

APPENDIX L

Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau

WITNESS STATEMENT

For Those Seeking to Enroll Their Child in a Catholic School or a Parish School of Religion

One of the blessings of marriage is bringing forth new life. God entrusts children to parents who have a primary right and duty to educate their child in the practice of the faith. Parents carry out this responsibility by creating a home full of love, forgiveness, respect, and fidelity. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one honors God and learns moral values.

In the rite of the Sacrament of Baptism, parents receive the following call from God to evangelize their children:

You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training her/him in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring her/him up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor... You will be the first teachers of your child in the ways of the faith. May you be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say or do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

It is no wonder, that the Church identifies the home as the domestic church. It is in the intimate environment of the family that parents are, by word and example, the first heralds of the faith with respect to their children. This environment is enhanced and deepened through the parish Eucharistic community that is the heart of the spiritual life for Christian families.

Catholic schools and parish schools of religion programs are in partnership with the family in order to proclaim and witness to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. They assist parents in fulfilling their responsibility as the primary religious educators of their child. This partnership works best when parents respect the beliefs of the Church and live lives in a manner that reflect these beliefs. If parents reject the beliefs of the Church or live lives in conflict with these teachings, catechizing young people becomes very difficult.

Aware, then, of the dignity of this holy parental call, and with a reverent awe for that responsibility which is mine, I commit myself to be, in word and example, the first and best teacher of my child in the faith. Practically, this means I will:

- Understand that the authentic teachings of Jesus as taught by the Catholic Church will be part of my child's education and formation;
- To the best of my ability respect the teachings of the Church and help my children respect the Church and its teachings;
- Regularly participate in the Sunday liturgy with my family (if not Catholic, support my child's participation in their faith tradition), include prayer in my life and form my child in the faith.
- Commit to speak frequently with my child about God and to include prayer in our daily home life;
- Participate in and cooperate with the school or parish school of religion in programs that enable me as a parent to take an active role in the religious education of my children, including sacramental preparation for Catholic children;
- Support the moral and social doctrine of the Catholic Church to ensure consistency between home and school;

- Teach my child by word and example to have a love and concern for the needs of others;
- Meet my financial responsibilities in supporting the Catholic school or the parish school of religion.
- Practice stewardship in support of the school and parish.

Signature of the Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

PRINT NAMES Parent(s)/Guardian(s) _____

Student Name _____ School _____ Grade _____

Signature of the Pastor/Administrator _____

Date _____