

St. George & St. Mary Parish Faith Formation Program

Handbook

Welcome to SGM Faith Formation! Thank you for choosing to enroll your child(ren) in our program. We are truly blessed to be part of your family's faith journey and are excited to help your child(ren) grow in their knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and His Church.

As parents, you are the first and most important teachers of the faith, and we are honored to partner with you in this sacred responsibility. Together, we will walk alongside one another, nurturing your child(ren)'s Catholic faith through prayer, learning, and the sacraments. We look forward to growing together as we help our children develop a lifelong relationship with Christ.

SGM Faith Formation's mission is to teach our children to live by faith and love like Christ by following the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.

- Learn and Live the Catholic Faith: We will teach the traditions and beliefs of the Catholic Church, giving students a strong foundation in their faith and encouraging them to share God's love with others.
- Grow in Faith: Through Mass, scripture, prayer, and the sacraments we will help students grow closer to Jesus and learn how to live their faith every day.
- Build a Faith Community: We will create a welcoming and caring environment where students and families feel loved, supported, and connected to our parish family.

Attendance for Sunday Mass & Holy Days of Obligation:

Faith Formation begins with gathering together as a Catholic community to worship God through the celebration of Mass where we come together as a parish family to pray, receive the Eucharist, and grow closer to Christ.

We strongly encourage the families of the Faith Formation program to begin their Sunday together at 8:00am Mass prior to class. *(The 4:00pm Saturday Vigil and 10:30am Mass also fulfill the Sunday Mass obligation).* By joining together in worship, we strengthen the faith we learn and share during Faith Formation.

Faith Formation Class Participation:

Regular participation in Faith Formation classes is essential for children to receive appropriate preparation for the Sacraments and ongoing catechesis. Students enrolled in the program are expected to attend class each week, as consistent attendance helps them build a strong foundation of faith, deepen their understanding of Catholic teachings, strengthen their relationship with Christ, and develop a sense of belonging within the parish community.

Because each lesson builds upon previous learning and experiences, regular attendance enables children to grow more fully in their faith journey and remain actively engaged with their peers and catechists.

If your child must be absent, please notify their catechist as soon as possible.

Thank you for your commitment to nurturing your child's faith and supporting their lifelong relationship with Christ and His Church.

Communication:

Good communication between families and the program is essential. Please make sure your family's contact information is kept up to date. Email is our primary means of communication, if that doesn't work for you, please contact Lindsay Tripp, Jamie Wyms, or Betsy Weinel.

A monthly newsletter from the Faith Formation Coordinators will be emailed to each family and will be the main way we share information. Parents are always welcome to reach out to their child's catechist with questions or concerns.

Our program works to create a safe, welcoming, and faith-filled environment. Students are expected to show respect and kindness to their catechists, classmates, and parish community. If there are behavior concerns, parents will be contacted by the Faith Formation Coordinators.

Sacramental Programs:

Faith Formation and sacrament preparation is an ongoing process that gives students time to learn, grow, and fully prepare to receive the Sacraments. Students must be baptized in the Catholic Church before beginning any of the Sacrament preparation courses offered. Each year of Faith Formation plays an important role in building a strong foundation of faith. The sacraments are not rewards to be earned but sacred gifts of God's grace; therefore, we are called to respond by making Faith Formation a priority

so that we may be properly prepared to receive them with faith, understanding, and reverence.

- The Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist (Holy Communion) are typically received in second grade. However, sacramental preparation is a consecutive two-year process that is required for all students, regardless of their academic grade level.
- The Sacrament of Confirmation is typically received in eighth grade. However, preparation for Confirmation is a consecutive three-year process that is required for all students, regardless of their academic grade level.
- Students entering our Faith Formation program after participating in another recognized program are asked to provide documentation of their previous faith formation and sacramental preparation. If additional review is needed, the student's progress and readiness will be discussed with the Faith Formation leadership team to determine the most appropriate path forward. Our goal is to ensure that each child is spiritually prepared to receive the sacraments.

Fees:

There is a registration fee of \$50 per student, with a family maximum of \$100. This fee helps cover the cost of materials and resources used throughout the Faith Formation program. We believe every child should have the opportunity to grow in their Catholic faith, and the ability to pay should never prevent a child from participating. If financial assistance is needed, please contact Faith Formation Coordinators.

We look forward to the year ahead and the opportunity to grow together as a faith-filled community. Through prayer, learning, and fellowship, we are excited to walk alongside our students and families as we deepen our relationship with Jesus and strengthen our Catholic faith. We are blessed to share this journey together and look forward to all that God has planned for our Faith Formation year.

Lindsay Tripp, Jamie Wyms, and Betsy Weinell

