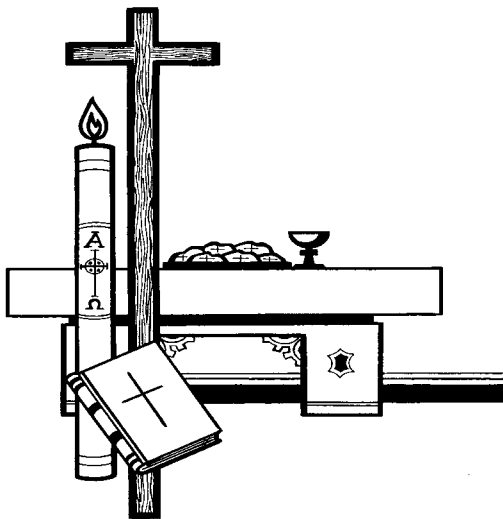


Our Lady of Light Catholic Community

Faith Formation Handbook



**19680 Cypress View Drive
Fort Myers, FL 33967**

**Phone 239-267-7088
Fax 239-267-5481**

Welcome to Our Lady of Light Catholic Community Faith Formation Program

We believe that . . .

- “ the family is a community of life and love in service to God’s Kingdom, with a specific identity and mission.
- “ the family is the primary context for faith growth and faith-sharing, profoundly shaping religious identity among its members.
- “ family life is a privileged locale for encountering God in everyday life experiences and in the Christian Tradition/Story.
- “ the parish community and its ministries need to be in partnership with the family in nurturing faith growth, in sharing the Catholic Christian faith, and in empowering the family to live the Christian faith both in the family and in the world.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is with great joy and expectation that we welcome you to Our Lady of Light Catholic Community's Faith Formation Program! We are looking forward to an exciting adventure in faith-building with you, your children, and the entire parish. This handbook is meant to provide you with helpful information about our Children's Faith Formation program, *Seasons of Faith*, Parent Program options, and the Sacramental Preparation process.

We are excited to have a great team of catechists and assistants who are willing to share their time and talents in the faith formation of the children in our parish. Their role is to assist parents by providing a witness to all that the Church teaches and believes. They awaken, strengthen, and encourage children to deepen their relationship with God, their families, friends, and their faith communities.

Parents and guardians are entrusted with the special role and responsibility of forming their children in faith. You are your child's first teacher and role model; you communicate the lessons of faith to your children and instill morals in them. Your faith, example, and lived reality set the stage and plant the seeds that become the foundation for your child's religious growth. Families coming together to celebrate Mass each week and participating in the sacramental life of the Church are essential elements in this process.

We are all growing in our faith throughout our lives. We can nurture our children in their faith development only as we ourselves are willing to learn and grow. With this in mind, we encourage you to take advantage of the many opportunities available in our parish to continue to deepen your faith.

Helping others to encounter the living Christ is a fundamental goal of all catechetical efforts. When Jesus asked Peter "Who do you say that I am?" (*Mark 8:29*), he reminds us that before teaching others about Christ, we must know him well ourselves.

As parents, as catechists, as directors of Faith Formation, as pastor and priests, as members of the community, one to another, our examples of God's peace are a primary step in catechizing ourselves and the next generation of the Church community.

Our doors are always open to parents and children alike. It is our deepest desire that the families attending Faith Formation programs at Our Lady of Light grow ever closer to one another in Christ. In this way, we will help to bring about the Reign of God in Christian community as Jesus taught us: through love, faithfulness, Scripture, faith-sharing, and example. May the Spirit of Christ surround us with peace as we work together to live out our commitment to the gospel: to *live Jesus!*

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Hugh J. McGuigan, OSFS
Pastor

Lori Crawford
Director of Faith Formation



Our Lady of Light Catholic Community Mission Statement

We, the people of Our Lady of Light Catholic Community embrace the call to live Jesus. As a Catholic community, we strive to grow personally and with one another. Through prayer, worship, faith formation and acts of community service we continue Jesus' mission, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Faith Formation Mission Statement

The catechetical program of Our Lady of Light seeks to provide children, youth, and adults with the knowledge, experiences, and skills necessary to become faithful and fruitful disciples of Jesus. In keeping with their age, they will assume responsibility as vital members of the parish and be able to participate in the Church's mission to proclaim, celebrate, and serve the coming of God's reign.

