of these six areas of formation.

Knowledge of the Faith – Through the work of the Holy Spirit, an encounter with Christ leads to a desire to know him and the plan of the Father, which he reveals. Through knowledge of Scripture and Tradition, learners begin to recognize God’s self-revelation and are increasingly able to explain it, coming to understand the meaning of the Creeds.¹¹ Beginning with the understanding that God is the source of all that is good, visible and invisible, and that God’s revelation comes to us through the stories of Scripture, especially those about Jesus’ life and ministry, and the lives of saints, revealing the work of the Holy Spirit, those being catechized will grow in their knowledge of the faith and, in turn, will live the faith in Christian community and proclaim it in the world.

¹¹ National Directory for Catechesis 20(1); General Directory for Catechesis 85 ¹² General Directory for Catechesis 84

Sacraments and Liturgy – Because Christ is present in the sacraments, believers come to know him more fully in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.¹³ Catechesis not only explains the meaning of the rituals, but also draws those being catechized into “full, conscious and active” participation in the liturgy of the Church.¹⁴ Formation of minds for prayer, thanksgiving, repentance, and the communal spirit of liturgy and sacraments is also emphasized.¹⁵ Sacramental catechesis prepares for the initial celebration of the sacraments and provides correct understanding and ongoing formation for sacramental living.

¹³ National Directory for Catechesis 20(2) ¹⁴ Sacrosanctum Concilium 14 ¹⁵ National Directory for Catechesis 20(2)

Moral Formation – “Jesus’ moral teaching is an integral part of his message.”¹⁶ Moral formation must not only include the content of Christ’s moral teachings, but also their implications for Christian living, in both private and public life. Beginning with the understanding that we are created to know, love and serve God, moral formation aims to convert those being catechized into life in Christ. Rooted in the understanding that all we are and have comes from God, those being catechized will be formed by the Beatitudes, Ten Commandments and other teachings in order to live in accordance with the demands of the Gospel and to recognize the consequences of failing to do so.

¹⁶ Ibid. 20(3)

Praying with Christ – Prayer, always directed to the Father, is the basis of Jesus’ entire life, death and Resurrection. As such, it is also the basis of Christian life.¹⁷ Catechesis should invite believers to join Christ in prayer, offering their lives to the Father. All of the knowledge and practice of the Christian life is understood in the context of prayer.¹⁸ Beginning with the understanding that prayer is communicating with God, those being catechized should grow in their knowledge and practice of various prayer forms and styles, as well as learning the traditional prayers of the Church.

¹⁷ Ibid. 20(4) ¹⁸ Ibid.

Living in the Community of the Church – Catechesis encourages an apprenticeship in Christian living. As Jesus commanded the disciples to “Love one another,” catechesis should point to a life of faith lived in community.¹⁹ Those being catechized should be formed in communal prayer, mutual forgiveness, concern for the poor and alienated, and a spirit of humility and simplicity.²⁰ Beginning with the understanding that the Church is God’s family, learners will continue to develop an understanding of the structure of the Church, the role and responsibilities of each member of the Christian community, as well as the relationship to the hierarchy and saints. It should also foster the desire for unity among all Christians.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid. 20(5) ²⁰ General Directory for Catechesis 86 ²¹ Ibid., Catechesi Tradendae 32

Living as a Christian in Society – The world is where the lay faithful live out their Christian vocation.²² Catechesis, then, should prepare believers to bear witness to their faith in the world, through word and deed.²³ Formation in this area trains believers to have the attitude of Jesus: “to be poor in spirit, to be compassionate, to be meek, to hear the cry of the injustice, to be merciful, to make peace and to accept rejection and persecution.”²⁴ Catechesis includes care for the environment, recognizing the dignity of all people, and dialogue with other religious traditions.

²² Lumen Gentium 16 ²³ National Directory for Catechesis 20(6) ²⁴ Ibid.

