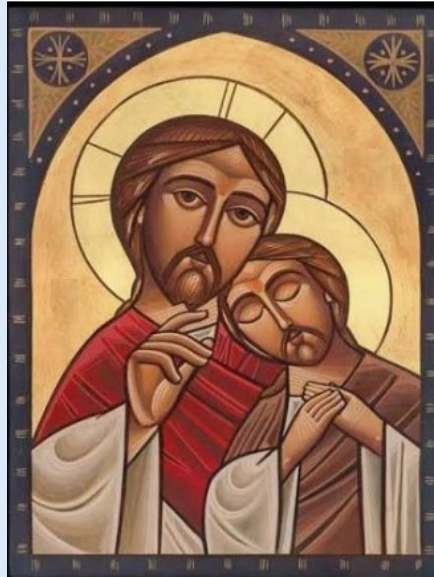


Beloved Disciple Parish



FAITH FORMATION PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027

Parish Website:

<https://www.beloveddiscipleparish.org/>

Facebook:

<https://facebook.com/BelovedDiscipleParish/>

Office phone: 724-748-6700

Marialyce Garvis ext. 112 and Lisa Bablak ext. 115



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Letter	3
Classes	4
Registration	4
Registration Fees	4
Nondiscriminatory Policy	4
Arrival & Pick-up	4
Attendance	4
Child Protection Policies	5
Curriculum	6
Sacraments	7
Photography	9
Discipline	9
Special Needs	10
Visitors	10
Volunteer Opportunities	10
Catholic Prayers and Moral Pillars of Faith	11

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2026-2027 Faith Formation Year! Thank you for entrusting your children to us to complement your Family's Faith Formation. We know that parents are the primary educators of their children. We are here to support you in this mission. With the help of the Holy Spirit, catechists will pass on our Catholic Faith to your children along with you. The Catholic home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the Faith. God ordained the Family as the place where life in Christ takes root in the human heart. Your active participation in the sacramental life of the Church nurtures the Family's spiritual life. Please ensure your child has opportunities for frequent participation in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (once they have received their first) and attends weekly Mass.

This year, we are excited to add a young parents' class. In this class the parents will study more about their faith, while their children, ages 0 to 4 years old, socialize and learn with each other. I am also thrilled that on the Faith Formation Calendars we have three Liturgical celebrations and an end of year celebration: Advent/St. Nick dinner, an Epiphany party, All Saints Day Procession, and our end of year celebration.

You will also see that all our classes are on Sunday mornings. Classes are held before Mass at the Beloved Disciple campus and after Mass at the St. Michael campus. We will begin with a light breakfast. Part of our Middle School and High School time is to build community. Therefore, I am happy to announce retreats are back for their classes. Please see the calendars.

This handbook was designed to give parents and guardians basic information about Beloved Disciple Parish's Faith Formation Program, please take time to familiarize yourself with it. If you have a question or concern at any time, please contact me.

God Bless,

Marialyce Garvis

Marialyce Garvis

Director of Faith Formation

mgarvis@beloveddiscipleparish.org

724-748-6700 ext. 112



Classes are to be held on Sunday mornings according to the schedule, from September through May. A schedule of classes is carefully constructed each year considering public school, parish, and holiday calendars. All children in 1st through 12th grade are invited to join us for Faith Formation classes at either campus.

FAITH FORMATION REGISTRATION

- All families are expected to register with the parish prior to enrolling in Faith Formation.
- Both sacrament and non-sacrament students are expected to attend Faith Formation

REGISTRATION FEE

\$25 for each child, \$75 for family of three or more. There is an additional sacrament fee of \$25 per child for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

*Need-based scholarships are available. Payment arrangements can be made through the Faith Formation Office. No one is denied the opportunity to attend Faith Formation.

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

Beloved Disciple's Faith Formation admits students of any race, color, ethnic origin, or cognitive abilities; giving to all rights, privileges, programs and activities. In addition, we will not discriminate in administration of educational policies, fees, fee waivers or educational programs. Beloved Disciple will provide quality Faith Formation for all students.

ARRIVAL

It is important that students arrive on time for class. Please do not drop students off any earlier than 10 minutes prior to class start time. Please make sure your child is safe in the building with certified adults before you leave.