FAITH FORMATION PERSONNEL

Lori Crawford, Director of Faith Formation

Jeanette Bishara, Faith Formation Assistant

Maureen Sullivan, Director of Student Ministry

Fr. Hugh J. McGuigan, OSFS, Pastor

Fr. John M. O'Neill, OSFS, Parochial Vicar

OUR LADY OF LIGHT CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Faith Formation Office
19680 Cypress View Drive
Fort Myers, FL 33967
Phone: 267-7088, ext. 240
Fax: 267-5481

Website: www.ourladyoflight.com

e-mail: Lori@ourladyoflight.com

Jeanette@ourladyoflight.com

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION

Seasons of Faith

Schedule 2007/2008

Sunday Program Kindergarten through Fifth Grade After 10:30 Mass: 11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.

October 7	February 10
October 21	February 24
November 4	March 9
November 18	March 30
December 2	April 6
December 16	May 4
January 13	May 18
January 27	

Wednesday Program Kindergarten through Fifth Grade 6:30pm-8:00pm

October 10	February 13
October 24	February 27
November 7	March 12
November 28	April 2
December 5	April 23
December 19	May 7
January 16	May 21
January 30	

CATECHETICAL ROLE OF PARENTS

The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom. (CCC 2207)

A parent instinctively shares those beliefs that he or she holds most deeply. Parents are, therefore, more capable of sharing their faith than they may realize. Faith adds an extra dimension to parental love, transforming everyday encounters into occasions when faith is spoken, celebrated and lived. While nurturing human values, such as security and trust, the parent at the same time lays the foundation for religious values, such as the love of God and dependence on God's care. For parents, God's affirming and forgiving love provides the model for their love of their children. For children, parental love is a concrete sign of God's love.

Parents do not wait until children begin school to teach them to speak or to walk, nor do they wait until then to teach children that God is good and loving. Our *Seasons of Faith* program is an important aspect of your children's religious formation, but it can only supplement a child's experience of living in a Christian home. Programs cannot replace parents in the religious formation of children.

A parent influences the religious development of a child initially and powerfully. A parent is the fundamental model and first teacher of faith for a child. A parent shares faith with a child by speaking of faith and by good example. Simply by living in the family, a child observes and begins to imitate the parent's beliefs and values. Children will have many teachers in their lifetime, but their parents are unique.

FAITH AT HOME

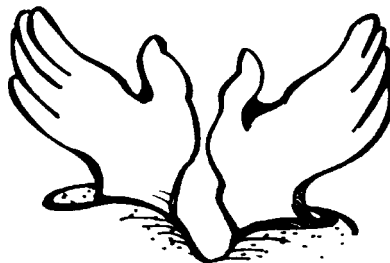
Faith which is celebrated and lived out within the family has certain characteristics:

- **Spontaneity:** Moments of learning and growing come when they will. Expressing faith at home is best done by making the most of the present. For example, a visit from a friend or relative is an opportunity to practice Christian hospitality.
- **Sharing:** The dinner table, the family room, the family car, vacations; these settings bring parents and children together intimately and often evoke earthy and honest sharing. Faith happens in the midst of it all.
- **Awareness:** For faith to thrive at home, each person must be aware of the needs of others in the household. The aim is to increase faith in the family by developing the awareness and sensitivity of family members.
- **Knowledge:** It is important for parents to know what the Catholic Church is all about – teachings, traditions, worships, and morality – in order to share faith in the family.
- **Patience:** Developing faith at home requires great deal of patience. Both parents and children need patience with themselves and with one another. All must learn from mistakes and make strides together.
- **Celebration:** In a family marked by the spirit of celebration, family meals, holidays, days of joy, and days of sadness are celebrated as rituals that reinforce faith and love.
- **Prayer:** An atmosphere of prayer and a spirit of growing together characterize faith at home.

The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called the domestic church.

-Pope John Paul II, On the Family, 21

Pray Always
Always Pray



AN OVERVIEW OF SEASONS OF FAITH

Call to Faith, the textbook series used in our *Seasons Faith Program*, is based on a “spiral curriculum.” A spiral curriculum presents the core content and teachings of our faith in an age-appropriate way each year, helping children to mature in their faith. Each year a child continues in the program, the core content is developed at a deeper level, increasing their understanding and helping them to connect their faith to life at the age at which they are presently.

