

FAITH FORMATION HANDBOOK 2023-2024



Church of Saint Joseph
12 West Minnesota Street
Saint Joseph, Minnesota

Dear Families,

Welcome to our 2023-2024 year of faith formation.

This year marks twelve years since my coming on board as your Director of Faith Formation. So much has taken place over the years, locally, globally, and within our Saint Joseph parish.

Many parish events such as the celebration of the sacraments, the building and dedication of Heritage Hall, many faith formation sessions onsite and within the family setting, Liturgy of the Word for Children, Kid's Night Outs, Valentine spaghetti suppers, appreciation picnics, baccalaureates, the Living Stations and the Living Rosary, youth nights, our church renovation, transitioning of pastors, staff changes, bible studies, faith and fellowship nights, parish missions, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, journeying with the many catechumens and candidates over the years and welcoming them into the Catholic faith via the RCIA process, celebrating the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter. . .and so many more moments and events as a parish family.

Remembering these brings gratitude and joy. This year our focus is on the national Eucharistic Revival taking place within the Catholic Church. As we continue to celebrate the Eucharist as a parish family, may our belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist be strengthened as we celebrate and participate in the Mass and as we are a eucharistic people in love and service to each other.

The picture below is an actual picture of one of our staff member's mother and siblings. How they got into and out of that barrel we do not know. However, the picture illustrates that we continue to be "in this together," and as a community of faith we continue

*to know our faith,
grow in our faith
so that we can go in faith*

to a world in need. May 2023-2024 be a year filled with many blessings and continued experiences within our faith community.

Welcome

**Welcome one another,
then, as Christ welcomed
you, for the
glory of God.** Romans 15: 7

TOGETHER we can do great things.

Mother Teresa

**Snowflakes are fragile; but if
enough of them stick together,
they can stop traffic.**



**Sincerely,
Marian Bach
Director of Faith Formation**

Dear Families,

Another exciting year begins! I feel so blessed to walk alongside our students in their faith journey. I hope and pray that the young faith community we are forming here at the Church of St. Joseph is a place where students felt seen, known, and loved. There were many moments last year when I paused and thanked God for the opportunity to serve here at the parish. You bring me so much joy! The Holy Spirit is doing amazing things, both big and small, in the hearts and lives of our young people.

As we enter this faith formation year, I hope that the knowledge we gain is not simply a collection of facts. Instead, I hope what we learn about Christ and His Church becomes an opportunity for an encounter with God, who is calling us closer to Himself in every moment.

With Joy,

**Colette Harrold
Youth Life Coordinator**



Church
of
Saint Joseph
St. Joseph, Minnesota

We, the Church of Saint Joseph, are a Catholic, Benedictine faith community. Through our liturgy and faith formation, we build on a solid foundation as active witnesses of Christ, and we eagerly respond to the needs of the parish and the global community.

FAITH FORMATION

Faith Formation includes a threefold ministry:

MINISTRY of the WORD,
MINISTRY of WORSHIP, and a
MINISTRY of SERVICE.

The four pillars of our faith are at the center of all our learning. The four pillars of our Catholic faith are:

Creed—Sacraments--Commandments--Prayer

National Eucharistic Revival

The National Eucharistic Revival is a three-year endeavor by the U.S. bishops to increase the Catholic understanding of and devotion to Christ's real presence in the Eucharist. Hopefully, the National Eucharistic Revival will lead many Catholics to remember God's unconditional love in the Eucharist and go forth in love and service.

The Eucharistic Revival schedule is as follows.

Launch Date: Feast of Corpus Christi-June 18, 2022

Diocesan Year of Eucharistic Revival: June 19, 2022-June 11,

2023: Parish Year of Eucharistic Revival: June 11, 2023-July 17,

2024: National Eucharistic Congress in Indiana: July 17-21, 2024:

Year of Going Out on Mission: July 17, 2024-Pentecost, 2025:

The Diocese of Saint Cloud and our Saint Joseph parish will be implementing events and prayer experiences in light of the Eucharistic Revival.

Faith Formation

Reawakening Active Participation in the Faith

FORMATION OF FAMILIES

Ongoing formation, through parish programs can help parents network, draw on the wisdom of others, and put words to their faith.

That, in turn equips parents to be their children's primary teachers of the faith—to fulfill the promise parents made at the child's baptism

and to guide the children through sacramental preparation.

Excerpt from Catholic Update August 2018

FAITH FORMATION OVERVIEW

GRADES PRE-K through GRADE 11

Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life and life to grow in faith.

Pope Francis World Meeting of Families, September 27, 2015

These past years we have focused on the importance of family catechesis and have worked diligently to integrate both faith formation within the family setting and within the parish setting. The focus for each age is noted below always keeping in mind the importance and continued efforts to promote and encourage family catechesis.

