

August, 2014

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to our parish Faith Formation Program. I look forward to seeing all of you who were involved in Faith Formation and sacramental preparation last year and to meeting those of you who will be beginning in our program this year.

This handbook contains important information regarding the various programs we offer. Please take the time now to read this booklet carefully and then put it in a place where you will be able to refer to it throughout the year.

As a part of the Most Holy Name of Jesus parish family, we hold a united responsibility for educating and forming our children in the practice of the faith and the nurturing of their relationship with God. This responsibility flows from our own baptism and life as disciples. We are privileged and challenged to proclaim the Word - the Good News - and to continue to build up the kingdom. It is vital that we play an interactive role with this responsibility. As parents/guardians you are expected to be not only supportive of our program efforts, but to be involved in all aspects of it. Together we will aim to provide all our children the highest quality of religious education possible.

If at any time you have questions or concerns regarding programs, materials, lessons, sacramental preparation or other parish related issues, please do not hesitate to call me. Please feel free to contact me at the Parish Office, 347-9989. I am here to serve you and your children as we grow in our faith community and in our worship of the Lord.

I remain your sister in Christ,

Fran Marinari
Director of Religious Education and Faith Formation

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The Faith Formation Program here at Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish is aimed at assisting all families to:

- Discover the meaning of God's presence in their lives.
- Encounter and know the faith of our Catholic Church and parish community.
- Come to a genuinely lived faith experience.

This is done through various opportunities offered to our families and children for education and faith formation. Through the programs and activities our families are invited to encounter and to know first hand God, our Father, Jesus, our Brother, and the Holy Spirit, who counsels us.

FAITH FORMATION CALENDAR

Calendar dates for Faith Formation classes are included on separate pages within this booklet. If you need additional copies, please contact the office.

At the time that our calendars are set up, we strive to be as accurate as possible so that you will know in advance the dates and times of our classes, programs, sacramental preparation dates, retreats, rehearsals, and events. However, there are bound to be adjustments as the year progresses. We will do our best to keep you updated as soon as we know of any additions and / or deletions to the calendars. Please be sure to check weekly with your child(ren) who will bring home notices of changes as they come up. We will also post changes in the weekly parish bulletin. Any last minute changes, such as cancellation of a class due to the absence of the teacher or weather emergencies, will be done via phone or e-mail to those families affected. If you are not sure a class and/or event will be scheduled, please call the parish office to verify if it will take place.

When we plan the calendar for Faith Formation classes, we take into consideration the Liturgical Calendar of the Church, the national calendar of events and holidays, and the schedule of annual events which happen at the parish. These holidays and events often reflect the need to cancel a Faith Formation class on the weekend of the event or holiday. We have tried to take this into

consideration as we have scheduled our classes; however, the Diocese of St. Petersburg also gives us guidelines regarding the number of classes which are to be scheduled, so we try to satisfy all situations whenever possible.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum we follow in Faith Formation is based on the guidelines of the Diocese of St. Petersburg. Copies of the Faith Formation texts listed are available for parent review.

A. ELEMENTARY FAITH FORMATION CLASSES

MATERIALS: Pflaum Gospel Weeklies

PUBLISHER: Pflaum Publishing

Classes for children , grades Kindergarten through five, are held immediately after 9:30 a.m. Mass (10:30 – 11:30). It is recommended that children attend Mass with their parents – either 9:30 a.m. preceding the FAITH FORMATION classes or at 11:30 a.m. (Hispanic) following the classes.

Children should have breakfast before attending classes or Mass. (Remember to account for the mandatory fast before Holy Communion for those children who may partake of the sacrament.)

Faith Formation introduces the pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church – Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer – every year, in every grade level at a level and activities which will be understood by the children at that level .

Pflaum Gospel Weeklies bring “total catechesis” to life by teaching the stories (Scripture), beliefs (Doctrine), and celebrations (Liturgical Year) of our Catholic faith *every year at every level*. Each year we build upon and reinforce what children have previously learned. This developmental, or “spiral” approach fills in the gaps. Transformation is fostered in every lesson as children answer the question: *WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES FAITH MAKE IN MY LIFE?*

- B. **MIDDLE SCHOOL FAITH FORMATION**
Sessions for students in grades 6-8 are held on alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. in the upstairs Youth Room in the GEC.

- C. **HIGH SCHOOL FAITH FORMATION**
Sessions for students grades 9 – 12 are held on alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. in the Youth Room of the GEC.

- D. Youth Group Social Nite is every Friday evening, from 7-10 p.m. in the upstairs Youth Room. This activity is for middle and high school teens.

SACRAMENTS

Guidelines: We follow the Catechetical Guidelines of the Diocese of St. Petersburg for the Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation.

Summary of the Basic principles of the Guidelines:

- A. Sacrament involves relationship with Jesus and presumes faith.
- B. Readiness, not age or grade, is the criterion for reception of a sacrament.
- C. The celebration of sacraments is the action of the community.
- D. The family has an essential role in preparation for and celebration of a sacrament.
- E. Catechesis and celebration of the sacraments of initiation are patterned on the principles of RCIA.
- F. Immediate preparation is done in and by the parish in which the sacraments are to be celebrated since the pastor has the canonical right and obligation to administer sacraments to his parishioners.

Principles of the RCIA include REMOTE and IMMEDIATE preparation, determination of readiness to receive the sacrament and ongoing catechesis after the reception of the sacrament.

