

Catholic is Our Core!



[stambrosecoop@gmail.com](mailto:stambrosecoop@gmail.com)

A ministry of the Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul

# Family Handbook 2019-2020

## **Our Core Committee**

**Sandy Pricer**, *director*

**Denise Nelligan**, *VIRTUS coordinator & high school coordinator*

**JoAnn Polickoski**, *secretary*

**JJ Salts**, *elementary school coordinator*

**Jeannie Sommers**, *Little Lambs, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd & nursery coordinator*

**Joe Pricer**, *treasurer*

The Core Committee ensures the success of St. Ambrose co-op by planning and administering, with input and guidance from the Basilica clergy, all aspects of the co-op including but not limited to: planning classes; purchasing supplies; setting up service opportunities; interfacing with the Basilica staff; and working diligently to provide a quality program rooted in our Catholic Faith.

The Core Committee welcomes ideas, suggestions, questions and concerns.

Send all official co-op correspondence to [stambrosecoop@gmail.com](mailto:stambrosecoop@gmail.com)

The Core Committee will address any concerns at its next scheduled monthly meeting (typically the third Wednesday of each month) and issue a response after its conclusion.

Since committee members are also homeschooling mothers of 29 total children with 65 years of homeschooling experience, who are volunteering their time and talent to ensure the success of co-op, please have patience, flexibility and understanding when addressing concerns.

## **Our Statement of Faith: The Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## **Governing Values**

As a ministry of the Basilica of Sts. Peter & Paul, all who participate in the St. Ambrose Catholic Homeschool Co-Op must agree to and adhere to the following rules, regulations, policies, and procedures:

### **Fully Catholic**

Families committed to homeschooling their children in the Catholic faith are welcome. They must be practicing Catholics and registered parishioners of a Catholic parish near their home in the tri-state area. A practicing Catholic is someone who at a minimum attends Sunday Mass every week and is a registered parishioner of a local Catholic parish. A practicing Catholic makes a religious assent of the mind and intellect to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, which is summarized especially in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Faith is founded on Sacred Scripture, the Inspired Word of God, and Sacred Tradition faithfully handed on under the guidance of the Holy Spirit by Apostolic Authority.

### **Precepts of the Catholic Church**

St. Ambrose Homeschool Co-op members must agree to adhere to the 7 Precepts of the Catholic Church, condensed as follows:

- I. To attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, and resting from servile works.
- II. To observe the days of abstinence and fasting.
- III. To confess our sins to a priest, at least once a year.
- IV. To receive Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist at least once a year during Easter Season.
- V. To contribute to the support of the Church.
- VI. To obey the laws of the Church concerning Matrimony, which is between one man and one woman.
- VII. To participate in the Church's mission of Evangelization of Souls. (Missionary Spirit of the Church)

### **Volunteering**

Every adult (18 and older) who will be on campus during co-op must be VIRTUS trained within 30 days of joining co-op or will not be allowed to continue participating. Training is available throughout the Diocese of Knoxville almost every week. Contact the Core Committee for a list of upcoming VIRTUS training sessions. VIRTUS training does not expire. The Basilica and Core Committee each require a copy of the VIRTUS certificate once training has been completed. Volunteer paperwork and background check paperwork are also required by the Basilica. For more information please visit [www.virtusonline.org](http://www.virtusonline.org)

Every parent or guardian who will attend co-op with their child(ren) will be assigned a volunteer position. We work hard to assign each adult a role they feel comfortable and capable of performing.

Each family also must volunteer to work in some capacity at the two co-op fundraisers (Advent candle sales in fall and bake sale in spring).

## Attendance & Responsibilities

### Personal Accountability

All parents/guardians are responsible for their children and their behavior while attending co-op and on the campus of the Basilica or All Saints Academy. Any discipline that needs to be addressed will be brought to the attention of the child's parent/guardian to correct the behavior. Any damage caused will be repaired by or payment made by that parent. Please remember that it is a privilege to utilize the church facilities, and co-op participants must act accordingly with respect and gratitude. There is to be no running anywhere on campus, in the buildings, or in parking lots, except during designated P.E. or recess times.

### Parent and Student Responsibilities

Parents and students should come to class prepared for the day's lessons, including having completed homework or projects, bringing in items requested by the teacher, and having a backpack or tote bag for their belongings. The co-op provides all textbooks, workbooks, paper, writing utensils and school supplies.

All students enrolled in co-op must attend all morning classes available for their age or grade level.

Lead teachers are provided manuals for teaching their classes; those materials must be returned at the end of the school year.

Clothing must be appropriate for attending Mass. Co-op T-shirts should be worn during co-op classes. All participants first grade and older, including all adult participants, must wear a nametag while on campus during co-op hours. Please label children's bags, jackets, water bottles, etc.