Liturgy of the Word for Children (LOW)

The celebration of the Mass is at the heart of our Catholic faith. Children in Pre-K and K are dismissed during the scheduled LOW dates during the 10:00 am Mass before the first Scripture reading when they focus on the Scripture readings according to their age level. They return to Mass at the time of the presentation of the gifts to continue participation of Mass with their families.

Grade One

First grade children learn that God is our Creator who loves us unconditionally. They learn that Jesus came to save us through his life, death, and resurrection. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit forms the community of the Church. Just as we belong to our families, it is through Baptism that we become members and belong to God's Family, the Church.

Grade Two

In second grade, the children learn that we are called to respond to God's love for us by loving and caring for others. Immediate preparations are made for reception of the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist.

Grade Three

Third grade children learn that all of God's creation is good and that we are called to live in community. Focus is on what it means to be a faithful follower of Jesus and on how each of the sacraments deepens our relationship with God. Faith, hope and love are the foundations for the moral choices we make throughout our lives.

Grade Four

Fourth grade students are given an understanding of The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes and how to apply these to their everyday lives. Special attention is given to the Sacraments of Healing and Service as part of the moral dimension of our faith.

Grade Five

Fifth grade students focus on the sacramental life of the Church. As baptized Catholics, we enter a new way of life when we celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation. Through the sacraments we live more fully in the life of the Church.

Grade Six

Sixth grade students focus on the history of salvation from the story of creation through the Old Testament, to its fulfillment in Jesus. Important themes of Catholic Social Teaching call us to holiness, to care for the earth and to act in the ways of justice.

Grade Seven

Seventh grade students take a closer look at each of the four Synoptic Gospels, while focusing on the overarching themes of God, Jesus, Church, Sacraments and Morality.

Grade Eight

Grade eight students are invited to enter into a deeper relationship with God and their faith in and through Jesus. The students focus on following Jesus and what it means to follow Jesus in their daily lives.

Faith Formation Curriculum Summary—2023-2024	
Liturgy of the Word Children-Pre-K/K	<i>Celebrating the Lectionary for Pre-K/K</i> <i>(Liturgy Training Publications)</i> and <i>Children’s Worship Bulletins.</i>
Grades 1-8	<i>Finding God</i> <i>(Loyola Press)</i>
Sacrament Preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist	My First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Family Preparation in addition to the onsite sessions and classes
Grades 9-10 Confirmation-Track I & II	<i>Venture and Connected</i> <i>(Ascension Press)</i>
Grade 11 Confirmation-Track III Sacrament of Confirmation	<i>Chosen:</i> <i>Ascension Press</i> <i>Diocese of Saint Cloud-Confirmation Directives</i>
RCIA	<i>Journey of Faith</i> <i>(Liguori Publications)</i>

Family Catechesis

In the Parish

Guided by the catechetical leader, parents and children come together with other families to take part in faith formation sessions that serve as springboards to each unit's content.

Outcomes:

Parents become more confident and able to share the truth and beauty of the Catholic faith.

At Home

Families explore the unit theme at their own pace supported by the engaging print and digital materials found in the Finding God Family Catechesis resource.

Outcomes:

Families grow in their faith together while being actively involved in the parish setting.

Grade Nine—Confirmation--Track I

Ninth grade students will study the Creed, Liturgy and Sacraments in depth. Focus will be on the gift of Faith, the Trinity, the message and mission of Jesus and the mission of the Catholic Church in today's world.

Grade Ten—Confirmation--Track II

Tenth grade students will study the meaning of Christian Morality and Christian Prayer. Focus will include social justice, moral truth, honoring God, and all human life and what it means to live a moral life. Students in grade ten will also study and experience the forms of prayer and the importance of prayer in our daily lives. Tenth grade students are at the threshold of immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, which takes place in eleventh grade.

Grade 11-Sacrament of Confirmation--Track III

By their junior year in high school, students are expected to have a solid understanding and knowledge of the Catholic faith. This year focuses on the immediate preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Importance is given to the meaning of this sacrament, the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit and the living of one's faith in community as active disciples of Jesus.

Youth Ministry

Ministry to youth is essential, using an intergenerational and inclusive parish approach. In addition to the faith formation sessions, opportunities offered are youth prayer experiences, youth nights, and retreats. The goal of ministry to youth is an increased awareness and sense of belonging to the parish community in real, transformative, and tangible ways.

Youth Groups

Youth gatherings are offered on Wednesday evenings throughout the academic year. The IGNITE youth group is for youth in grades 6-8 and the AGAPE youth group is for youth in grades 9-12.

Vacation Bible School

Each summer VBS takes place in partnership with Resurrection Lutheran and Gateway Churches. Children ages 4 through grade 6 are invited to participate. Junior and adult helpers are invited to assist with VBS.

