

Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church

209 South Street
Waunakee, WI
(608) 849-5121



Faith Formation Family Handbook

2010-2011



Saint John the Baptist Catholic Church

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Dear Faith Formation Families:

Welcome to a new year of Faith Formation at St. John's! We are excited to again be working with your family and hope this updated handbook will help make things easy to find and explain.

When you enroll your child(ren) in our Faith Formation program at St. John's, it is implied that you agree and comply with the best of your ability to the policies set forth in this handbook. Please look through the book carefully. If you have any questions or concerns please contact us to discuss this.

Parents are the first teachers of the faith! It can be a daunting task, which is why the focus of the Faith Formation program is to lend support and encouragement to the parents in the faith formation of their children which begins at home. Parental interest and participation in this program is essential.

- Parents/Guardians understand that attendance at Sunday Mass is essential to the spiritual well-being of the child and the family.
- Parents/Guardians will make attendance of Faith Formation classes a family priority and encourage attendance and participation on a regular basis. Regular attendance is particularly important when a child is preparing for a sacrament.
- Parents/Guardians will reinforce what is taught in the Faith Formation classes by asking questions or helping to better understand the concept being presented.
- Parents/Guardians acknowledge that Faith Formation events, meetings, and celebrations are important and support them.

May the Lord bless your family! Please pray for us and for all the wonderful volunteers who assist with our programs. With the Holy Spirit guiding us we are ready for another great year!

In the love of Christ,

Jenny Schmitz
Coor. of Faith Formation
Grades K-6

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

Faith Formation Staff

Rectory Phone: 849-5121
Attendance Line: 849-4081 (Wednesday & Sunday)

Pastor Rev. Monsignor James L. Gunn
Email: jlgunn@straphael.org
Ext. 311

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Lance Schneider
Email: Lance.Schneider@straphael.org
Ext. 303

Coordinator of Faith Formation Grades K-6: Jenny Schmitz
Email: jenny.schmitz@straphael.org
Ext. 304

Coordinator of Youth Ministry Grades 7-12: Jenna Keller
Email: jenna.keller@straphael.org
Ext. 302

Communication:

Tuesday Email: Families on our email distribution list will receive a Tuesday email with information pertaining to upcoming parish events, weekly classes, and diocesan offerings.

Monthly Newsletter: Families in the K-6 program will be informed of schedules and activities via a monthly newsletter and calendar for each month.

Newsletter: Families in the 7-12 programs will receive 3 newsletters listing special events, volunteer opportunities and upcoming events during the year.

Facebook: Middle school and high school students with facebook accounts are invited to join our SJB Youth Group. Extra reminders about upcoming events, links to cool Catholic websites, articles, songs, and discussion topics are all there!

Bulletin: Notices about upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and reminders are also published in our weekly parish bulletin.

Questions and Concerns

We are here to serve the Faith Formation needs of our children, youth, and adults. If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions please feel free to share them with your child's catechist or a member of the Faith Formation Staff.

Student Withdrawal from Faith Formation

Parents should contact the Faith Formation office as soon as they are aware their child will be moving or not attending the St. John's Faith Formation Program.

Telephone/Address/Email Changes

If families have a change of home, work or emergency contact information we ask that parents/guardians contact the Faith Formation office as soon as possible. Our records need to be current in case of an emergency.

Cancellation of Classes

If there is a question about cancellation of Faith Formation classes, please note:

1. If public school is cancelled at the beginning of the day, we will not have Faith Formation classes
2. If public school is cancelled during the school day we will not have Faith Formation classes.
3. If weather is bad, we will make a decision by 2 PM on Wednesday. An announcement will be made at school, and email will be sent to families and an announcement will be made on the following radio stations:

WJJO 94.1 WOLX 94.9 WXEE 104 FM WMMM 105.5 WIBA 1310 AM

Behavior on Trips/Retreats/Service Projects

Regular requests of good, respectful behavior of one another, chaperones, and the people involved in the destination are expected. Modest and respectful dress is always expected; no vulgar language or symbols on clothing will be allowed. Specific trips may have further expectations for behavior, dress, etc. and will be explained in the permission forms.

Right to Amend

This handbook is primarily a means of communication. It is meant to provide the parent/guardian with helpful information on how we operate in our ministry of Faith Formation. We reserve the right to amend this handbook if necessary. Parents/Guardians will be notified in writing of any changes made to any procedures or information in this handbook.

Curriculum

Growing in and learning about faith does not stop with receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation or completing a particular grade; faith is ongoing and our study of it is as well. Faith-filled learning opportunities are offered for all ages throughout the year at our parish.

In particular, Sunday and Wednesday evening Faith Formation classes offer opportunities for our youth to practice their faith by learning about different aspects of our rich Catholic traditions and scripture. Our classes follow the standards set forth by the Diocese of Madison. These standards are on file in the Faith Formation Office. Each year, based upon their learning ability, students will be exposed to these seven core areas: Sacred Scriptures, Doctrine, Sacraments, Community, Service, Prayer and Spirituality.