The unit themes that are presented each year are Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Church, Morality, Sacraments and the Kingdom of God. The themes are developed through prayers, scripture readings, textbook exercises, activities, and music.

We begin each session with a prayer service in Church with parents and children together. The prayer is usually focused on the gospel reading for the Sunday approaching or the Sunday on which the Sunday session meets. Time is offered during the service for parents and children to respond to questions about the Gospel and how it applies to their lives.

The children are dismissed with their catechists at the end of the prayer service. *Parents are invited and encouraged to stay for their own session.* These adult sessions are open to everyone in the parish and are meant to provide an opportunity to grow in faith and to address questions about Catholic beliefs that might have arisen over their years of practicing their faith. Moreover, the sessions provide a basis from which the parents are able to discuss questions of faith and spirituality with their children at an age-appropriate level.

In the children’s classes, attention is given to ritual, prayer, scripture and tradition, in order to provide the children with a developing sense of our Catholic identity. To ensure a comprehensive curriculum, sessions include connections between scriptural themes and doctrines found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Since Catholic doctrine and sacraments spring from *Scripture*, it is natural that the nativity readings lead to a discussion of incarnation, that Jesus’ Baptism elicit a discussion of the Baptismal commitment, that his call to forgiveness introduces the Sacrament of Reconciliation, that during Lent the paschal mystery is explored. Lectionary-based catechesis reinforces the Liturgy of the Word and enables parents to talk to their children about what they are learning and experiencing during Faith Formation classes.

The chapters that the children study each week are chosen in accord with their relationship to the lectionary cycle of readings and time in the liturgical year. Each week, the children will bring home materials from the chapters studied. Additional materials and interactive exercises are available at <http://www.harcourtreligion.com>. Choose “Call to Faith,” then under the parish section, choose either *Parents* or *Children*.

We encourage you to talk with your children about the topics you and they study in your respective sessions. Perhaps set aside five or ten minutes the day or evening of class to go through some of the materials and respond to your children’s questions.

THE EDGE (Middle School Ministry)

The EDGE at Our Lady of Light is our Catholic Middle School Ministry experience with a new attitude and direction created for early adolescents in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. During these years, lots of crazy things happen: bodies are growing rapidly, reasoning skills increase, boys are starting to like girls, girls are starting like boys, and both are starting to think about what it's like to be a teen or adult. They are not really children anymore, but they are not adults either. They are in a place we could call...The Edge.



The Edge is designed to meet their educational, spiritual, emotional and social needs. Our hope in establishing this middle school youth ministry program is that they will experience Jesus on their level and this will allow a smooth transition for them into Life Teen, our high school ministry program. Also, our middle school youth are encouraged to celebrate at the 5:00 p.m. Sunday evening Life Teen Liturgy along with their families and friends.

The EDGE ministry centers around and flows from the Life Teen Mass. Dinner is served right after the mass and the EDGE night follows the dinner. Parent pick-up is 8:15 p.m. A team of supportive parents/adults is what makes this ministry possible.

For more information, contact Maureen Sullivan, 267-7088, ext 235.

LIFE TEEN (High School Ministry)

Life Teen is a comprehensive youth ministry program reaching our high school teens. Its mission for the past 20 years has never wavered...“leading teens closer to Christ.”



The success of this program is based upon our commitment of speaking the truth in love, helping teens to feel loved and accepted, and building a community focused on Christ through the Eucharist. The Life Teen program was developed to reach teens on four levels: Spiritual, Educational, Emotional and Social.

Providing a community with a liturgy geared toward their spiritual needs is the first step. Teaching them about the truth in line with the theology of the Catholic Church is how the program educates. We accomplish this through small group bible studies, open (rap) discussions, dynamic and deep prayer services, and personal experiences. The Life Teen program provides an atmosphere in which teens can honestly express their feelings and emotions in a loving environment.

Teens are encouraged to become part of the community through service, outreach and social events. The focal point is the Eucharist and we begin with a 5:00 p.m. Sunday evening Life Teen Liturgy. Dinner is served right after the Mass and a “life night” geared to teens follows the Mass. The night ends at 8:30 p.m. Annual weekend away retreats, out of state conferences, fun trips, community service, mission trips, mid-week spiritual growth sessions, a vibrant faith community, and so much more await the teen who participates in LIFE TEEN!!