Theology of the Body - The Theology of the Body is Saint John Paul II’s dramatic teaching of the meaning of and purpose of human nature. He emphasizes the body as not only a biological reality, but also as a “resacramentalizing” of our Catholic intellectual and moral life.²⁵ He explores how our God-given masculinity and femininity complement each other and help answer two fundamental questions: “Who am I?” and “How am I to live?” In exploring his teachings on the great themes of love, gender, gift, vocation, creation, redemption, purity, and covenant, those being catechized will come to understand the dignity of each human person, the proper relationship with God and others, and the importance of marriage, family and friendship. *“This is the body: a witness to creation as a fundamental gift, and therefore a witness to Love as the source from which the same giving springs.”*²⁶

²⁵ Weigel, George. Evangelical Catholicism, New York: Basic Books. 2013. 211 ²⁶ TOB 14.5

RESOURCES

Official Church Documents

The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition. United States Catholic Conference, Inc.—Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

General Directory for Catechesis. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997. Published in the United States, January 1998.

National Directory for Catechesis. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2005. (This document is not available online.)

Graded Course of Study Pre- K through 4th Grade

Archdiocese of Cincinnati Office of Evangelization and Catechesis 2016

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016-GCS-Religion-PK-4.pdf>

ST. LEONARD FAITH FORMATION POLICIES

The following policies, procedures, and expectations are established to ensure the commitment of both parents/families and the Faith Community in fulfilling our responsibilities to our children and to each other.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

ARCHDIOCESAN POLICY: Decree on Child Protection (2013, Policy C.2)

“A child may participate in an organized program sponsored by a parish, school, agency or institution of the Archdiocese only with the written consent of the child’s parent or guardian on a standard Permission, Release and Medical Power of Attorney form.... Such written consent should provide for emergency care of the child, as warranted by the program or activity.”

REGISTRATION, PERMISSION, AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY: All students participating in the St. Leonard Religious Education Program **MUST** have on file a current Religious Education Registration Form signed by the appropriate parent/ guardian. A Medical Authorization Form and Photo Release Form must also be on file.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY: The St. Leonard Faith Community Religious Education Program admits all students regardless of race, religion, gender, ancestry, or national origin. It does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, or national origin in the administration of its programs or the recruitment of its teachers.

REGISTRATION FEES: Responsible stewardship demands that we collect fees to cover the costs of administering an effective formation program. Current registration fees are:

Preschool (Ages 3 and 4)	\$40 per child
Grades K-8	\$75 per child
Maximum per Family	\$150 per family

Parents who agree to teach receive 50% off the total cost of family tuition.

The religious education of our children is our highest priority and financial need should never prevent a family from registering their children for classes. Please contact the DRE if you need financial assistance.

BAPTISMAL RECORDS: Copies of baptismal certificates are kept on file for all students, especially those new to SLFC and students preparing for sacraments. If your child was not baptized at St. Leonard, please make sure we have a copy of your child’s baptismal certificate on file.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

The Religious Education Program holds regular classes from September through May. A calendar of activities is provided at the beginning of each year. Adequate notification of any changes in the calendar will be provided through the bulletin and e-mail.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, please listen to Channel 7 television station or WHIO 1290 radio station for class or program cancellation. A cancellation notice will also be sent through our TEC Voicemail Alert system and placed on our website and Facebook page.

ATTENDANCE

Children are expected to attend Religious Education classes on a regular basis and to actively participate in class activities. Parents are asked to demonstrate a commitment to their children's formal religious education even when it is difficult or when it involves potential conflicts with a child's interests in sports or other extracurricular activities. Should a parent/guardian anticipate an unavoidable conflict in a child's attendance at religion classes, he/she should contact the child's catechist and the Director of Religious Education as soon as possible either by phone call or text at 937-542-1806. The catechist will provide information for work that is to be made up for classes that are missed. Students are expected to complete the work in order to maintain active participation in class sessions. Attendance will be diligently tracked using SLFC's new ParishSOFT program.

Receiving the sacraments is vital in nurturing a life of Christian spirituality and discipleship. In order to assist our children in developing this sacramental faith life, children are expected to attend Mass and receive the sacraments on a regular basis.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Sunday morning religious education classes begin promptly at 9:00 AM. Students are dismissed from their classrooms at 10:15 AM.

To ensure student safety and building security, students must arrive through the Chapel entrance and proceed directly to their classrooms.

At no time should students be wandering unsupervised in the halls, classrooms, or office areas. Students are reminded to walk in the hallways and to be respectful of Franciscan Living Center residents at all times.

Students in preschool through third grade should be dropped off and picked up directly by a parent/guardian. Older siblings are not permitted to pick up younger siblings. Students are the responsibility of their parents after 10:15 AM. Catechists may not leave the room until all students have departed.