Elementary (Grades K-4)

Text: Call to Faith
Published: Harcourt Religion
Goal: Discovering Faith

Intermediate (Grades 5-6)

Text: Call to Faith
Published: Harcourt Religion
Goal: Exploring Faith

Middle School (Grades 7-8)

Text: Catholic Youth Bible*
Goal: Growing in Faith

High School (Grades 9-10)

Text: Catholic Youth Bible*
Goal: Making Faithful Choices

Confirmation (Grades 11-12)

Text: Catholic Faith Handbook
Published: St. Mary's Press
Goal: Claiming Faith

* Grades 7-10 utilize a mini-course system where they attend 4-8 week courses over the year. Detailed descriptions of each course are available online. Some of the courses have their own textbook that will be handed out when your child attends that particular mini-course.

For all mini-courses for grades 7-10 there are weekly downloadable sheets for parents to go over with their students that include the weekly objectives, questions, faith activities, and media suggestions. Please visit the Faith Formation section of our website to view and download the sheets (they are saved as pdf files). www.stjb.org

SACRAMENTS

Reconciliation

As primary catechists, parents are encouraged to practice forgiveness in the home and to be an example to their children in both the teaching and the receiving of the sacrament. Formal preparation for reconciliation begins in the first grade with the child learning about Jesus and His role in Salvation History. Further catechesis takes place in second grade in BOTH the classroom AND at home. Parental formation is essential in this process as it is the choice of the parent as to whether the child is ready to receive this sacrament.

A mandatory retreat is held in late fall for students who are planning to make their first reconciliation. Students are expected to attend Faith Formation classes on a regular basis.

Opportunity is provided for the celebration of Reconciliation for children in the second grade prior to the reception of First Holy Communion. Again, it is at the discretion of the parent as to whether or not the child receives the sacrament. First Reconciliation is traditionally celebrated during the season of Advent.

Further catechesis in grade 3 and beyond matches the intellectual and moral development of the child. As the child grows older, a more complex idea of sin is presented in relationship to the larger community. Families are encouraged to attend parish reconciliation services during the seasons of Advent and Lent; individual reconciliation is available on Saturday afternoon's beginning at 4:00 PM in the church.

Eucharist

Parental involvement in preparation for First Holy Communion is essential. Children at this age learn from hand-on experiences; therefore, family meals around the table and participation in Sunday liturgy are the MOST important points of preparation for this sacrament. It is within the home that preparation starts for the reception of this sacrament.

Catechesis in second grade focuses on receiving Jesus in the Eucharist and experiencing Eucharist within the family. A mandatory retreat is held in early spring for students who are planning on making their First Holy Communion.

First Holy Communion is generally celebrated in the spring, following the Easter celebrations. The readiness of the child for this sacrament is the decision of the parent. Further catechesis is available for a child who might not be ready for First Holy Communion or an older child who has not yet received the sacrament. Information regarding the sacrament is sent to the families in the fall. Opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are available on both a daily and weekly basis. Please see the bulletin for more information.

Further catechesis in grade 3 and beyond matches the intellectual and faith development of the child. Ideas of community and the living Eucharist are presented. Again, families are encouraged to make Sunday liturgy a priority.

Confirmation

(more detailed information is included in a separate packet that is mailed out to students at a later date)

Confirmation is the completion of baptism, with the Holy Spirit coming more fully into the lives of believers. However, it should not be viewed as a graduation, but rather as yet another doorway to pass through on a person's life journey in their faith. In the same way the Sacrament of Matrimony is not the end of a couple's journey in their life together, the Sacrament of Confirmation is the next step in our faith life, welcoming to a deeper and more personal relationship with God.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation begins in the winter (January) of the students' Junior Year and continues until the late fall of their Senior Year. Upon entering into the stages of preparation, students are considered 'candidates'

Those wishing to be confirmed must show sincere desire to know Jesus better, sufficient understanding and meaning of Confirmation, a willingness to participate in the life of the Church, a desire to deepen their faith through prayer, and be studying with regular attendance at Mass.

Expectations

- A. Parent(s) and Guardian(s)
 - a. Ensure that their children attend classes regularly and on time each year. We want the child to receive a well-rounded religious education and to experience their faith in the midst of the community. Therefore, it is essential that students remain in the program from Kindergarten through the year of their Confirmation
 - b. Communicate any special needs or circumstances that may affect their children within the classroom.
 - c. Be an active part of their children's learning and be involved in the classroom at the catechist's request (ie. Help with special and/or service projects). Make it a priority to look at your child's folder and ask questions about the lessons each week. Please make sure the students have the proper materials (Text, Bible, Folder, etc.) before they leave for class on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.
 - d. Each family is expected to volunteer 2 times per year. A \$25 fee will be assessed if this is not possible.
 - e. It is expected that families keep current with Faith Formation communication by reading newsletters, event flyers, bulletin notices and emails.
 - f. Encourage students to participate in social activities sponsored by the parish and diocese.

