

**FAITH FORMATION  
HANDBOOK  
2024-2025**



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

## **Dear Families,**

Welcome to our 2024-2025 year of faith formation. The National Catechetical theme established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) for this year is

### **“Lord, When Did We See You Hungry?”**

Mathew 25:37

How well this fits in with our 2024-2025 focus in light of the Eucharistic Revival to **“BE Eucharistic people. Strengthened by the Eucharist, we are called to go forth at Mass to bring Christ’s love and presence to others, to those longing for Christ. The words of Saint Augustine ring true. “Our hearts are restless until they rest in God.”** Nourished by the Eucharist, our hearts find rest. Being Christ’s presence to “the hungry” brings peace.

During our faith formation sessions this year, we will focus on tangible ways to help others. The group session activities will reflect and bring awareness to Catholic Social Teaching.

With joy, we welcome Thomas Biernacki to the parish staff as our part-time Youth Life Coordinator and Ben Epper as the School of Theology *Conversatio* Ministerial Intern. Previously, Thomas has volunteered as part of the COR Team for grades 9-10-11. Ben is continuing his internship

with us. We are grateful for these outstanding young men as they share their gifts and talents.

The catechetical team for grades 1-11 consists of a wonderful group of parishioners and college students who are dedicated to the ministry of catechesis. We are grateful to and for each team member.

May we be graced with the longing

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

**Blessings.**

**Marian Bach**

**Director of Faith Formation**

# FAITH FORMATION

Faith Formation includes a threefold ministry:

**MINISTRY of the WORD,  
MINISTRY of WORSHIP, and  
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's third year focuses on *Going Out on Mission: Being a Eucharistic People*: July 17, 2024-Pentecost, 2025.

**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

### **Reawakening Active Participation in the Faith Formation of Families**

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

*That, in turn equips parents to be their children's primary teacher 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

These past years we have focused on the importance of family catechesis and have worked diligently to integrate faith formation both 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. At the 10:00 am Mass on scheduled LOW dates, children in Pre-K and K are dismissed before the first Scripture reading with their catechist(s) who present the

Scripture readings according to their age level. They return at the time of the presentation of the gifts to continue participation in the 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 three Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and the Gospel of John, 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.

### **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. Emphasis 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.



### Faith Formation Sessions

#### Liturgy of the Word for Children

Scheduled Sundays during the **10:00 am Mass**

**Grades 1-8: 8:45-9:45 am** Scheduled Sundays.

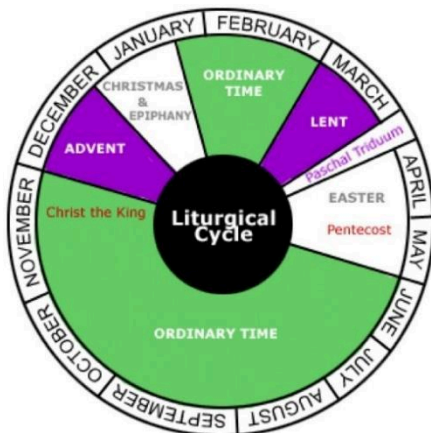
**(note start time change from last year's start time)**

**Grades 9-10-11: 6:30-8:00 pm** Scheduled Sundays

**Please refer to the grade level calendars for details.**

Liturgy of the Word Children-Pre-K/K	<b><i>Celebrating the Lectionary for Pre-K/K</i></b> <i>(Liturgy Training Publications)</i> and <b><i>Children's Worship Bulletins.</i></b>
Grades 1-8	<b><i>Finding God</i></b> (Loyola Press)
Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist	<b>Grade 2 Finding God and My First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.</b>
Grades 9-10	<b><i>Venture and Connected</i></b>

Confirmation Tracks I & II	(Ascension Press)
Grade 11 Confirmation Track III	<b>Chosen:</b> Ascension Press <b>Diocese of Saint Cloud</b> Confirmation Directives
OCIA Order of Christian Initiation of Adults	<b>Journey of Faith</b> (Liguori Publications)



## 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.

## Vacation Bible School

Each summer VBS takes place in partnership with Resurrection Lutheran Church. 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 round table discussions.

### **Order of Christian Initiation of Adults (OCIA)**

The OCIA process (formerly RCIA) is for those seeking full membership into the Catholic Church. OCIA 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 SACRAMENTS



**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 take place before the Sacrament of Baptism. The sessions are individually scheduled with the Director of Faith Formation. Baptisms take place during a weekend Mass or outside of Mass according to the family's wishes. Baptisms during a weekend Mass are encouraged.

## **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 or religious life are invited to contact the pastor for information regarding the process for discernment to the priesthood or information about religious communities.

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**

Registration forms and an informational letter will be available at the beginning of August and due no later than August 30<sup>th</sup>. 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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320-363-7505 ext. 533

## **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



<b>Forty days after Easter:</b>	Ascension of the Lord
<b>August 15:</b>	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
<b>November 1:</b>	All Saints
<b>December 8:</b>	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
<b>December 25:</b>	The Nativity of the Lord

## **Mass on Saturdays/Sundays throughout the year.**

### **The Ten Commandments**

- I. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before Me.
- II. Use God's name with respect.
- III. Keep the Lord's Day holy.
- IV. Honor your father and mother.
- V. Treat all human life with respect.
- VI. Respect married life.
- VII. Respect what belongs to others.
- VIII. Tell the truth.
- IX. Honor the family relationships of your neighbors and friends.
- X. Be happy with what you have.

### **Months of the Year**

<b>January:</b>	Month of the Holy Name of Jesus
<b>February:</b>	Month of the Passion of Our Lord
<b>March:</b>	Month of Saint Joseph Patron Saint of our parish.
<b>April:</b>	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