Can't wait to see you there...For more information, contact Maureen Sullivan, 267-7088, ext 235 or lifeteen@ourladyoflight.com

Seasons of Faith Registration Information

- If you are registering for the first time, please be sure that the family is registered in the parish. Include a copy of your child's baptismal record.
- Registrations are due to the office no later than September 19th.
- If you are experiencing financial difficulty and have concerns about the registration fee, please let us know. We will address each situation on an individual basis.
- Please note that families with children in kindergarten through 5th grade have the option of registering for **either** Sunday mornings **or** Wednesday evenings. Please select the day of the week that best fits your family's schedule; once enrolled, we ask that your student attend on that day all year. Contact the office for any clarification or questions. Class-changing causes challenges for the catechists in developing and nurturing a classroom bond, as well as creates challenges for them to provide classroom materials and keep attendance.

Seasons of Faith Registration Fees

Due at time of registration:

\$45.00	One child
\$75.00	Two children
\$100.00	Three or more children

**SACRAMENTAL
PREPARATION
INFORMATION**

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist Pastoral Vision of the Sacraments of Initiation

The sacramental process at Our Lady of Light Catholic Community prepares children for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist, and/or Confirmation. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are the Church's three sacraments of initiation.

Children in the sacramental process journey into the Catholic Church through sharing the faith of their parents. They have been born into both the love and the faith of their families. When parents ask the Church to baptize their children, they promise to teach them to love God and share the joys and hopes, the struggles and sorrows of their neighbors. Children baptized as infants grow up experiencing the faith of parents and the parish community as their own.

Confirmation

Confirmation completes our Baptism and seals our Baptismal commitment to Christ in the Holy Spirit. God's special gift in the sacrament of Confirmation is the gift of continued empowerment of mission in the church through the Holy Spirit which was begun in Baptism. The person is confirmed or sealed in the Holy Spirit." (*Transformation in God's Love, Policies for the Sacraments of Initiation and the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Diocese of Venice, 9*)

Eucharist, no matter when Confirmation is celebrated, is always the culmination of our initiation into the Christian community. It is the one sacrament of initiation we celebrate every Sunday when we gather together as a Church community. It feeds us and nourishes us on our Christian journey so that we might grow closer to God and to one another. It is our participation in the sacred meal of the Eucharist that testifies to our commitment to develop our relationship with Christ and one another through belonging to the community of faith.

The decision when to celebrate Confirmation is left to the bishop of the Diocese. In the Diocese of Venice, the sacramental policies state that "the classic triad order of reception of Christian Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) is now the norm." Moreover, the norm for "the age for full initiation is the 'age of discretion' and consequently for Confirmation also." (*Transformation in God's Love, 10*) However, the diocese also allows Confirmation to be celebrated anytime after the age of reason.

We at Our Lady of Light begin the process of preparation for Confirmation for those students in grades five and six or anytime after. This is in-line with the diocesan sacramental policies in welcoming those to the sacrament of Confirmation whose parents think that they are ready for its celebration. At this time we have not implemented the restored order of the initiation sacraments.

Eucharist: Celebrating Christ's Saving Presence in Our Midst

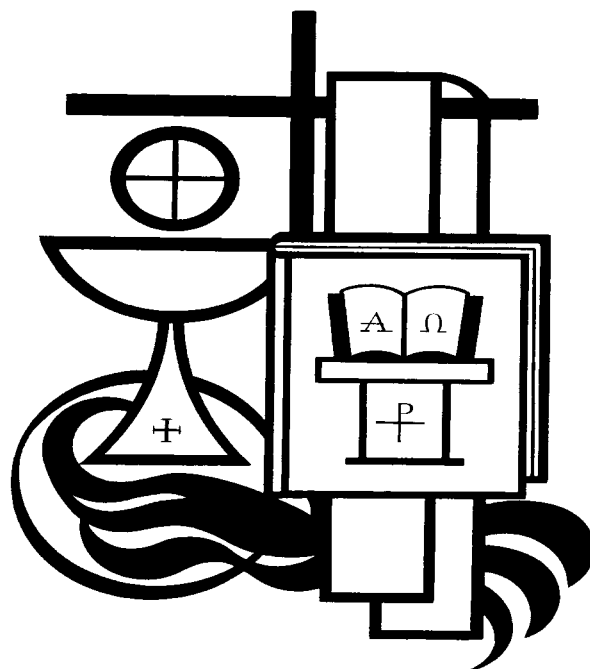
The Sacraments of Initiation Baptism and Confirmation, celebrate the realities of belonging to Christ, being identified with him, and being gifted by his Spirit in the community of his followers, the Church. Like all the sacraments, Baptism and Confirmation are signs that Christ is truly present in the world today, through the Church.