Adult Faith Formation

Faith Formation is a life-long process. Faith formation opportunities, faith-filled gatherings and social events are planned throughout the year for all parishioners. These

include bible studies, reflection days, and Faith and Fellowship evenings.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The RCIA process is for those seeking full membership into the Catholic Church. RCIA is guided by the process found in the early Church. Catechumens and/or candidates are led through the faith journey, along with sponsors and parish guides. Those seeking full communion in the Catholic Church are invited to contact the Director of Faith Formation.



The Seven Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, Marriage, Ordination and Anointing of the Sick are at the heart of our Catholic Faith.

Baptism

Baptism preparation sessions are typically held the first Monday of each month beginning at 5:00 pm. Baptism weekend is the second weekend of each month during Mass or are individually scheduled if outside of Mass upon completion of the preparation session. During the season of Lent Baptisms are typically not held during Mass. Contact the faith formation office for more information.

First Reconciliation and First Eucharist

Immediate preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist (Communion) takes place in the second grade. This time of preparation includes the regular faith formation class times and additional parent and child participation times. Parents (Guardians) of children who are beyond second grade and have not received the sacraments of initiation, are encouraged, and invited to contact the faith formation office.

Confirmation

The Church of Saint Joseph has implemented the Diocesan Guidelines for Confirmation. In addition to the sessions, the components for immediate preparation include reflective dialogue, sponsor-candidate process, prayer and service retreats, and liturgical celebrations. Liturgy and worship, parish and community service are all marks of discipleship.

After attending faith formation sessions in each of the previous grades, parish students in grade eleven begin immediate preparations and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in their junior year. Focused preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation includes Tracks I (grade 9), II (grade 10), and III (grade 11).

Parish students attending Cathedral High School or Saint John's Prep join the parish's immediate preparation for the sacrament in their junior year, while continuing their faith formation within the parochial setting.

Vocations

There are many opportunities to serve others. Each of us is called to a life of service. Lay ministry includes various ministries in the church as well as service to the local and wider communities. A list of parish ministries can be found in the entrance of church as well as on the website and parish bulletin.

Young men called to the priesthood are invited to contact the pastor for information regarding the process for discernment to the priesthood.

Likewise, young women who are sensing a call to religious life are invited to contact the Director of Faith Formation for information about the various religious communities.

All parishioners are encouraged to volunteer in various ways. Some of these ways include ushers, lectors, gift bearers, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, choir members, clean church, catechists, youth nights, and the parish festival.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Faith Formation registration forms, information, and calendars are available online via the parish website by August 1st. Registration for faith formation is done electronically. Please stay informed via the parish website, bulletin, and emails for updates and additional information throughout the year.

Attendance and active participation in the faith formation sessions are essential. Reception of the sacraments doesn't "just happen." Each year of faith formation builds upon the next. The purpose, meaning and sacredness of the sacraments within a learning environment leads to living the sacraments in our daily lives as active members of the Catholic church.

Respect for each person is non-negotiable. All are to be welcomed and treated with kindness.

Respect toward the faith formation team and each child will be the norm. A positive attitude and good behavior are expected and self-understood. If deemed necessary parents/guardians will be notified. Safety is of utmost

importance and will be followed accordingly. Weapons are banned from church property. Safe Environment training is mandatory for the catechetical team as well as background checks.

Contact Information

Director of Faith Formation

Marian Bach

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GRACIOUS GOD,

Thank you for the gift of today. Refresh me, invite me, to discover your presence in each person that I meet, and every event encountered.

Teach me when to speak and when to listen, when to ponder and when to share. In moments of challenge and decision attune

my heart to the whisperings of your wisdom.

As I undertake ordinary and unnoticed tasks, gift me with simple joy. When the day goes well, may I rejoice!

When it grows difficult, surprise me with new possibilities.

When life is overwhelming, call me to Sabbath moments to restore your peace and harmony. May my living today reveal your goodness. Amen.

Church Feasts

Holy Days of Obligation

January 1:	Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
Forty days after Easter:	Ascension of the Lord
August 15:	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
November 1:	All Saints
December 8:	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
December 25:	The Nativity of the Lord

Mass on Saturdays/Sundays throughout the year.

Months of the Year

January:	Month of the Holy Name of Jesus
February:	Month of the Passion of Our Lord
March:	Month of Saint Joseph Patron Saint of our parish.
April:	Month of the Resurrection
May:	Month of Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth
June:	Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
July:	Month of the Precious Blood of Jesus
August:	Month of the Assumption of Mary
September:	Month of Our Lady of Sorrows and the Holy Cross
October:	Month of the Holy Rosary
November:	Month of All Souls
December:	Month of the Coming of Jesus

Prayer to Saint Joseph

Protector of the Church
and our parish patron saint.

Blessed Saint Joseph,
we ask you to pray for us.

Through the love you had for Mary
and by the love you expressed to Jesus,
we humbly ask you to help us in all our
needs.

Watchful guardian of the holy family,
defend us from sin, shield us from harm
and protect us from evil.



Through your prayers
and examples,
guide us to live a holy
life and obtain eternal
happiness in heaven.
Amen