

FAITH FORMATION PARENT HANDBOOK

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Faith Formation Staff

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WELCOME!

It is a great privilege to be a part of your children's faith formation. YOU are the primary educators of your children in the ways of our Catholic faith and we are here to guide and help along the way.

Saint Kilian Faith Formation is centered on the development of true spiritual values, and the encouragement of the attitudes, understandings and behaviors of a member of the Catholic community.

Our goal is to help your child to reach Jesus; to know that he/she is especially loved and especially valued by Christ.

Our programs begin at age 3 and go thru to the 8th grade, where the student will be invited to complete initiation into the Catholic faith through the sacrament of Confirmation in the 8th grade. We offer the following formats for education:

- On-Site Faith Formation - Students attend CCD in the classrooms located in the parish school building (Grades 1-8).
- Family Centered: Students are taught at home by their families and attend several meetings with their children throughout the year. (Grades K-8)
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Program. (ages 3-9)

This handbook, which contains important policies, guidelines and a wealth of information, is provided to unite parents and administrators in the preparation of responsible, faithful, and knowledgeable Catholic Christians.

CURRICULUM

We use the Harcourt Publishing Co., CALL TO FAITH textbooks (Grades K through 6), Kingdom of God, Sacraments and Church History for Grade 7, and Jesus Christ, Morality and Call to Celebrate: Confirmation for Grade 8—they are thorough, well organized and easy to use both in the classroom and at home. The student textbook integrates prayer, liturgy, and Catholic Social teaching within catechesis. Catholic identity is promoted through the clear presentation of content. Every text contains many special family activities that extend classroom learning into at-home family catechesis. Each chapter follows a unique, three-step catechetical process which echoes Jesus' pedagogy of faith:

Invite: This step invites the learner into the process through simple and engaging reflections that draw out the life experience of the learner.

Explore: This step explores, in an age-appropriate way, the living Tradition of our Catholic faith as it is expressed in Scripture and doctrine. The students enter more deeply into the chapter content and are helped to connect faith with their lives.

Celebrate: In this step, students celebrate what they believe through prayer celebrations that model the diverse ways in which Catholics pray. Prayer of praise, meditations, litanies, and celebrations of the Word are included.

Online Resources – part of the component for many textbooks used for Faith Formation is an online resource for catechists, parents, and students. Harcourt offers two online resources to be used in conjunction with their textbooks.

1. <http://www.harcourtreligion.com>– An excellent resource for use by families in conjunction with the textbook.
2. eConnect – <http://www.calltofaithconnect.com>– requires an invitation from the parish. If you would like to receive the invitation to register and would like to use this website please send your email address to Deacon Ralph at rbachner@saintkilian.org and we will process an invitation.

Both of these websites offer very helpful tools for lesson planning, activities and additional resources to assist with your preparation and teaching.

Other ways to help your child be a success:

- Before class: check up on homework (if any). Have a positive attitude about going to CCD; BE ON TIME.
- After class: review your child/ren's lesson; ask questions to make them think about what they studied. Challenge them to apply it in their daily lives.
- All week long: live faithfully. Practice your Catholic faith actively; teach with your every move.

MASS ATTENDANCE

At the heart of our Catholic faith is the celebration of the Eucharist. Attendance at Mass is an irreplaceable part of your child's faith formation. Please **DO NOT SUBSTITUTE** faith formation classes for attendance at Mass. Your attendance, as a family, at Mass sets a powerful example for your child.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

- Two years (Grades 1st and 2nd) of formal religious education is required to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.
 - In 2nd grade, parents and sacrament candidates will be required to attend one extra day of preparation for each sacrament ("Good Shepherd Day" and "Jesus Day").
 - Notices regarding these dates will be mailed to you or can be found under Religious Education on our website.

- Three years (Grades 6th, 7th, and 8th) of formal religious education is required to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
 - In the 8th grade, preparation will include a parent meeting and an Afternoon of Recollection.
 - Confirmation occurs in the Spring for 8th graders.

REGISTRATION & FEES

1. Students must be registered in the parish in order to attend Faith Formation classes.
2. All students must provide a record of their baptism. Please turn in a photocopy of your child's baptismal certificate as soon as possible so that the required paperwork is in order for your child. Baptismal certificates previously submitted for returning students are kept on file until the student completes eighth grade and receives the Sacrament of Confirmation.
3. Books, lesson plans and some additional materials are already included in the registration fee. Students are asked to bring all materials to class each week. In the case of lost materials, please talk to Susan Bachner.
4. Books, supplies and/or furniture that are lost, stolen, defaced or damaged are the responsibility of the student.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

1. ATTEND CLASS regularly! Students are expected to attend all classes. For those classes which unavoidably must be missed, extra homework may be required and is due to the teacher at the next class.
2. Requests for early dismissals are the responsibility of the parents. Parents MUST obtain and sign an “Early Dismissal Form” before class begins **or** present a signed note authorizing the dismissal. The note or form must be returned to the main office before class begins. (click for Early Dismissal Form.)
3. Late arrivals disrupt the class, the attention of the teacher and probably makes your child uncomfortable. Every effort to be on time is appreciated.

