



ST. JOHN XXIII
CATHOLIC CHURCH

*Faith Formation /Middle School
Program*

Family Handbook

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St. John XXIII
Faith Formation Program
Mission Statement & Contacts

The Faith Formation Program at St. John XXIII strives to provide a Christian atmosphere of faith, love, and compassion to welcome children and families into our program.

Beginning with the faith received in Baptism, we seek to collaborate with parents and the parish community to teach children the gospel message so they may live their life in worship and service in the love of Jesus Christ.

Faith Formation Department Contacts

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Religious Education Programs of St. John XXIII! The Faith Formation program strives to foster the religious formation of your child/children and seeks to incorporate Catholic Christian values and traditions into the family's daily life.

As parents you are the primary teacher in the ways of faith and we very much want to partner with you in deepening you and your child/children's faith.

You may not remember this but at your child's baptism one of the blessings said was "**...you will be the first teachers in the way of faith. May you also be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what you say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.**"

When parents let children know the importance of God in their own lives, children can understand that they, too, can have a relationship with God. By demonstrating their reliance on God, modeling a prayer life and by taking part in our communal worship at Mass, parents plant the seeds of faith that will grow as children develop in other ways. As we begin classes for another year of growing in our faith, I ask you to renew your commitment to bring your children to Mass every weekend as well.

We have an excellent team of Catechists (teachers) and Assistants. Each member has met the requirements of the Diocese of Venice by being fingerprinted, background check and have completed the Safe Environment Training course. Each member holds true to our philosophy of religious formation and is happy to work with you in the process of faith development for your child/children.

It is our hope that the information provided in this booklet will help you with the particulars of the program. With the cooperation of everyone, your children will experience a meaningful year of Religious Education and grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Peace and Respect!

Frannie

Attendance

Attendance at every class is important for the sake of continued and consistent understanding of the lessons and for development of faith in our children.

If it is necessary that your child miss a session, please contact the Faith Formation Office by email to inform us your child will be absent and ask about any assignments that need to be made up.

Regular attendance in the Faith Formation program is particularly important if your child is preparing for the Sacraments. If your child is preparing for the Sacraments, (in year I or year II) they may have no more than 1 absence in the fall semester and no more than 1 absence in the Spring semester.

Class attendance is just one part of your child's Faith Formation. Regular attendance at Sunday Mass and at parish events is also important to your family's formation especially in preparing for the Sacraments.

Please note, the lessons on the Mass and Mass itself, are counted as regular sessions and attendance will be counted for these dates.

Weather/Cancellations

In the event of inclement weather, we follow the Lee County School for cancellations. Please call the Faith Formation office if you have any questions.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures (When classes are held in the Parish Life Center)

Arrival:

Parents are encouraged to park and walk children into the Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel, located in the church. Have children sit in their designated areas for opening prayer. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend the 12 minute prayer & praise session. After prayer students and teachers are dismissed to their classrooms in the PLC and remain there until parent pick up. Never leave your child in front of the building unless an adult is present to ensure they enter the building safely. Students should not be dropped off for the 4:15 class before 4:05 and not before 5:50 for the 6:00 class. Please note, as a safety measure, doors to the Parish Life Center will be locked 10 minutes after classes start.

***If pizza is being served between classes, from 5:30-5:55, and students are staying after class or arriving early to eat dinner, a parent MUST accompany a child in grades K-5 (even if the student has an older sibling, we still want a parent to be present)**

****Pizza will NOT be served the following dates:
8/28, 10/2, 11/6, 1/22, 2/12, 3/5, 3/12, 4/9**

Dismissal/Pick-up:

Children need to be picked up promptly at 5:30/7:30. **Please park your car in either the parking lot next to the Faith Formation Entrance OR in the PLC parking lot** and come into the building to sign out your child.

Children will only be released to a parent, guardian or an adult who has been given written permission by the parent. Permission forms must be completed if someone other than parent or legal guardian will be picking up. **Parents or authorized adults**, must sign your child out of his or her class. **Please do not send siblings because they will only be released to a parent or an authorized adult.**

Church

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures (When classes are held in the Church for Mass)

Arrival:

At the beginning of each session, children meet in the Our Lady of the Rosary Chapel to sign in for attendance purposes. Parents are required to stay with their child(ren) for Mass as families will sit together. If you arrive after Mass has begun, please come to the chapel following Mass to ensure your child is marked present for attendance purposes.

***Dismissal/Pick-up**

Children do NOT need to sign out on Mass days and thus are welcome to leave directly following Mass with their family. However, if they did not arrive in time to sign in on the attendance roster, then they should proceed to the chapel following Mass to ensure they are marked present on the attendance log.

****NO CHILDREN should be dropped off to attend Mass independently. All children need to be accompanied by an adult during Mass days for the duration of the Mass.**

Health and Medical concerns:

Allergies/Medications:

Please make us aware of any allergies, or special needs that your child may have.

If there is a change in your child's medical condition in the year, please inform the Catechist and Director of Faith Formation as soon as possible.