### Absolutely NO Drop-Offs

A VIRTUS-trained parent or guardian must attend co-op with their child(ren) and remain on campus (to include the church, Varallo Hall, nursery, religious education building, All Saints Academy, and parking lots of both the Basilica and All Saints) during co-op hours. If in the event of an emergency or sudden onset of illness you must leave campus early and designate someone else to take your children (ages 1<sup>st</sup> grade and older only) home, please inform a member of the Core Committee and let her know who will be responsible for your child(ren) in your absence.

### Absences or Late Arrivals

Notify a member of the Core Committee as soon as possible **before** co-op begins if there is any reason you are unable to attend co-op or will be late. We want to make this learning experience as positive and rewarding as possible for all students participating; therefore, we need to ensure adequate teaching coverage (2 adults per class) for all classes. If you know in advance that you will not be attending co-op for any reason (such as travel or a family event), please post your absence date on Slack as soon as possible.

## Severe Weather

If any Catholic schools in the Chattanooga area (Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Jude, or Notre Dame High School) are closed due to severe weather conditions, St. Ambrose Co-Op also will be closed. If those schools are dismissed during co-op hours, St. Ambrose will dismiss early as well. If those schools have delayed openings due to weather, St. Ambrose will be closed. ***Co-op does not follow Hamilton County Schools closings.***

## Sickness

To protect the health of all co-op participants, no one (parents/guardians, teachers and students) who has a contagious illness in the past 24 hours should attend co-op. That includes **fever, vomiting, rashes, diarrhea, colored phlegm/mucus, head lice, eye drainage, and croup-like coughing**. If one person in your family has any of the above, chances are someone else will also, and therefore everyone should stay home. Contagious incidents that appear during co-op hours must be reported to a member of the Core Committee (in confidence), who will then post it to Slack so other families may watch for symptoms in their own children. ***Co-op will not be closed when other surrounding schools are closed for illness.***

## First Aid

Participation in the St. Ambrose Homeschool Co-Op is at your own risk. All participants must sign the enclosed waiver for each adult and child before beginning classes.

First Aid Kits are located in the nursery; in the second floor supply closet; in the supply locker near the gym at All Saints Academy; and near the men's restroom in Varallo Hall. Lock combination is 1890 (the year Basilica was consecrated) for all kits. Parents, guardians and teachers also must fill out a health information form for themselves and each child attending co-op.

If an emergency happens during co-op hours (such as an insect bite or a fall), the child's parents must alert one member of the Core Committee, who will then relay necessary information to the child's teachers so they can keep an eye on the child.

## Communication

The primary means of communication with co-op participants is through Slack, available as an app and a website. The Core Committee will ensure each participant has access to Slack. Participants should check Slack regularly and especially the night before and morning of co-op as this is where homework assignments, activities, events, requests for equipment, prayers, absences, and other information is posted on a daily basis. If there is an emergent issue (such as weather), a member of the Core Committee will address it through a texting app called Remind.

## Social Media and Photography

Members must sign a waiver acknowledging that the Core Committee and other members of co-op may photograph or videotape any part or person of co-op, and those images may appear on social media or in print for the purposes of promoting co-op, or on another member's social media.

## Application Process

### Registration

Returning families may register Feb. 1-28. Registration is then open to new families from March 1-April 30. New families must attend an open house or plan a visit during co-op hours before April 30.

All families must complete an application. When the application has been approved and the family is committed to joining St. Ambrose Co-op, they must complete a registration form for each child (babies through high schoolers), read and sign a copy of the handbook, sign all waivers (both parents), and pay the registration fee. Then they will be invoiced for all class fees.

All teachers who do not have children enrolled in the program also must agree to abide by all policies in this handbook, sign waivers, and have a filled out registration form on file.

### Late Registration Policy

As the St. Ambrose co-op is run by a core group of five homeschooling mothers who are volunteering their time and talent to run the co-op, they need ample time in the summer to set class sizes, create the schedule, find teachers, choose curriculum, and purchase supplies in order to be ready to start on the first day of classes in August, and therefore cannot accept late registrations. For those families moving to the area after June 1, the core committee will decide on a case-by-case basis whether they will be able to join.

### Co-Op Fees, Class Fees, Late Fees

**Co-Op Fees:** A non-refundable registration fee, which covers rent and insurance to the Basilica as well as cleaning and office supplies, is due upon registration. Registration fee is for the entire school year and no part will be refunded in the event of withdrawing from co-op for any reason.

**Class Fees:** St. Ambrose Co-Op purchases all textbooks, workbooks, and supplies on behalf of each student depending on which courses they are enrolled in. Fees are to be paid in full by July 1 for fall semester. Most classes will have second semester supply fees as well (whereas all one-time book fees are charged on the first semester invoice only). An itemized invoice is provided to each family at least a month before fees are due. Class fees are not refundable.