However, in the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, Catholics have the ultimate sign of Christ's presence in their midst: the sharing of bread and wine, consecrated as Jesus' own Body and Blood and offered by Jesus out of love for the whole world. Celebrating Eucharist for the first time represents the fullness of Christian initiation by most closely uniting the person with the mystery of Jesus. Frequent celebration of the Eucharist becomes a way for Catholics to deepen their lifelong initiation into Christ's life, death, and Resurrection.

The Church does not require that children have a profound doctrinal understanding of the Eucharist. Rather, we invite children to join the community at Jesus' table and to learn the meaning of Eucharist through participating in the sacrament. Their journey of faith is as gradual as growth itself. All of us deepen our understanding of the Eucharist and our response to its meaning through taking part in the sacrament over time.

First Eucharist preparation aims only to help children begin participating in Eucharist. To celebrate First Eucharist, the Church requires only that a child be able to distinguish that the Body and Blood of Christ are different from the regular bread and drink we serve at our meals at home. In addition, they must affirm our faith that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ really present with us.

As your child has been strengthened in faith by you and the parish community, the community will be nourished by your child's new joy and simple expression of faith. Joining the community to give thanks and praise through, with, and in Jesus' name and to celebrate Eucharist with other Christians, will nurture both the children's understanding of the sacramental action and their commitment to becoming the Body of Christ in the world.



First Reconciliation: Celebrating Forgiveness

The sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament of communal peace through which sins committed after Baptism are forgiven. Also called the sacrament of penance, Reconciliation celebrates the unfailing forgiveness that God extends to us. In his public ministry, Jesus communicated God's generous love and forgiveness over and over to those who approached him with sincere faith: "Your sins are forgiven."

Through this sacrament, members of the Catholic Church are reconciled with God, with themselves, and with the Church (the whole community), and receive God's mercy and forgiveness for their sins. The sacrament of Reconciliation also provides a way for us to heal our spirit by telling the story of our own brokenness and failings in confession to a priest, who represents God and the church community and to commit to changing what needs to be changed in how we relate to God, family, friends, and ourselves.

Children are prepared to celebrate First Reconciliation prior to First Eucharist, and in the same year as First Eucharist preparation.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is occasionally offered as a communal celebration, and is a special opportunity for members of the faith community to come together to be reconciled to self, to God, and to one another. In the context of gathering, song, and the spoken Word, participants collectively focus on those frailties, habits, and actions that stand in the way of right relationship. Part of the rite includes individual, private confessions with the opportunity for individual counsel and absolution.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION POLICIES

Parents are the first teachers of children in all things, including faith. Our Sacramental Preparation process, therefore, is for both parents and their children. The sessions are designed so that children will grow in their understanding of the sacraments, and parents will be fortified to assist their children as they prepare.

During preparation sessions for the sacraments, students and parents spend time meeting as families and separately. ***At least one parent must attend every sacramental preparation session.***

Your child will need to be actively participating in Children's Faith Formation: *Seasons of Faith* along with their sacramental preparation. If you are registering for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist or Confirmation Preparation, you must also register for Seasons Faith, our Faith Formation program.

Diocesan Policy on Parochial School Students:

First celebration of sacraments is to take place in the parish in which the family is registered. Sacramental preparations involves all those preparing for the sacrament, both those children attending Catholic school and those in the parish's Faith Formation program.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FEES

Non-Refundable Sacramental Preparation Fee:

\$35.00 per child

ROLE OF THE PARENTS

The partnership of Our Lady of Light Catholic Community and families in the process of preparing their children for the sacramental life of the Church begins with Baptism and extends to Reconciliation, Confirmation, and Eucharist. The family and the parish have important roles to play in preparing children for the sacraments.

The **parish community**, in the name of the whole Church, provides a framework for students in discovering their place in the life of the church and growing in faith. Sharing the life of the community that prays together and does the work of justice together also instructs. **Catechists** help children understand the sacraments at their own level. But it is **parents** that have the most important role to play in the formation of their children's spirituality.