- B. Students
 - a. Behave in a Christian manner at all times showing respect and being cooperative with adults and other students.
 - i. Behavior includes:
 1. Respect for others and others property
 2. No use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs
 3. No weapons on premises
 4. No vulgar language, sayings or designs on clothing
 5. Dress modestly at all times
 6. Adhering to posted rules and consequences
 - b. Attend class regularly and complete any assignments or homework

c. Discipline Policy

- i. All students are expected to share in the faith learning experience of the parish program. If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him or her in the classroom, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue:
 1. At the first incident, the student will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior
 2. After the second incident, the student will be sent to the office for a discussion with a Faith Formation staff member about appropriate behavior.
 3. After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the student will be sent to the office and parents will be notified.
 4. If the child's behavior continues to disrupt, one-on-one work with a Faith Formation Staff member or working from home may be necessary.

C. Catechists

- a. Provide a loving, Christian atmosphere within the learning environment so that children will be able to grow in their faith.
- b. Prepare and teach designated curriculum.
- c. Be a Christian role model.
- d. Communicate regularly with and involve parents in the faith development of their children.
- e. Attend in-services throughout the year.
- f. Encourage attendance to parish youth events by handing out and talking about flyers when they are given for class.
- g. Attend the VIRTUS program "Protecting God's Children for Volunteers." This program, mandated by the Diocese of Madison, is for all employees and volunteers who regularly work with children of our parish. Sessions are free of charge and are held at Saint John's and around the Diocese throughout the year. Volunteers have a three-month time period to complete this one-time training.
- h. All catechists must complete a background check form and the Statement of Receipt and Agreement form for the Diocese of Madison Policy Regarding Abuse of Minors, Sexual Misconduct, and Sexual Harassment. It is expected that the catechist will also read the above mentioned policy.

Arrival and Dismissal Guidelines

St. John's Faith Formation staff and volunteers require safe, orderly and timely procedures for the arrival and dismissal of all students under their care. Students should enter and exit only through the main doors of St. John's school for the safety of all students.

Missing all or part of a scheduled session affects a student's faith formation. If a student must be absent, please call the parish office (849-5121) during regular business hours or our attendance line (849-4081) on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Notification is also required for late arrival and/or early dismissal. Phone calls will be made to homes of absent students who have given no prior notice to ensure students safety.

Regular arrival for Faith Formation sessions is expected as follows:

Elementary Students (Grades K-4) meet 9:05-9:55 AM Sundays

1. Report to St. John's School through the main building doors.
2. Attendance will be taken in the classroom to ensure safety and provide a clear attendance record.

Intermediate Students (Grades 5-6) meet 5:45-7:00 PM Wednesdays

1. Report to St. John's School through the main building doors.
2. Attendance will be taken in the classroom to ensure safety and provide a clear attendance record.

Middle School and High School Students (Grades 7-10) meet 7:15-8:30 PM Wednesdays

1. Report to St. John's School through the main building doors.
2. Attendance will be taken in the classroom to ensure safety and provide a clear attendance record.

Confirmation Students (Grade 11/12) is still to be determined. Further information will be sent out shortly regarding Confirmation Prep classes. *Current Confirmation candidates (Seniors) will continue to meet according to their schedule.

NOTE: Parents/Guardians and Students driving a vehicle must follow traffic rules pertaining to yielding/stopping for pedestrians, speed and noise control. Infraction of traffic rules seen or reported will result in a call to the family. Continued infractions will be reported to the police.

POLICIES

Attendance

Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes is an important factor in deepening the students' understanding of God and our faith through the study of Scripture, Prayer, Church teachings, and Community. Every effort should be made for the student to arrive on time and commit to full participation for all scheduled classes, events and community service opportunities from Kindergarten through Confirmation Prep.

Tardiness interrupts valuable class time and is discourteous to the catechist and other students. Please make every effort to arrive on time. If the Faith Formation staff is not notified of unavoidable tardiness ahead of time, the student may be marked absent and a call will be placed to the parent/guardian.

If you know your student will be absent or tardy, please notify the Faith Formation staff by calling 849-5121.

Child Abuse

See the policy set forth by the Diocese of Madison entitled, "Policy Regarding the Abuse of Minors, Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment." Copies of this policy are available in the parish and faith formation offices, as well as on the diocesan website at (www.madisondiocese.org/DiocesefofMadison/SafeEnviorment/PolicySexualMisconductBRHarassmentAbuse/tabid/286/Default.aspx)

Health Concerns

It is understood that from time to time children will not feel well or accidents will happen during Faith Formation classes. While we have good first aid supplies, it is essential to have emergency contact information for each student. Children who are not feeling well may call a parent/guardian for early pickup. An adult will stay with the student while he/she is waiting.

No medication will be distributed to any child without written request from the parent. In the event that medication is necessary, arrangements must be made with the Coordinator of Faith Formation and/or Coordinator of Youth Ministry.

Because we have children coming from many different schools, notification would be appreciated when children have been exposed to lice, chicken pox, or pink eye so that all parents/guardians may be made aware.

Pick Up

If you are coming inside the building to pick up your child, please wait in the school lobby. Children in the Elementary grades (K-4) will be walked down when class is finished by their catechists. Waiting in the hallway where your child's classroom is will not be permitted.