ASSESSMENTS AND PROGRESS REPORTS

At the moment Assessments and Progress Reports are communicated personally between the Catechist and the parent or guardian. If you feel you are not receiving satisfaction please contact the DRE. On February 5th students in the 5th and 8th grades will be expected to take the ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis Religious Education) *Archdiocese of Cincinnati Religious Education Policy #2108.02 states, "The NCEA ACRE Assessment must be administered in every parish and school annually." Each of us in catechetical leadership should assess/evaluate our program to determine its strengths and areas of concern. The NCEA IFG: ACRE instrument gives data-based information from which to do that evaluation and plan more effectively for the future.* If your student is not able to attend PREP on that day contact the teacher or DRE and other arrangements will be made.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Christian discipleship begins with personal choices regarding behavior and interaction with others. While participating in the St. Leonard Religious Education Program, students are expected to conduct themselves according to the basic Christian principles of care and respect. In particular, students should arrive on time to class, bring text and any homework, show respect for others (including classmates, catechists, and Franciscan Living Center residents), handle property with care (Church and Center), and participate fully in class.

Every student enrolled in the St. Leonard Religious Education Program has the right to a quality education. This can only be accomplished in an environment where students and catechists respect each other's rights. Disruptive behavior on the part of the student in the classroom before, during, or after classes cannot be tolerated. If the situation develops where we feel the need for parent involvement, then parents will be contacted. Our emphasis, however, will remain on the positive behavior of our students as we work together to learn and live our faith.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONICS

Cell phones, iPods, MP3 players, CD players, and other electronic equipment must be **turned off** and stored away during class. All electronic equipment that is not turned off and stored away will be confiscated, and a parent must retrieve the item from the Faith Community Office. The Faith Community is not responsible for lost or stolen cell phones or any other electronic equipment brought to class. Text messaging during class is forbidden. Parents should not text message students during class. If a student needs to contact a parent due to an emergency, the catechist will permit the student to use a cell phone or the phone located in the classroom.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

EMERGENCY MEDICAL INFORMATION: Parents are expected to provide any of their child's special medical information on the registration forms so that we can better serve the student's needs. Please notify us if any changes need to be made in our records.

MEDICATIONS: No medications will be given during Religious Education times.

PARKING/SPEED LIMITS: Parents are asked to observe the "No Parking Fire Lane" signs, speed limit, and stop signs, since many elderly residents walk the grounds.

FIRE AND TORNADO PLANS: Each teacher will have a planned route to follow in case of fire or tornado and will go over this with students at the beginning of the year. The St. Leonard Franciscan Living Center will announce a fire, or tornado watch or warning, and students will proceed to designated areas.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY

Substance abuse is defined as either the possession of, use of, or trafficking in of any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, injection, or percutaneous means. Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance during any officially sponsored Faith Community activity will be immediately suspended from the program.

Search and Seizure Policy - If any young person is suspected of having weapons or drugs in his or her possession, the Coordinator will have to search in order to maintain safety and order. An adult staff member or volunteer will witness the search. The decision to search will involve some suspicion of wrong doing on the young person's part. That individual will be asked to cooperate. If the person refuses, the parents will be contacted to come to the program site and assist in the search, and proper legal authorities may be called in.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

VISITORS: We welcome visitors to our classrooms under the following guidelines:

- Visitors under the age of 18 (e.g. friends of registered students) must provide the following information upon arrival: name of visitor, name and phone number of parent/guardian, name of registered student, date of visit. Student Visitor Registration is available in the Office.
- Parents and other adults wishing to observe or assist in the classroom must obtain permission from their child's catechist and must sign-in at the Office and obtain a visitor pass.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS: Parents are urged to take every opportunity to be actively engaged in the program and are invited to participate as volunteers in various ways. All volunteers are required to complete paperwork and the online Background check and child protection requirements established by the Archdiocese under the Decree on Child Protection. To sign up for Virtus go to <http://virtusonline.org/virtus/> and begin the registration process. If you have further questions contact the DRE.

The family is a kind of deeper humanity. But if it is to achieve the full flowering of its life and mission, it needs the kindly communion of minds and the joint deliberation of spouses, as well as the cooperation of parents in the education of their children. In the family, the various generations come together and help one another grow wiser... (The Church in the Modern World, Vatican II, no 52.