Role-Modeling

Most importantly, children come to understand God's constant and persistent love as they see it modeled in their families. It is important for children to grow up in a home where faith is expressed openly through personal prayer, through regular worship with a parish community, and through a life lived in accordance with gospel values. The faith that parents live is irreplaceable in their children's awakening of faith.

Storytelling

Your involvement is a unique gift to your child. A parent can recount memories of the day of the child's Baptism and share photos. Parent can share what happened on the way to church, who was there, what the church looked like. Only parents can add the all-important personal dimension.

Active Participation in Mass

Going to Mass is essential in every child's initiation into the Christian community. First Eucharist must not be a child's only experience of joining the community around Jesus' table, rather, it should be the beginning of regular togetherness with the community that gathers in Jesus' name and shares a meal as Jesus asked.

Children can participate in Eucharistic celebrations long before they understand them fully; in fact, they learn through participating. The liturgy is a great teacher for young children. Worshiping with others tells children their parents share values and traditions with a wide variety of people. They may not remember all of the words they hear, but they are likely to remember the people they watch going to communion, along with the sights, songs, signs, colors, smells and touches they experience during Mass.

Active Participation in the Life of the Parish

Children also will learn from their parents, older siblings, and older relatives by watching how they participate in the life of their faith community (and in other public venues). A family active in many facets of parish life will teach valuable lessons about service and stewardship to younger members of their families.

*Parents are the first and most important educators
of their own children, and they also possess
a fundamental competence in this area:*

They are educators because they are parents.

*They share their educational mission with other individuals
or institutions such as the church and the state.*

-Pope John Paul II, Letter to Families, 16

Sacramental Preparation Schedule 2006/2007

First Reconciliation/First Eucharist

Preparation for First Reconciliation

Wednesday evenings 6:30pm-8:00pm

October 3, 17, and November 14

Celebration of First Reconciliation

Wednesday, December 12th, 6:30pm

Preparation for First Eucharist

Wednesday evenings 6:30pm-8:00pm

January 9, 23, February 20, March 5, 26, and April 9

First Eucharist Retreat and Rehearsal

Saturday, April 26, Time to be announced

Celebration of First Eucharist

Sunday, April 27th at the 10:30am Mass

Preparation for Confirmation

Sundays after 10:30 Mass

February 3, 17, March 2, and 16

Confirmation Retreat - to be announced

Celebration of Confirmation - to be announced

When preparing their children for sacraments, parents need:

- To cultivate the spirituality of their child through prayer and family rituals.
- To encourage good listening skills to prepare their child to hear the word of God.
- To teach their child to say “thank you” as a way of preparing their child to offer praise and thanks to God.
- To provide sacred times and space within their child’s life, so as to prepare their child to enter into religious imagination and communion with God.
- To foster the realization that we gather for Eucharist in response to Jesus’ invitation.

PRAYER

We encourage parents to both pray with their children and to help them in learning the most common prayers of the Church and the responses of the Mass. Through the guidance and example of their parents and the reinforcement received in the Sacramental Preparation and Faith Formation programs, the children should minimally be able to pray:

Sign of the Cross

The Lord’s Prayer (Our Father)

Act of Contrition

Hail Mary

Glory Be

FAITH FORMATION PROCEDURES

Attendance

Regular attendance at Children's Faith Formation classes is an important factor in deepening a child's understanding of God through the study of Scripture, prayer, Church teaching and community. Excused absences are limited to illness and emergencies. ***Please call the Faith Formation Office if your child will be absent.***

If your child is in the Sacramental Preparation process for First Reconciliation/First Eucharist or Confirmation, he or she is allowed only two excused absences from Children's Faith Formation classes.

Arrival and Dismissal

For the safety of your children, we ask that parents/guardians of students in K through fifth grade accompany their children to every communal prayer service to celebrate with them. At the end of the session, parents/guardians should promptly pick their children up from the classroom.

Children will only be released to the care of their parents/guardians unless written notification is provided to the Director of Faith Formation in advance. Photo identification may be required. Children are expected to be prompt for class. Arriving late disrupts or delays precious class time. It is just as important for parents to be punctual in picking up their children afterwards, especially if the parents do not stay for the adult session.