REMOTE preparation for reception of the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation is participation in systematic Faith Formation for a minimum of one year prior to the year of immediate preparation for these sacraments. This requirement is met through participation in a Catholic School or parish Faith Formation program.

IMMEDIATE preparation is those which focus directly on the nature of the sacrament(s) to be received. Immediate preparation includes students in both Catholic, public schools, and home-schooled.

READINESS determination rests on the Pastor, the Director of Religious Education, the Catechist(s) and parents/guardians.

FOLLOW-UP means that those who receive sacraments are expected to continue participating in the liturgical/sacramental, catechetical and apostolic life of the parish.

The usual grade for immediate preparation for **First Eucharist and First Reconciliation is 2nd Grade (usually 8 years old).**

The usual grade for immediate preparation for **Confirmation is 8th Grade (usually 13 years of age).**

Preparation for older students, outside the usual grades for immediate preparation will be determined on an individual basis, following the principles of these guidelines. Parents should contact the Director of Religious Education for information on this preparation.

POLICIES

A. REGISTRATION

- B. The following programs require **annual** registration through the Faith Formation Office:

Religious instruction classes are for Public School students, Grades K -5, immediate preparation for Sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation. Please refer to guidelines (pages 7-8) to see if your child is eligible for immediate preparation. If you are not sure, please contact the Director of Religious Education.

C. FEES (2014-1215 year)

\$20.00 per child for Faith Formation Classes Grades K-5
(Maximum of \$50.00 per family)

\$20.00 per child for Immediate Sacrament Preparation - Eucharist &
First Reconciliation

\$20.00 per child for Immediate Sacrament Preparation – Confirmation

These fees in no way cover the actual costs of providing the programs, books, materials, etc. for our children. The parish subsidizes as necessary, so that we may provide the best Faith Formation possible for those who attend. We are thankful to all who support our children's instruction in the faith.

No child will be refused participation in a program due to financial needs. If full payment cannot be made, please contact the Director of Religious Education. All inquiries will be kept confidential.

D. ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes is an important factor in deepening a child's understanding of our triune God through the study of Scripture, prayers, Church teachings, and community

F. CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse is a serious concern. Consistent with Diocesan policy and legal codes, our parish catechetical staff has a moral and legal duty to comply with the law and to ensure the welfare of a child.

We sincerely invite all parents and children to attend the Safe Environment Training Workshop which will be scheduled in the fall at the Goodman Education Center to assist parent/guardians and children to recognize dangers to their child(ren)'s safety.

G. EXPECTATIONS

PARENTS/ GUARDIANS:

Ensure that your child (ren) attend(s) Mass and Faith Formation classes regularly and on time, bringing with them the books and materials necessary for class.
Communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect your child within the classroom.
Be an active part of your child (ren)'s learning and be involved in the classroom at the catechist's request (i.e., help with special needs and /or special projects).
Attend and participate in parent meetings that pertain to your child (ren)'s Faith Formation, including Sacramental Preparation classes and Safe Environment Training Workshops.
Teach your child the prayers appropriate for their grade level.
Review your child's homework to be sure he/she had completed the assignment and understands it.
Sign the homework assignments/forms before returning them to the teacher for the next class.

STUDENTS:

Behave in a Christian manner at all times showing respect and being cooperative with adults, teachers, and other students.
Actively participate in classroom activities and discussions.
Attend class regularly and complete any assignments or homework for the next class.
Respect others' property and person.

No use of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs.
No weapons on premises. (This includes guns, knives, or any sharp material, matches, lighters, or any item that could harm another person.)
Wear appropriate clothing. (Not suggestive or with logos/messages or artwork that is contrary to Christian teachings.)
Follow additional classroom rules as established by each grade teacher.
Be prepared to accept the consequences for inappropriate behavior.

CATECHISTS:

Provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that students will be able to grow in their faith.

Prepare and teach designated curriculum.

Be a Christian role model – must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.

Communicate regularly with and involve parents in the faith development of their children.

*Complete a background check as required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

*Participate in Safe Environment Training as required by the Diocese.

*Participate in Parish and Diocesan Catechist Training Programs and Workshops.

Participate in Harassment Policy Training as required by the Diocese.

VOLUNTEERS:

Parent/guardian volunteer participation is welcomed and needed in various areas of our programs. Anyone interested in volunteer service such as: clerical and office help, class aide, hall monitor, etc., should contact the Director of Religious Education at (727) 347-9989, Ext. 311.

*Volunteers will have to participate in the background check and Safe Environment Training required by the Diocese.

* These items are required with anyone, employee or volunteer, who works with children in the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

H. DISCIPLINE AND PROBLEM SOLUTIONS

All students are expected to share in the faith learning experiences of the parish programs. Class rules and consequences will be posted in every classroom. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him/her 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 consequence of misbehavior.
2. After the second incident, the child will be brought by a Hall Monitor to the Director of Religious Education for a discussion about appropriate behavior in the classroom and with others.
3. After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the child will do his/her Faith Formation assignment seated in the hallway with the Hall Monitor. The child's parent/guardian will be contacted.

*** After steps 1-3 the student 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. If continued disruption and lack of cooperation occurs, the child may have to be placed on home-bound study.

I. OFF CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

These types of activities will only be organized and authorized with the knowledge of the Director of Religious Education. Permission slips, additional fees, sign – up procedures, contact persons, transportation, insurance requirements, etc., will be given on an event by event basis and only through approved requirements and procedures Diocesan Evangelization & Life Long Faith Formation Office. If you have any questions, contact the Director of Religious Education.