EARLY DISMISSAL

Either a signed note from a parent/guardian or an “Early Dismissal Form” (available at the front desk) must be completed each time a child is to be picked up before the end of their session. On the Early Dismissal Form, parents will be asked to turn this form (questions 1-7) in to the Religious Education Office BEFORE CLASS begins the day of your desired early dismissal. A member of the Faith Formation Staff will pick up your child from the classroom and wait with him/her outside (by the glass entrance doors) until they are picked up.

Saint Kilian Parish
Faith Formation Program

EARLY DISMISSAL FORM

Parts 1 through 7 should be completed and form turned in at the Faith Formation Office before class the day of the desired early dismissal. Please meet your child for pickup outside the Faith Formation Office at the time of early dismissal. Signature and identification will be required for release of student.

1. Student's Name _____ GRADE: _____

2. Name of person picking up child _____

3. Relationship to student (e.g. - mother, father etc.) _____

4. Reason for early dismissal _____

5. Date of early dismissal _____

6. Time of early dismissal _____

7. Signature of Parent or legal guardian _____

8. Signature of person picking up child _____
(To be signed in the presence of Catechetical Administrator or duly appointed representative)

AFFIDAVIT OF CATECHETICAL ADMINISTRATOR

The individual named in point two above signed the form in my presence, claimant:

a) Produced Identification

b) Is known to me by sight

Signature of Catechetical Administrator _____

Date _____

This form is in accordance with and as mandated by directors of the Diocese of Pittsburgh for all parish Faith Formation Programs.

GUESTS

Friends MAY NOT accompany students to class. Our classroom space is limited and we are responsible for the safety of all children on our property.

ROLLER SHOES

Wheeled Shoes are not permitted in the classroom or on parish property.

WEAPONS AND ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES

Diocesan policies regulate that any student found with a weapon or in possession of an illegal substance will be dealt with as follows:

“The weapon will be confiscated, the parent and pastor will be immediately contacted, the police will be notified, and the child will be suspended from the program. If an investigation results in expulsion from the Faith Formation program, the parish will work with the parents to find another means of religious education.”

Cancellation of classes / Snow days

CANCELLATION of classes due to inclement weather will be:

1. Announced on KDKA, WTAE & WPXI
2. Posted on the Parish Phone System. Call the Parish Office at 724-625-1665
 - a. Select 5 for Religious Education
 - b. then 1 for cancellation or delays.
3. Every effort will also be made to post cancellations on the parish WEBSITE at www.saintkilian.org under Faith Formation.

DISCIPLINARY POLICY

At Saint Kilian Parish every child has the right to take part in Religious Education class without disruption. Therefore, this policy has been designed to help all grow toward the love and knowledge of God, in mutual respect and dignity. Behavior that disrupts class or is disrespectful to the catechist, other students or parish property will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

First Incident - Catechist talks with the student quietly alone and tries to resolve the situation, informing the student that inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated in class.

Second Incident - Student will be given a second warning and will be advised of the next step, should the disruptive behavior continue.

Third Incident - Student is removed from the room and sent to the office. He/she is given an assignment to complete that will compensate for the missed work in class.

Fourth Incident - Student is removed from the room and calls the parent in the presence of the members of the Faith Formation Staff. A parent/child conference is scheduled.

Fifth Incident - Student is removed from the class. Parent is contacted. Student is permitted to return to class only if accompanied by parent for remaining sessions or an alternative means of religious education is provided.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents and/or guardians are:

- encouraged to participate by volunteering as catechists, classroom facilitators, service project coordinators, or substitute catechists. Any other ideas are gladly welcomed.
- expected to attend the mandatory Sacramental Preparation meetings.
- expected to have students in their classrooms on time and picked up upon dismissal by the teacher.
- expected to carry on the religious education in the home; providing a continuity of learning for their children.

“WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A PRIMARY EDUCATOR?”

- Be involved on a regular basis in your child’s religious education.
- Let your child see that you are involved, engaged and knowledgeable.
- Let your child’s teacher know you support them and are willing to be partners with them in any way possible.
- Continue learning about your faith. Make religious education a life-long commitment.
- Share with your child your time, your attention your knowledge and your love—in this way you will model what it means to be loved, just as God loves your child.
- Pray. Participate. Laugh. Enjoy!