Health Concerns and Medication

Regarding medication, the usual policy is ***not*** to dispense or administer medication to students. Please include on the registration form any special needs that your child may have. An appointment should be made with the Director of Faith Formation to discuss special medical concerns. If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition, please inform the catechist and Director of Faith Formation as soon as possible.

Child Abuse

Pursuant to state law, we are required to report suspected child abuse, and we will also follow diocesan policy on such matters. The Diocese of Venice has extensive requirements for the protection and safety of children, including background checks for persons working with minors. Staff and catechists are required to sign an acknowledgment that they have read and understood the ethical and personal conduct policies of the diocese. Adult volunteers also attend a *Safe Environment* training prior to their participation with children.

Additionally, children annually attend a *Safe Environment* session presented on their level. Parents may opt their children out of this session, although it is highly recommended for them to attend.

For more information about the policies on the protection of children, please contact the Office of Faith Formation at 267-7088 or the Diocesan office at 941-484-9543.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Fire Safety

In case of a real emergency, children are to be taken to a prearranged evacuation area by the footbridge in the parking lot.

Emergency Class Cancellation

If local schools are closed due to an emergency situation, Faith Formation classes will generally also be cancelled. In the event of inclement weather, or if you have questions about a possible cancellation, please call the Faith Formation Office before bringing your child to class.

COMMUNICATION

In order for us to maintain effective and timely communication with our families, it is important that we have on-file your most current and up-to-date information. If your phone, email, or address changes, please contact the office as soon as possible.

The church bulletin and regular notices passed out in classes will keep you informed about the activities of the Faith Formation Department. In some cases, we may telephone or email you with news and/or updates.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions about how we can better communicate with you, please contact the Office of Faith Formation.

EXPECTATIONS

Parent/Guardian

1. Ensure that your child attends class regularly and on time.
2. Communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect your child within the classroom.
3. Be an active part of your children's learning at home and be involved in the classroom at the catechist's request.
4. Bring your children to Mass.
5. Participate as often as possible in the prayer at the beginning of the sessions and in the adult session.

Students

1. Behave in a Christian manner at all times showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students.
2. Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
3. Attend class regularly and complete any assignments or homework.

Catechists

1. Provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that children will be able to grow in their faith.
2. Be a Christian role model.
3. Communicate regularly and involve parents in the faith development of their children.
4. Prepare and teach designated curriculum.
5. Establish and post classroom rules with children.

Volunteers

Parent/guardian and volunteer participation is welcomed and needed in various areas of the Faith Formation program. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer please contact the Office of Faith Formation.

DISCIPLINE

The word *discipline* comes from the word, *disciple*. The goal is not to look at discipline as a negative, but to view it as a positive tool to help a person more closely follow as a disciple; in this case, as a disciple of Jesus.

All children need to be treated with respect. All children have rights. This includes the right of each member of the class to be free to learn without disruption. In dealing with misbehavior, we have put into place a discipline policy for our faith formation program. This is to insure that students will:

- Gain as much as possible from their time in class without unnecessary disruptions;
- Improve their own self-esteem, having appropriate behavior recognized and affirmed.

This policy will also enable our volunteers to carry out their ministry of Catechist and Assistant Catechist.

All students are expected to share in the learning experiences of the parish program. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for himself or herself or for others, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue:

1. At the first incident the child will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior.
2. With the second incident, the child will meet with the director about appropriate behavior.
3. After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the child will complete his or her Faith Formation assignment apart from the other children. The parent/guardian will be notified.
4. At steps 1-3, the child will be allowed the opportunity to rejoin the class if an understanding can be reached as to how all involved may best continue to learn and grow in their faith;
5. If the child's behavior continues to disrupt learning, home-schooling may be more appropriate for your child.

Parents' Prayer

God, you are parent to us.
You made us in your image and likeness.
Help us to become more like you
in our relationships with our children.

God, you are always there for us.
Even when we turn away from your love,
you stay with us always.

Help us to be present to our children
in good times and in bad times.
May we support them and love them
as you have loved us: unconditionally.

God, give us the strength and determination
to be just and honest in our relationships
with our children.

Give us patience and perseverance
to face each day, knowing you are with us,
as we try to become
the parents we must become
for our children.

Amen.

To request a copy of this booklet in writing, please contact
the Office of Faith Formation at 267-7088 or email
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