PICK-UP

Your child is to be picked up at their classroom for elementary students. Middle & High School students can meet their parent in the church gathering area, not the parking lot for your safety.

ATTENDANCE

You have asked us to help you with the Faith Formation of your child. Their attendance is of utmost importance for their ability to grasp this very important material. When a student is going to miss a class, the parent should contact the Faith Formation Office. Letting us know your child will be absent and why will help us to keep them up to date with the rest of their class. Should your child have too many absences (more than 3 in a Sacrament year), it may mean that your child will need to repeat the year in order to get a full understanding of the material, especially for Sacrament years. We will take into consideration the reasons for the absences and what has been done to catch up with missed lessons. We are always willing to work with you!



REPORTING ABUSE TO THE DIOCESE

It is the policy of the Diocese of Erie that all employees and volunteers report all forms of abuse (i.e., physical, mental, psychological, emotional, etc.) against any minor, even if the person is no longer a minor, perpetrated by any person. If a child discloses any information that leads us to believe the child is unsafe, we will report it to the proper authorities.

Protection of Children and Youth



SAFE ENVIRONMENT SCREENING OF PERSONNEL

The Diocese of Erie policy requires all diocesan, parish, Catholic school and affiliated agency personnel, including any individual 14 years of age or older who have direct contact and responsibility with minors to complete the PA State Police Criminal Record Check, the PA Dept. of Human Services Child Abuse History Certification and the Federal Criminal History Record Information – FBI Report. Additionally, any volunteer (unpaid) who has direct contact and responsibility with minors must also complete the clearances listed above.

PROTECTING THROUGH EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE

Safe Environment Training –

The Diocese of Erie requires all diocesan, parish, Catholic school, and agency personnel and volunteers to complete the Diocesan “Creating a Safe Environment” training before working with minors. The diocese also mandates all parishes and Catholic schools to provide age-appropriate training and education on safe environments/personal safety for all children. In addition, parishes and Catholic schools are required to share the diocesan provided information regarding child abuse and safe environments to all parents/guardians of minors in their parishes/schools.

Compliance Audits –

The Office for the Protection of Children and Youth conducts annual audits through on-site visits and annual reports of all parishes and Catholic schools to ensure that all individuals working with minors are in compliance with the policies of the Diocese of Erie.

COMMUNICATION

We are here to serve the Faith Formation needs of our children, youth and adults. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to share them with your child’s Catechist or call our office. Electronic communication will be sent to your home through your email address. This mail will keep you up to date on all Faith Formation happenings.

CURRICULUM

Grades 1-5 are using Sophia Teachers “*Walking With Jesus*” texts. This program utilizes a liturgical learning method. Each year students grow in their knowledge and understanding of the four pillars (Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Christian Prayer) of the Catechism of the Catholic Church because the timeless truths of our faith are taught every year on every grade level.



GOALS for a more in-depth understanding visit:

www.eriercd.org/religiouseducation/recurriculum.html

- **Kindergarten** - To help the children know God as Creator & loving Father & to develop an awareness of the presence of God in themselves, in other people and in the world.
- **First** - To help the children know, love and serve God as Father, Son & Holy Spirit.
- **Second** - To develop the children’s participation in & knowledge of the sacraments with special emphasis on Reconciliation & Eucharist.
- **Third** - To introduce the children to the fact that God has a Church to help transform the world.
- **Fourth** - To introduce the children to Catholic moral teaching & to foster moral living.
- **Fifth** - To enable the children to become knowledgeable of & active participants in the sacramental life of the Church.

PRAYERS TO KNOW BY –

Prayer	P	K	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6
Sign of Cross	x	x	x					
Our Father			x	x				
Hail Mary			x	x				
Glory Be			x	x				
Act of Contrition				x	<i>see the official Book of Rites for individual penitent</i>			
Apostles’ Creed					x	x		
Hail Holy Queen						x		
Prayer to the Holy Spirit							x	x

- **Sixth to Eighth-** will use the *Edge* program by Life Teen. During the three-year cycle, each program must complete two semesters on Morality, two semesters on Creed, and two semesters on Sacraments.
- **Ninth** - will use the Life Teen *Purpose* program. **This is Confirmation year.** More information and the requirements for Confirmation are listed on the policy pages in section 630: <https://www.eriercd.org/images/sections/religiouseducation/Confirmation.pdf>
- **Tenth to Twelfth** - students will be invited to participate in *Beyond*, led by Grove City Newman Club Students. These Small Groups bring a more adult perspective and helps the high school youth have college mentors.

