

St. Mary Parish Faith Formation Guidelines

Classes are offered for children in grades Kindergarten through 6 on Wednesday evenings from 5 – 6:00pm from September through May (see attached schedule). This is to allow anyone who would like to attend the 6:15pm Mass after class to do so.

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion take place in second grade. **Students must have attended first grade class to be eligible. Any student who needs to receive the Sacraments but has not yet completed the first grade class will be placed in the first grade class regardless of age.** Parents are required to attend two retreats with their children during the second grade year.

Registration

There is a form to fill out online to register your child(ren) for our program. If you have had your child baptized at a different parish, please be sure to provide us with a certificate so that we have proof of the Baptism. This can be retrieved by calling the parish of your child's Baptism and having them send us a certificate. On the first day of classes, please come in with your child to fill out an emergency contact form in case we ever need to contact you.

There is a registration fee of \$30 for all students and an extra \$30 fee for any student who is receiving First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion that year. These fees are to help cover the cost of materials, snacks, and retreats that your child will participate in with our program. If you are in need of financial assistance, please contact the Director of Religious Education through either email or phone call.

Attendance

All Religious Education classes must be attended with illness or serious family difficulties being the only exceptions. No other activities – sports or leisure – should be viewed as more important. If a child misses three consecutive classes or shows any erratic attendance patterns, the parents will be contacted to discuss how to ensure that the child will be able to move on to the next level the following year.

All Family Faith Formations must be attended by the child with at least one parent/guardian, though the entire family is invited to attend regardless of age. The family is the foundation of growth in faith and it is important to build relationships with God not just individually, but as a community as well.

If a student should miss class for any reason, please contact the Director of Religious Education with why they are missing so that they may let the student's catechist know.

Behavior

It is important that all students do their best to be well-behaved and cooperative. Specific classroom rules will be set by the teachers and discussed at the beginning of each year. If a

student repeatedly disrupts class, engages in offensive behavior and/or uses abusive or obscene language, parents will be called immediately for consultation.

Visitor Policy

Students are always welcome to bring a friend with them to class! Please be sure to give the Director of Religious Education notice through either email or phone call if there will be someone joining your student. If a visitor is coming frequently, you may be asked to have the family of that child go through the registration process in order to join our program.

Dismissal

Parents and guardians are expected to pick up students from the classroom on time at the end of Religious Education activities. **No child will be released from class early unless they have a note from their parent/guardian.**

Emergency and Storm Closing

If a Religious Education activity must be cancelled for any reason, an email will be sent out by the Director of Religious Education. Please be sure to check your email each week before coming to class as sometimes these changes may come at the last minute. If either Firelands or Vermilion schools cancel school that day, Religious Education will also be cancelled.

Family Expectations

To ensure that our program is as successful as possible we need your cooperation and support as parents/guardians. We are here to support you in teaching your children the Catholic faith, but at the end of the day the family is the foundation of education of the faith and we can only do so much. We are asking that you make a commitment to support your children in the following ways:

- Participate fully in the sacramental life of the Parish!

Attend Mass Weekly, attend special devotional services. Children learn a great deal by attending Mass on a regular basis and by witnessing and practicing their faith.

- Continue to bring your children each year!

As in any curriculum, one year builds on the next, so full participation through the grades and sacrament preparation is necessary to receive a full religious education.

- Continue your own faith development!

Your children look to you as their example of how to live out their faith and we are never done learning and growing! Be sure to check the bulletin for opportunities to dive into different activities!

Most Importantly

Please work with your children and encourage them by asking about their lessons, answering their questions, and setting time aside for family prayer and discussion.

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