



## **St. Martha Catholic Church Religious Education**

### **Synchronous & Asynchronous Proposed Learning Plan**

#### **St. Martha Religious Education Mission Statement**

The Saint Martha Religious Education/ Faith Formation Program lays the foundation for children to become disciples of Jesus Christ. Children are the focal point of its educational process and instructional programs.

The curriculum is designed to be relevant, effective, and appropriate for the child's needs and should enable the student to meet the demands of the world in which he/she lives. Students will study Catholic teaching and will share their faith through scripture, prayer, and experiences.

The Saint Martha Religious Education/ Faith Formation Program is an extension of the teaching mission of the Church and exists for that purpose. We will provide a safe environment in which the children of our parish can learn about our Catholic beliefs and traditions. As partners in the teaching process, the Faith Formation Program is committed to our parents/guardians who are the primary religious educators of their children.

We encourage all children and their families to become actively engaged in our Religious Education/Faith Formation Program, to grow in faith, love and relationship with God, his Son, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

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Dear Families,

As we continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on our community, we understand that our parish families, employees and community have many questions and opinions about the start of the 2020-2021 Religious Education/Faith Formation year. It is our prayer that this document and future revisions will continue to clarify the steps being taken to have our catechists and students return to Religious Education. It is our sincere hope and prayer that these measures are temporary in nature and that as restrictions ease across the state, St. Martha Church can also ease restrictions and requirements.

In order for this plan to work and for a future return to normalcy, it is essential that all of our families comply fully with the requirements for returning to Religious Education. We as a faith formation program carry a serious burden to do everything we can to bring students back, while protecting them and their families to the fullest extent we are able.

This document reflects those needs. The ultimate goal of this plan is to promote the safety of all members of our parish community and to assist the community with understanding the importance of the plan. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Department of Health (DOH), and World Health Organization (WHO). The Diocese of Venice continues to look at best practices in education while listening to the recommendations being made by the Department of Education (DOE), the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), and the Florida Catholic Conference School Executive Committee (FCCSEC) and Accreditation Committee (FCCA).

Please review our Religious Education/Faith Formation plan. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Religious Education office. We will continue to send you updates. We are grateful for your patience and support during these unprecedented times. We trust that God will continue to pour out his blessings on our entire community.

Blessings in Faith,

Patricia Sileo  
Director of Religious Education

## **AT HOME- SYNCHRONOUS & ASYNCHRONOUS LEARNING MODEL**

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING OPTIONS FOR 2020-2021**

There are two options for Religious Education/Faith Formation instruction available to our parish families (Parents/Guardians to pick one of the options by September 4<sup>th</sup>)

1. For those families who are comfortable returning to the religious education/faith formation classrooms, students can join their catechists and peers in their classrooms. (See St. Martha Church Religious Education In- Person Learning Model)
2. Other families may choose to participate via virtual learning at home.

St. Martha Catholic Church is committed to delivering an engaging learning experience for all students during a time when circumstances compromise our ability to provide that experience for all students on our campus.

This Synchronous/Asynchronous Learning Plan has been created to ensure the continuity of spiritual growth for all of our students in the 2020-2021 school year. Synchronous/Asynchronous Learning cannot replicate the Religious Education/Faith Formation classes students are used to receiving, however, we will partner with students and parents to ensure that meaningful learning experiences continue during this time of Synchronous/Asynchronous Learning.

Students will engage with their Catechists through a range of methods, including recorded video, online discussions, email, and phone communication. Catechists, and our Director of Religious Education will be available to communicate with students and parents on an ongoing and regular basis to ensure that individual student needs are being met to the best of their ability.

- Using email, Google Docs, Google Classroom, and Google Meet, students will be sure to receive timely feedback and learning support directly from their Catechists
- Catechists will provide monthly Lesson Plans
- Monthly Zoom Meeting with Class/Catechist
- On-line textbooks/ebooks/links
- Monthly newsletters/updates

This Synchronous/Asynchronous Learning Plan relies on the continuing partnership of our dedicated Catechists, motivated and engaged students, and committed parents.

As we look to provide a high-quality Synchronous Learning/Asynchronous Learning experience for our students, we have identified the following goals:

- Continuing a high level of spiritual growth for each student
- Maintaining Catechist to student/family connections
- Ensuring a continued strong sense of community

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Synchronous Learning creates a dramatic change for students and their families. These changes and the responsibilities that go with them can produce extra stress for both children and parents. While academic structures are important in this time, we also know that your role is to be a parent, not a teacher, and we want you to embrace the flexibility that remote learning allows.

As you prepare to parent your child in Synchronous Learning, we offer the below recommendations for supporting your child's intellectual and emotional health:

- ❖ Set up a learning space in an area free of distractions. We recommend that you find a quiet space and create a learning environment that includes access to school supplies and internet access. We recommend Google Meet/Zoom Meeting sessions take place in public spaces in your house (such as dining room, kitchen table, living room, family room, or den).
- ❖ Use a calendar to help your children keep track of classes, assignments, and responsibilities. Assignments given through Google Classroom will automatically be on the student Google Calendar and published monthly in the newsletter.
- ❖ Keep the lines of communication open. It is important to let your children's Catechist know if they are having difficulty with their Synchronous Learning/Asynchronous Learning experience.
- ❖ Please let our Catechists know if your children are struggling with content or completion of any assignment.
- ❖ Talk with your children about what they are thinking and feeling. Some resources for how to talk with children about the coronavirus include: "[Talking to Teens and Tweens about the Coronavirus](#)," *The New York Times*; "[Talking to Children about COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)- A Parent Resource](#)," The National Association of School Psychologists; and "[How to Talk to Kids about Coronavirus](#)," *The New York Times*.

## Digital Learning Conduct

During Synchronous Learning/Asynchronous Learning, we will continue to expect and support positive behavior, kindness, and respect. All students are expected to use their devices appropriately and safely.

Technology Information

[Parent/Guardian Guide to Google Classroom](#)

[Parent/Guardian Guide to Google Meet](#)

[Digital Citizenship](#)

## Technology

Students and families should refer to the [Diocese of Venice Technology Plan and Acceptable Use Policies](#) ([dioceseofvenice.org](http://dioceseofvenice.org)) to ensure safe and appropriate device use. Parents have the option to view the websites with their children.

## Expectations for Virtual Meetings

It is essential that students understand that a virtual classroom/zoom meeting is identical in behavior expectations to a Religious Education classroom. Students engage positively in a virtual meeting by:

- ❖ Logging in promptly through Google Classroom/Zoom Meeting
- ❖ Entering the virtual meeting space prepared for the lesson, activity, or meeting with books, paper, writing utensil, any other materials requested by the Catechist
- ❖ Entering the virtual meeting space prepared for the lesson, activity, or meeting.