**Late Fees:** If all fees are not paid by the set deadline, a \$50 late fee will be added to your account. Families who need to arrange a payment plan must contact Treasurer Joe Pricer at [jmpricer@gmail.com](mailto:jmpricer@gmail.com) *before* the fee deadline.

### Class Placement

Little Lambs (ages 3-5, Pre-K/Kindergarten) must be potty-trained. Children in elementary-age classes must be age 6 by Sept. 1 and be able to read and write. Latin class placement will depend on previous Latin experience and/or a teacher recommendation. Children will be divided into three levels for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: Level 1, ages 3-6, Pre-K-K; Level 2, ages 6-9, grades 1-4; Level 3, ages 9-12, grades 5-8.

### Special Needs

St. Ambrose Co-op welcomes all of God's children to share in our faith journey. We strive to make co-op a positive experience for all children and expect them to participate to the best of their abilities. Special needs considerations must be noted on the child's registration form to ensure adequate accommodation for them. Please note that our building is a former convent that is more than 100 years old, and only the first floor is handicapped accessible; at All Saints Academy, only the main floor is handicapped accessible.

### Class sizes

In the event that we must limit class sizes due to classroom capacity and number of VIRTUS-trained adults available to teach, registrations will be processed in the order they are fully completed (all forms signed, VIRTUS training completed, payments made).

When classes have reached capacity, the Core Committee will start a waiting list for families interested in joining. In the event a family withdraws, the committee will contact those on the waiting list to complete their registration. No fees are due until registration.

### Guidelines for Teachers and Class Assistants

- \* Please direct all questions, comments, and problems to the director, Sandy Pricer.
- \* Prepare an extra lesson plan that involves minimal supplies and submit it to the director by the first day of class so that, in the case of a last-minute absence, your class can easily be covered by your assistant or a member of the Core Committee.
- \* Practice a positive approach to discipline, and always involve a child's parent or guardian in any disciplinary situations.
- \* Per VIRTUS rules, a minimum of two adults must be in each classroom when working with children.
- \* Dismiss class promptly, not early or late. Schedule:
  - 8:00-8:15 a.m. Teachers arrive to set up classrooms
  - 8:30 a.m. Co-op gathers in Varallo Hall for morning prayers, pledge and announcements
  - 8:45-9:30 a.m. First period
  - 9:30-10:15 a.m. Second period
  - 10:15-11:00 a.m. Third period
  - 11:00-11:45 a.m. Fourth period
  - 11:45-12:00 p.m. Dismissal/prepare for Mass
  - 12:00-12:30 p.m. Mass
  - 12:30-1:15 p.m. Lunch/recess
  - 1:15-2:00 p.m. Fifth period
  - 2:00-3:00 p.m. Sixth period

\*Open flames and combustible projects are not allowed in the buildings. If a lesson involves these, teachers must take the class outside for that portion of the instruction, EXCEPT for candles used during Catechesis of the Good Shepherd classes.

\* At least two adults must accompany children (except high school students) across the parking lot between the religious education building and Varallo Hall. Students should use the buddy system when moving about campus.

\* Teachers must return any co-op provided materials at the end of the school year.

### Basilica Nursery Policy (effective 09/06/2018)

A nursery is available during co-op hours for parents with children younger than age 3. Parents must stay with their babies/toddlers in the nursery while their older children attend classes to ensure state-prescribed capacity (explained below) is not exceeded. All nursery-age children must be registered with co-op. Nursery slots will be allotted in the order that registrations are received.

Each child should be signed in and out by a parent or guardian, even if the parent is remaining in the nursery (because of the state requirement to limit the number of children based on their ages). Please provide a cell number if you are dropping off your child.

#### **Nursery Staff and Volunteers**

• To ensure a safe environment, THERE MUST BE TWO ADULTS IN THE NURSERY AT ALL TIMES.

A volunteer sign-up sheet is in the nursery.

• All nursery staff and volunteers must sign in and out.

• All nursery staff and volunteers over 18 must have VIRTUS certification registered with the parish.

• Teenagers younger than 18 may volunteer to serve in the nursery, and they are not required to have VIRTUS certification. But there still must be two VIRTUS-certified adults present.

#### **Nursery Capacity**

By State of Tennessee policy, with 2 or more staff present, the nursery may accept the following number of children, depending on the age of the youngest child:

• If there is a baby under 7 months: 8 total children

• If there is a child under 2 years: 12 total children

• If there is a child under 3 years: 14 total children

• If there is a child under 5 years: 20 total children

• If there are only ages 5 and older: 25 total children

### All Other Matters

St. Ambrose Catholic Homeschool Co-Op will abide by the policies and procedures issued by the Diocese of Knoxville Office of Youth and Adult Ministry.