When will my child receive the sacraments?



First Reconciliation, sometimes referred to as First Penance or First Confession, is celebrated in the second grade except for special circumstances. First Reconciliation is always celebrated prior to First Eucharist. Our preparation expectations are to be present for first and second grade.

First Eucharist, sometimes referred to as First Communion, is celebrated in the third grade except for special circumstances. Our preparation expectations are to be present for second grade and third grade.



Confirmation: Our Bishop requests that all students in the Diocese of Erie be confirmed in ninth grade. Our preparation expectations are to be present for our Edge program prior as well as ninth grade year. Other expectations are reviewed at the Parent meeting in October.

Sacraments (per Diocesan Policies):

Reconciliation - 611.10 The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated only with those who have been properly prepared (this includes usually first and second grades), who are actively involved in the parish preparation process, and who freely choose to be reconciled.

611.20 Sacraments are celebrations of the believing community. The option for homeschooling during the preparation for this sacrament is discouraged except for serious pastoral need and with the pastor's approval.

611.30 The recommended time for first Reconciliation is once the person has reached the age of discretion. (Canon 989) Children baptized before reaching the age of discretion will celebrate first Reconciliation in second grade.

611.40 The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated prior to the child's reception of first Eucharist. (Canon 914)

611.41 There will be a significant period of time between the celebration of first Reconciliation and first Eucharist. The catechesis for Reconciliation must be done separately from the catechesis for first Eucharist, and the preparation periods for these two Sacraments must not take place within the same time period nor overlap in any way. (NCD, 2005 quoted at #36, B-2, p.135)

First Eucharist - 621.10 First Eucharist will be celebrated only with those who have been properly prepared (Canon 913 #1), (this includes usually second and third grades), who are actively involved in the parish preparation program, and who freely choose to receive.

621.20 Sacraments are celebrations of the believing community. The option for homeschooling during the preparation for this sacrament is discouraged except for serious pastoral need and with the pastor's approval.

621.30 Children who were baptized Catholic before reaching the age of discretion will normally celebrate First Eucharist in third grade.

621.40 First Eucharist will be celebrated only with children who have previously been sacramentally reconciled. (Canon 914) (NDC, 2005 #36 A-3A, p. 127)



Confirmation – 631.10 Confirmation will be administered only to those who have been properly instructed, actively involved in the parish program, and who freely choose to be confirmed.

631.11 Parishes have the responsibility to provide adequate opportunities for preparation of candidates for this sacrament. Requirements for the Confirmation Program should be clearly communicated to both candidates and their parent(s)/guardian(s).

631.12 Confirmation preparation, as a distinct catechetical experience, must adhere to Policy 401.20 which requires 40 hours of contact time. Up to five hours of the 15-hours of service requirements may be applied toward this 40-hour requirement.

631.13 The appropriate period for the celebration of Confirmation is to be no earlier than the ninth grade. This policy is to be understood with the following clarifications:

- Three (3) full years of catechesis prior to Confirmation is required by the policy.
- Confirmation will typically therefor be celebrated in the ninth grade.
- All students in the Confirmation year (normally 9th grade) must attend the Confirmation preparation in their home parish Faith Formation program. This includes all students enrolled in a Catholic high school.

631.14 All Confirmation names must be that of a saint or blessed of the Church. Only saints whose names can be found in Butler's Lives of the Saints, or saints that have been canonized by the Catholic Church since the Butler's publication may be used. The names of persons beatified and titled "Blessed" in the last 150 years may also be used. This policy does permit the use of Scripture names of the holy persons/angels of both the Old and New Testaments.

631.15 Each Confirmation candidate must request the Sacrament from the Bishop in a letter that follows the instructions given by the diocese. The appropriate personnel in the parish must review all letters to ensure that the Bishop does not receive letters from candidates indicating that they do not wish to be confirmed or containing inappropriate material.

631.16 The pastor or his representative must interview each candidate at least once at the end of the preparation process.

