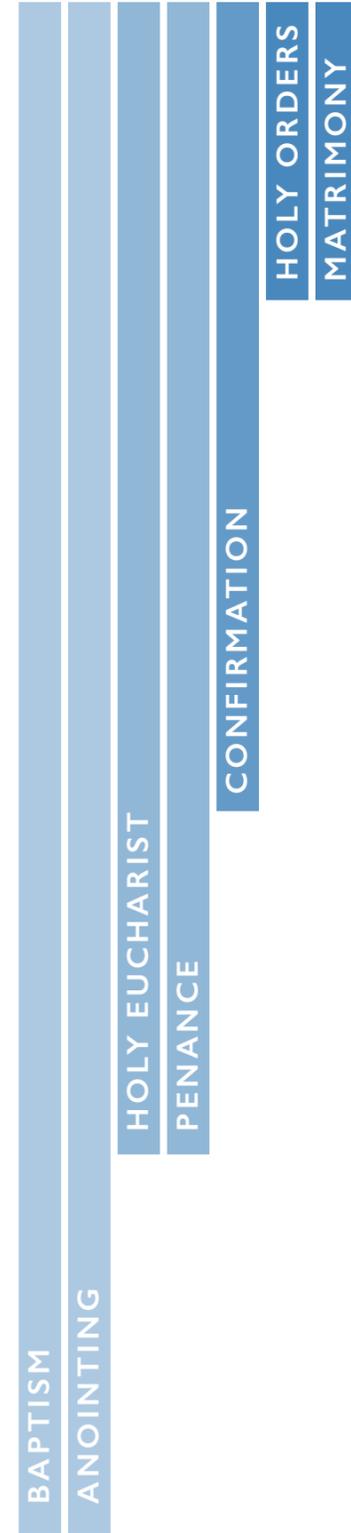


ROADMAP TO VIRTUE

	DEVELOPMENTAL YEARS	DOMINANT THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE	KEY CARDINAL VIRTUE	PRINCIPAL HUMAN VIRTUE	SACRAMENTS
NATURAL DEATH ↑	FULL ADULT MATURITY EMOTIONALLY, SOCIALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY CONTINUES THROUGHOUT LIFE AS ONE PURSUES EVANGELICAL PERFECTION.				
	16-18 YEARS	HOPE	PRUDENCE	FLEXIBILITY LOYALTY AUDACITY HUMILITY OPTIMISM	
	13-15 YEARS	FAITH	TEMPERANCE	FRIENDSHIP MODERATION SIMPLICITY SOCIABILITY RESPECT MODESTY	
	8-12 YEARS	CHARITY	FORTITUDE	PERSEVERANCE JUSTICE INDUSTRIOUSNESS RESPONSIBILITY GENEROSITY	
	3-7 YEARS*		JUSTICE	OBEDIENCE SINCERITY ORDERLINESS	
CONCEPTION	0-2 YEARS*				



*DENOTES AGE OF INNOCENCE

ROADMAP TO VIRTUE

The Age Distribution of Virtues Chart is a most helpful tool for parents and teachers. It brings the perspective that the educational process lasts for at least eighteen years and virtues are acquired in stages. The chart shows that they are four major stages. We find that these stages correlate with the developmental stages that were highlighted on the previous page. We also see that there are four cardinal virtues, which also offers some simplification.

From ages 3-7 only three virtues are possible for a child this age to acquire. During the first stage parents can focus their attention on obedience, sincerity and orderliness. It is not that parents cannot work on other qualities but they must realize that the child will not acquire them until he or she developed the appropriate capacity. The second stage 8-12 years brings the potential for acquiring another group of virtues. It is this period that is often called the golden years because of the child's willingness to please his or her parents. It is here, however, that parents may be frustrated by their own expectations for their children. They may expect the child to acquire a virtue that will not be possible until the teen years, such as prudence, or expect the child to possess the virtue more quickly than is normal for children. Good habits take time to develop and children take forward and backward steps. Patience, optimism and common sense are the answer on the part of the parent.

The third stage correlates to a time when emotional, physical and social changes are most dramatic. Some days may seem like an Italian opera. The primary concern for parents during this period is wrong action. The primary need is for virtues of temperance, moderation, respect, chastity and friendship. Peer pressure and the need to be accepted at this stage is very heavy and parental vigilance is required. Helping children choose friends based upon virtues and good common values is important. Intervening in friendships, which parents judge to be dangerous or inappropriate, is most necessary. The habit of frequent confession is a great aid to parents during this stage as well as the youth. As they struggle to do what is right they may become discouraged as they fail. A wise and patient confessor is a good friend to any young person or adult.

The last stage finds the youth able to acquire prudence, which is the virtue most, associated with maturity. The youth's intellectual prowess is peaked and they will seem "much more brilliant" than their parents will for a while. The need for parental patience and wisdom is great for the danger during this period is wrong thought. Ideologies can influence youths a great deal at this time and parents need to discuss issues with their children. Reason is always the key to most issues as well as recourse to competent authority. The child's reasoning may tend to fall short and parents need to extend the thinking.