Special Needs - Children with special learning needs (i.e., mentally or physically challenged) are welcome and included in our programs. Parents are asked to indicate their children's special needs at registration time that any additional help or materials needed in the classroom may be obtained. Catechists/Assistants will be made aware of a child's special needs.

Health Precautions:

As Faith Formation classes begin, it is important that we remain vigilant regarding spreading germs and avoiding illness. Children, catechist and anyone coming to classes, we ask that you only enter if you are feeling well and are not exhibiting any symptoms of illness.

We will be diligent in doing our part to prevent the spread of illnesses. Each class room will have a large container of antibacterial hand sanitizer, and each catechist will make sure the children use it upon entering the classroom. Before each class session, desks will be wiped down with an antibacterial cleaner, and again after the session is ended.

If your child is ill; i.e. running a fever, vomiting, please do not bring him/her to class.

Discipline -

Every person is worthy of being treated with care and the respect fitting one made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, classroom behavior needs to be characterized by genuine Christian care, mutual respect, and honesty. There is no food or beverage allowed in the Church. Chewing gum is not permitted. We ask that parents make sure that children leave items such as toys, iPods, or other electronic devices at home. St. John XXIII does not tolerate bullying by children or adults. In the event that your child is having a problem, please do not confront catechists or assistants. Please speak to the Director or Fr. Bob

Discipline Policies

At the beginning of the year, your child's Catechist will review the classroom rules with the students.

The normal steps for disciplinary action will be:

1. First incidence: Verbal correction by the teacher
2. Second incidence: Director will come to the class area and meet with the student. Student may be sent to the office and parents will be notified.
3. After returning to the class, if inappropriate behavior continues the child will be escorted to the Director and a parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up early and to schedule a conference with the parent, Director and Pastor. If behavior continues, home-schooling may be more appropriate for your child.

Safety!!

Safe Environment Training for Children: Each year the Diocese of Venice has each parish provide a session on safety measures for your child regarding stranger danger, good touch/bad touch **and internet safety**. For more information please visit the Virtus website. <https://www.virtusonline.org/>

Children's Liturgy of the Word

Children's Liturgy of the Word is a program for children ages 4 to 10 that takes place each Sunday during the 9:15 & 11:15 Masses. After the opening prayer, the children along with their Catechist move to the chapel to hear and discuss the Sunday readings at a level they will understand. At the offertory the children return to the assembly for the remainder of the Mass. There is no registration required for Children's Liturgy of the Word.

While we want this to be a fun and engaging time for the children, they are expected to behave in an appropriate manner respectful to adults and to God's House. Please talk to your child about this before having them attend Children's Liturgy of the Word. Because this is a guided lesson, **we ask that children younger than age 4 do not attend**

Great Catholic Family Resources

Catholic Online: <http://catholic.org/>

Catholic Resources on the Internet:
<http://users.rcn.com/lanat/catholic.htm>

Loyola Press /Living as a Catholic Family:
<http://www.loyolapress.com/living-as-a-catholic-family.htm>

RCL Faith First <http://www.faithfirst.com/family.html>

Pflaum Family Pages <http://www.pflaum.com/>

Catholic Mom <http://Catholicmom.com>

Our Sunday Visitor <http://aliveinchrist.osv.com/family>

Sacrament Preparation

*"The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify,
build up the body of Christ, and finally
to give worship to God."*

(Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy)

At St. John XXIII we embrace the sacredness of all the Sacraments of the Church. The preparation for Sacraments is a two year process. Listed below are the guidelines and requirements set by the Diocese of Venice and followed by the Parish. For a more detailed description, please visit our website: www.johnxxiii.net

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion

The program is opened to students in second grade or above who have **fully completed the 2023-2024 year Faith Formation program or attended a Diocesan Catholic School. (St. Francis Xavier or St. Andrews Catholic School) Students must attend Mass each weekend.**

Sessions are held separate from our Faith Formation program. Your child must also be enrolled in our 2024-2025 Faith Formation Program or attending a Diocesan approved Catholic School. Your family must be registered and actively participating in the life of the parish.

Confirmation

In compliance with the Bishop's office and all parishes in the Diocese of Venice, the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated at the end of the candidate's two year program. Candidates must complete a 2 year preparation program that begins in 9th grade or above. Students enrolled at Bishop Verot High School must attend classes in both 9th and 10th grade.

Family Commitment Prayer

God, Our Father,

Through the holy Sacrament of Marriage you have blessed us and bestowed on us the gift of families in different shapes and sizes. You created the family to be the image of love and unity revealed to us in the Blessed Trinity. We commit ourselves to model that love and unity in our daily lives and in all our relationships.

Guide us on our journey as we read and reflect on your holy Word. By your Word we are transformed so that, by our witness, we may become leaven for the transformation of the world.

May the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us through our Baptism, shine through our interactions within our family and through our encounters with others.

May all families within our parish become hearers and followers of the Word, so that our parish family might mirror the love and unity of you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen



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