

ST. ALBERT THE GREAT CCD PROGRAM: COVID-19 PLANNING

In response to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, all program options for St. Albert the Great Religious Education Program will be conducted virtually from September 2020 through December 2020, with the hope of resuming in-person classes come January 2021 conditions permitting.

WHY A SHIFT TO VIRTUAL LEARNING?

We believe that switching to a virtual learning environment for the fall is the best decision in order to ensure the health and well being of students and staff at this time. A shift to virtual learning addresses the following concerns:

- Students attending our CCD Program would be exposed to three separate learning environments: their day school community, the St. Albert the Great school community (SATG), and CCD community. There are very real parental concerns for the steps these learning environments will take to mitigate risk of their child's exposure to COVID-19. Virtual learning eliminates any risk of exposure from the SATG and CCD communities because CCD students and staff will not be exposed to those learning environments in a virtual setting.
- The PA Dept. of Education and the Archdiocesan Office for Catholic Education are evaluating several scenarios and developing policies to help mitigate risk of exposure to COVID-19 among student populations and faculty in preparation for a return to school come fall. Some of these proposals would be challenging for our CCD Program to implement and fulfill, as we do not have the financial or personnel resources of a school or school district.
- Should a resurgence of COVID-19 this fall result in the suspension of school again, our CCD Program would be unaffected as we are already conducting classes virtually.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "VIRTUAL LEARNING?"

- In March, a two week suspension of classes turned into an indefinite stay-at-home order that necessitated our switching to a "homeschooling" model to finish out the school year. This model placed the onus of instruction upon the parents to complete the remainder of the year and the catechists took on a resource role, communicating with parents, and keeping track of the completion of work. **This is NOT what we plan for the fall of 2020.**
- By "virtual learning" we mean that catechists will conduct classes virtually via Zoom at set times and assignments will be posted and tracked using Google Classroom.

WHAT WILL VIRTUAL LEARNING LOOK LIKE?

- **FOR TUESDAY CCD:**
 - Classes will be conducted by catechists via Zoom.
 - Virtual classes will be held from 4:30 – 5:45 PM on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tuesday of each month beginning in October. Each class will cover one chapter.
 - Homework and other assignments, including links to the online e-assessments, will be posted on Google Classroom for students to complete each week.

- Every student will be provided with a user name in the format of "jsmith@satg1.org." This user name will allow the student to access Google Classroom for CCD purposes.
 - There will be no virtual class on the 1st Tuesday of the month. This will be used as a "bye" week to allow students time to catch up on assignments if needed.
 - During the bye week, parents will receive an email that will contain resources for the material that will be taught that month. These resources will help to keep parents in the know, and will enable them to better assist their child in completing assignments.
 - Families will be expected to complete at least one service activity and one spiritual activity over the course of the fall term at their convenience, as we cannot provide these opportunities for student in a virtual learning environment like we do in a traditional classroom setting. For similar reasons, we ask parents with students in grades 3-7 to ensure that their child receives the sacrament of Penance at least once during the fall term. Additional details on this will be provided in the program calendar.
- **FOR SUNDAY FAMILY CATECHESIS**
 - Classes will be conducted by catechists via Zoom.
 - There will be no family gathering on the 2nd Sunday of the month.
 - Instead of the usual family gathering, virtual classes will be held from **11:30 AM – 12:30 PM** on the 2nd Sunday of each month beginning in October. Each class will cover the first chapter of the Unit as usual. Please note that the start time has been delayed by 30 minutes to allow catechists and families attending the 10 AM Mass time to return home for the virtual lesson.
 - Parents will be provided with a video presentation of the Unit Theme for the month. The video will contain the traditional PowerPoint presentation they are accustomed to along with voice over commentary, and discussion questions to use at home with their family.
 - Homework and other assignments, including links to the online e-assessments, will be posted on Google Classroom for students to complete.
 - Every student will be provided with a user name in the format of "jsmith@satg1.org." This user name will allow the student to access Google Classroom for CCD purposes.
 - All other aspects and requirements of the family catechesis option remain unchanged including the monthly resources provided to families via a Google Form.
 - **ARE THERE SECURITY ISSUES REGARDING ZOOM?**
 - **No.** All of the security issues such as "Zoom Bombing" that were experienced by users at the start of the Pandemic have been addressed by Zoom.
 - Students will be provided with a unique password encrypted login link to access their virtual class. This link will remain unchanged for the duration of virtual learning. Only those with this link will be able to access the virtual class.
 - As the host, catechists will have access to additional security features to provide a secure and safe learning environment for their students.

- **IS ATTENDANCE AT THE VIRTUAL CLASS MANDATORY?**
 - Yes. Our attendance policies remain unchanged even though we are moving to a virtual learning environment. Students that habitually miss the virtual class may be removed from the class, in which case the family will be required to home school the remainder of the program year.

- **WHAT HAPPENS IF I DO NOT HAVE A DEVICE FOR EACH OF MY CHILDREN?**
 - If you have multiple children, and do not have a device for each of those children to access the virtual classes, then please contact Mr. Mueller at dre@satg1.org or 215-947-3641 to discuss your situation and options.

- **WHAT HAPPENS COME JANUARY 2021?**
 - As of now, our plan is to resume in-person in-class instruction in January 2021 following the Christmas holidays.
 - If conditions are not conducive to a return to classroom instruction, then we will continue to meet virtually using the same format outlined above.
 - The decision about January will be made sometime in December when a proper evaluation of the situation can be made.

- **DOES SWITCHING TO VIRTUAL LEARNING IMPACT THE FEES FOR CCD?**
 - No. The cost savings for switching to virtual learning for four months is minimal. While costs regarding heating, electric, water, paper and copying are reduced, other expenses such as textbooks and classroom supplies (in anticipation of a return to class in January) remain unchanged.
 - Any cost savings will be off-set by additional expenses for things like Zoom subscriptions and technology needed for our catechists to conduct virtual learning.
 - We will be extending the current registration discount through August 30.

- **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**
 - If you have not registered for CCD yet, please do so as soon as possible.
 - We are providing catechists with extensive training this summer to prepare and equip them for the fall.
 - A detailed program calendar will be provided to families mid July.