633.10 The Confirmation retreat is an important part of the candidate's preparation and is not to be omitted.

634.10 Service opportunities are an important part of the Formation of young Catholics. Parishes are to provide service opportunities for the confirmation candidates based on the needs of the local community.



PHOTOGRAPHY: At times we will take pictures/video of the amazing things our Faith Formation 8 classes are doing. *If you do not want your child photographed, please indicate this on their registration form or call the Faith Formation office.*

DISCIPLINE: Please go over the discipline policy with your child. If their behavior disrupts the learning process for him or others, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue.

Breaking rules (see classroom rules below)

- When a catechist sends a student is sent to the office for breaking a rule or for any other conduct unbecoming a Catholic student, the person on staff will speak to the student and retain the student for at least 10 minutes during class time in the office.
- If the student is sent to the office a second time for breaking one of the rules, a parent will be notified.
- If the student is sent to the office a third time for breaking one of the rules, a parent will be asked to come in for a conference with the DRE and Catechist to come up with measures that will be taken on any subsequent offence.

Bullying

- If a child is threatened by another student or threatens others or brings weapons to class, the catechist will call down to the office immediately. Authorities may be called, depending on the circumstances.
- Any child who displays disruptive behaviors that are deemed detrimental to the classroom or school environment or who cause safety concerns will be transferred to homeschool learning immediately without the benefit of the four steps outlined above.

Classroom Rules

- Please make every effort to be in class on time.
- If you are absent, you are responsible for making up missed work.
- Proper manners and Christian behavior are always expected. Inappropriate behavior will not be allowed. There will be no improper language or comments.
- Students will respect the property of others. Students will treat each other with respect.
- Use of cell phones, texting or other forms of communication are not allowed during class time. If they are, they will be confiscated and returned at the end of class.
- If a child must leave a class early, the parent or guardian must send in a note with the child at the beginning of class or call the office. This is a safety precaution implemented to protect your child and us.
- There will be no use of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs. No weapons will be allowed on the premises.



SPECIAL NEEDS

"All baptized persons with disabilities have a right to adequate catechesis and deserve the means to develop a relationship with God." (National Directory for Catechesis) This statement includes all learning disabilities. If there is any information you can provide to help us work better with your child, please list it on the registration form or call the Faith Formation office. Together we can create a plan for their faith formation including their strengths, difficulties and any accommodation that they may need.

VISITORS

All visitors must check in with the office upon entering the building. Parents and guardians are always welcome to attend a class as a guest (If this is a more than a one-time occurrence, the parent may need clearances). Most catechists would like to have prior notification.

Friends of students are always welcome to attend the students' class (It would be nice to receive prior notification).



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Our program is only possible through the help of many volunteers. Here are the areas for you to consider helping out:

- Catechists (teachers): Introduce students to Jesus and our wonderful Catholic Tradition by allowing them to witness your love for Christ and the teachings of the Church.
- Substitute Catechist: Lesson plans will be provided
- Catechist Assistant: Help the primary catechist
- Family Assistant: Assist in the family classroom with the young children when necessary, so that the parents can participate more in class
- Retreat team: Work with a small group of students during a retreat; attend retreat set-up/meeting the evening prior to the retreat
- Service Project assistance: Assist with the service projects once a month by making sure all the supplies that are needed are available, helping families to complete project, and cleaning up afterwards
- Meal Coordinator: Aid in organizing parent volunteers for breakfasts prior to each class
- Hospitality for class: Set up and clean up of the breakfast prior to each class
- Hospitality for adults: Set up and clean-up of refreshments for (Parent Meetings, OCIA, or Parent and Child Retreats)

If you are interested in any of these volunteer positions, please contact Marialyce Garvis at the Faith Formation office.

CATHOLIC PRAYERS AND MORAL PILLARS OF THE FAITH:

Sign of the Cross: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Our Father: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory Be: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Grace before Meals: Bless us, O Lord, and these, thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Act of Contrition: My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy. Amen

Apostle's Creed: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son Our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

Hail, Holy Queen: Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth. Let us pray. O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Ten Commandments:

1. I am the Lord, your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your god in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbors goods.



The Beatitudes: Matthew 5: 3-12

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

The Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, Matrimony

The Virtues:

Definition: Virtues are spiritual powers or habits or behaviors. They help us to do what is right and avoid what is wrong.

- The Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, Charity
- The Moral Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance