

# Saint Therese



2025-2026

Religious Education Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome and thank you for choosing the St. Therese Religious Education Program.

As parents, you are the primary educators in regard to the faith of your family. Your children will learn the most from you and your example: your attitude toward being Catholic, your participation in daily and/or weekly Mass, the importance you place on the Sacraments, how your Catholic values are reflected in your daily life, your excitement toward continuing to learn and share your Catholic faith and having a strong commitment to serve others. So please talk often to your children about what it means to be Catholic, show them how to live that faith and pray daily with them for wisdom, strength, courage, patience, peace and love.

The goal of the St. Therese Religious Education program is to assist your family in your faith journey. We are here to provide your children with some structured education in the Faith and in Sacramental prep, but we are also here to support parents in any way we can. Please contact me with any questions or concerns. Like you, I am constantly learning, so if I do not have the answer, I will find it.

On behalf of the St. Therese staff and our wonderful catechists, we look forward to an amazing year of growing closer to Jesus and our beautiful Catholic faith.

God's Peace to You,

Steve Martin

Director of Religious Education /Youth & Family Ministry



#### **Prayer for the Start of a New Year**

O God, we long to know you and to love you, but the busyness of life often gets in the way. Help us to recognize the ordinary, daily ways that our family can learn about you and grow closer to you. We know that you are with us, leading us and guiding us on our way. Amen.

**Parents and St. Therese Parish are Partners in  
Religious Education**

Prayer for students

Father of Light and Wisdom,  
thank you for giving me  
a mind that can know  
and a heart that can love.

Help me to keep learning every day of my life--  
no matter what the subject may be.  
Let me be convinced that all knowledge leads to you  
and let me know how to find you and love you  
in all the things you have made.

Encourage me when the studies are difficult  
and when I am tempted to give up  
Enlighten me when my brain is slow  
and help me to grasp the truth held out to me.

Grant me the grace to put my knowledge to use  
in building the kingdom of God on earth  
so that I may enter the kingdom of God in heaven.

Amen.

**The Parents' Role in Our Partnership involves:**

- Being a witness to your Catholic faith by attending weekly Mass with your family, following the precepts of the Church, and celebrating the Sacraments.
- Fostering Christian values in your home.
- Keeping current with Religious Education communications; e.g.: reading the Religious Education Handbook, Sunday Bulletins, and any special letters.
- Actively participating in the program by attending parent catechesis, meetings and volunteering as needed.
- Bringing your children to classes regularly and on time.

**The Parish's Role in Our Partnership involves:**

- Taking responsibility for our role in assisting parents in their role as the primary educators of their children.
- Supporting your household of faith by providing resources and prayer rituals to help you to share your faith with your children.
- Communicating regularly and honestly.
- Providing progress reports for your children when necessary and communicating promptly if concerns arise with your children.
- Monitoring your children while Religious Education Classes are in session.
- Maintaining an atmosphere of love, caring respect, and acceptance.

## **The Importance of Attending Mass**

The importance of the Mass and Eucharist cannot be overstated. In fact, the Catechism tells us that, “The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.” The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch’ (CCC 1324).”

As such, it is a very serious tragedy that takes place when we withhold the Eucharistic blessings from our children. For this reason, it is vital to the spiritual wellbeing of you and your children to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. As you know, our actions speak louder than our words. We can tell our children that it is important to attend Mass or we can show them the way. As Saint James says, “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead (James 2:26).”

Please put your faith into action by taking time out of your busy schedule to worship God each week at Mass. We believe that if you do so, you will be pleasantly surprised at the results of God’s grace at work in your lives.

## **Holy Days of Obligation (in the United States)**

Every Sunday

Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary	August 15*
All Saints Day	November 1*
The Immaculate Conception	December 8
Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)	December 25
Mary, Mother of God	January 1*

\* When these days fall on a Saturday or a Monday, the precept to attend Mass on that particular date is abrogated (removed) in the U.S.

## **ACT OF CONTRITION**

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,  
I have sinned against You,  
Whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help,  
to do penance,  
to sin no more and avoid what ever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.  
In His Name, my God, have mercy. Amen.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting, Amen.

## **Religious Education Policies**

### **Attendance and Absences:**

In order to ensure that the students of our Religious Education program receive the best faith formation we can provide, we ask that parents of students who miss class contact the Religious Education Office.

If a student misses a class, there may be make-up work assigned to help keep the child from falling behind his or her peers. Please keep absences to a minimum as they create a lot of extra work for the catechists and students trying to catch up on material missed.

Tardiness interrupts valuable class time and is discourteous to the catechist and other students. Please make every effort to arrive on time .

## **Class Times, Pick Up, and Drop Off:**

All classes will begin at 6:30 PM and end at 7:45 PM. *(Please note that evenings with Mass may run a few minutes late.)* Please do not drop your child off prior to fifteen minutes before class begins. Also, all students should be picked up within ten minutes of class ending. Any student not picked up by 7:55 will be taken to the R.E. Office for pick-up.

It is our policy that students in Grades K-2 should be picked up by a parent or guardian in their classroom at the end of class. All other grades will be dismissed from their classes at 7:45 PM.

## **Parking:**

In order to help insure the safety of all of our students, Father has asked everyone to avoid parking on Kort Street from 6-8 PM during Faith Formation. If you are a parent and need to park for an extended period of time, we ask that you please use one of our parking lots located on the south side of the church or on the north side of the school.

## **Discipline:**

At St. Therese Parish, we strive to provide the best possible environment for our children to grow in faith. This takes the cooperation of catechists, parents and students. One of our main objectives is to teach our children to make virtuous choices in regard to behavior.

As such, all students are expected to be respectful and cooperative during class. If a teacher deems it necessary to remove a student from the classroom for misbehavior, he or she will be sent to the Religious Education office.

For lesser infractions, the student will be given a verbal warning. At the discretion of the Coordinator of Religious Education, the student may be sent back to class or wait out the remaining class time in the parish office. Parents will be contacted the second time a student is sent to the office or if the first offense is deemed serious enough to warrant it. In cases of severe or continuing behavioral problems, the DRE reserves the right to suspend or even expel any student from the program.

## **Traditional Catholic Prayers**

### **OUR FATHER**

Our Father, who art in Heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

### **GLORY BE**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

### **HAIL MARY**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### **GRACE BEFORE MEALS**

Bless us, O Lord, and these Thy Gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **GRACE AFTER MEALS**

We give Thee thanks almighty God for these and all Thy gifts, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen. May the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

## To help out as:

- Substitute Catechists for Religious Education
- Catechists for Religious Education
- Assistants for Religious Education

Chaperones for Youth Ministry events

Volunteers for special events

## To help with the Mass:

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion  
Help to distribute Holy Communion
- Readers  
Proclaim the first and second reading, announcements, etc.
- Ushers  
Take up the collection, help people find pews, pass out bulletins, etc.

Come help bolster the ranks of our volunteers. Each of these roles is very important to our parish community.

Contact the Religious Ed Office for more information.

## Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices:

The use of electronic devices including cellular phones, video games, mp3 players, etc. are prohibited during class. Anyone caught using an electronic device may have it confiscated from them at the catechist's discretion. If this occurs, a parent will be required to pick up the device after class from the Parish Office.

## Dress Code:

Hats and jackets may not be worn in the classroom. Bare midriffs and visible undergarments are also unacceptable attire for Religious Education setting. Parents, please discuss this policy with your children before classes begin so that it does not become an issue the teachers have to deal with.

## Food and Drink:

It is at the catechist's discretion as to whether or not students will be allowed to chew gum, eat food, or drink beverages inside their classroom. If such a privilege is granted, abuse may lead to it being taken away by the catechist or DRE Students are encouraged to make sure that they dispose of any waste properly.

## Homework:

The student is responsible for completing all work assigned by their teacher, and turning it in on time.

## Peanut / Nut Allergies:

This year we have several students in our Religious Education program with severe peanut / nut allergies. If you plan to send a treat to Religious Education for any reason we ask that you make sure that it is peanut /nut free. Thank you for helping us keep everyone safe.

**Required Service Hours:**

The purpose of requiring service hours prior to receiving the sacrament of Confirmation is to encourage students to live the Christian Life. "...When you have done this for the least of my brethren you have done it to me" (Mt 25:40). As such, a minimum of 30 hours are required to be completed from 7th-10th grade. Fifteen of those should be parish projects and the other fifteen community/parish projects. There will also be a final class project in the months before Confirmation. St. Therese Parish sponsors several events which help students meet this requirement.

**Sacramental Preparation:**

Any parents of children who have not been baptized should contact the Religious Education Office. Likewise, parents of children who are past the second grade and have not received the sacraments of Reconciliation or First Eucharist should also notify the Director of Religious Ed at the time of registration. Arrangements will be made to prepare them to receive these important sacraments.

**Snow Days:**

Religious Education classes will be cancelled due to inclement weather if the D.C. Everest Schools are closed for the day or dismissed early. Please check local news channels for cancellations. Classes may also be cancelled at the discretion of the DRE for other suitable reasons. Parents will be contacted through e-mail when a snow day will occur.

**Kindergarten Program**

Starting each January we offer a free program for children in Kindergarten to give them a chance to learn more about their faith. The program will meet during the normal Religious Education class time and will focus on Moses and Jesus using a VeggieTales™ themed curriculum.

If you are interested in signing up your child for this wonderful opportunity, please contact the R.E. Office.

**Optional Safe Environment Training for Parents**

Please note: all of the forms, materials, and videos for our Safe Environment Training can be found on the diocesan website at:

<http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com/Safe-Environment/index.htm>

**Instructions:**

Read all of the required reading:

The Red Book  
The Green Book  
5 Steps to a Safe Environment  
Red Flags in Adults  
Red Flags in Children

Then watch the Safe Environment Video

Complete the Parent Training Verification Form.

**Or:****Go on-line**

<http://dioceseoflacrosse.com/safe-environment>

**Found under: Training and Library**

- 1) Complete the Safe Environment Training
- 2) Complete Verification of Parent Training form
- 3) Give the completed Verification form to the Safe Environment Coordinator at your parish/school.

\*Note: All students will have safe environment training in class that is appropriate to their age group. If you would not like your child to receive this training, you may opt out by filling out the Student Training Declination Form prior to the night it is offered. Any student not in attendance the night of training will be required to complete this at home with his/her parents.