

Children's Faith Formation



PARENT HANDBOOK 2020-2021

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church
(813) 949-2699
2348 Collier Parkway, P.O. Box 1229, Land O' Lakes, Florida 34639
www.LadyRosary.org

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me,
and do not prevent them; for the kingdom
of heaven belongs to such as these.”
(Matthew 19:14)

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Thank you for participating in the Children's Faith Formation programs of Our Lady of the Rosary. There are several different learning platforms for your child, and we hope that you will find one that will work for your family. Young Disciples (Kindergarten to 5th grade – Traditional classroom), Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Based on the Montessori teaching principles, Level 1, ages 3 to 5 years and Level 2, ages 6 – 8), and Kids in Christ (KIC) (4th and 5th grade). This is a hand-on, interactive program. We also have a home study program for 1st to 5th grade with a monthly Family Formation Session. We are truly blessed with many wonderful families who attend our parish, who are willing to reach out and welcome newcomers seeking a faith community they can call "home".

It is the goal of our parish to provide ongoing Faith Formation for all children, youth and adults. Our hope is that as parents and guardians you will continue to grow in your understanding, appreciation and love of the Catholic faith that has been handed down to us by the Apostles.

Faith Formation classes for children covers preparation for sacraments (Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist, Confirmation, etc.) providing ongoing information for parents, parish family activities, Youth Ministry, RCIA, teens and children who wish to join the Catholic faith.

Although we are proud to offer many opportunities for Faith Formation, the most effective opportunities are those positive examples given by parents: accompanying your children to Mass, discussing your faith, praying together as a family, living a good, moral life, etc. Although your child will learn many concepts during the year, the greatest lessons are those taught by the examples of family members. Please pray for God's continued guidance, as the task of parenting is always a challenge.

Our team of dedicated catechists, assistants, and aides are the best you will find anywhere. They are fine, Christian men and women, who live their faith and encourage the children to do the same. I am sure they will be of great assistance to you in answering questions about your child's faith formation. I hope to assist you along this journey of our faith.

In Christ's Service,

Connie Whittington

Director Children's Ministry
813-949-2699
ConnieW@ladyrosary.org

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church
2348 Collier Parkway, P.O. Box 1229, Land O' Lakes, Florida 34639
(813) 949-4565 (Parish Office)

***Our Lady of the
Rosary***
Mission Statement

Professing on Faith, one Lord, and one Baptism, Our Lady of the Rosary Parish is a Roman Catholic community of the people of God redeemed by Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Strengthened by Prayer, the Sacraments, and the Word we seek to know Jesus Christ fully, to serve Him faithfully, and to experience the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Through the Stewardship of our Time, Talent and Treasure, we strive to minister to the spiritual and material needs of all God's Children. Empowered by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we proclaim the Good News of Salvation through Jesus Christ and invite everyone to join us in the Kingdom of God where the Justice, Peace, and Joy of Christ abound.

Mass Times: Saturday – 4:30 p.m. (English), 6:30 p.m. (Spanish)
Sunday – 7:45a.m., 9:30 a.m. (Family Mass/Liturgy of the Word for Children), 11:30 a.m. Mass, 5:00 p.m. (LIFETEEN)

Parish Staff:

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FatherRon@ladyrosary.org

Parochial Vicar: Rev. Felipe Gonzalez, 813-949-4565
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Music: Tony Sievert, 813-949-4565
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Seniors' Ministry Director: Carol Gray, 813-949-2699,
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Mission of Children's Faith Formation

"Let the children come to me: do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." – Mark 10:14

It is the Mission of Children's Faith Formation to embrace the uniqueness of each child and to work side by side with their parents to help each child along their journey for the love and understanding of Jesus.

Recognizing their individuality, we offer different learning platforms for the children at Our Lady of the Rosary.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION POLICIES
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL OF YOUNG DISCIPLES

1. The Sunday morning session begins at 11:00 a.m., dismissing at 12:15 p.m. **ALL children must be accompanied by a parent** to and from the classroom.
2. Monday and Wednesday Young Disciples sessions begin at 4:45 p.m. dismissing at 6:00 p.m. Young disciples may be dropped off in the front of the church building to attend the Opening Prayer Service in the church prior to class each week. Parents are welcome to park and attend the Opening Prayer service each week in the church. **Parents must park in designated parking areas and pick up young disciples after class in their classroom.**
3. Monday 6:30 pm to 8:00 p.m. who participate in Kids in Christ may be dropped off at the main door into Rosary Hall. **Parents must park in designated parking areas and pick up students after class in Rosary Hall.**
4. **PLEASE BE ON TIME WHEN TRANSPORTING YOUR CHILDREN TO OR FROM CLASS.** If you will be late, we ask that you please contact the Children's Faith Formation Office, 813-949-2699.
5. Please observe ALL traffic directions and Security Personnel in the parking lot. Please drive slowly and carefully, as there will be parents and children walking through the parking areas. **FOLLOW THE LOWER CIRCLE AREA TO THE DROP OFF AREA IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH.** Please observe directions given by security personnel.

Thank you for your cooperation in observance of the drop off and pick up procedure. The safety all children is a SERIOUS responsibility. We appreciate your patience and full cooperation in assisting with the high regard we have for the care and safety of them.

ATTENDANCE

If a child must be absent, please call the Children's Faith Formation Office at 813-949-2699. We encourage ALL students to attend AT LEAST 80% of classes, approximately 6 absences. This "80% rule" is MANDATORY for those students who are preparing to receive sacraments.

NOTE: PLEASE READ THE WEEKLY CHURCH BULLETIN AND PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED FOR EMAIL FROM CHILDRENS FAITH FORMATION. THESE ARE THE PRIMARY MEANS WE HAVE OF KEEPING YOU INFORMED.

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION POLICIES (CONTINUED)

CONDUCT

1. We will make every effort to help the students learn to participate in classroom activities without disruptive behavior. **Following three warnings, parents will be called to meet with the catechist and the Director of Children's Faith Formation to discuss a possible solution.**
2. We reserve the right to confiscate any inappropriate items during classes. These items will be returned to the student at the end of class, or if need be, to the parent.
3. **Proper church etiquette is expected from all students while on the church grounds.** This includes respect for church property, (plants, trees, playground equipment, furniture, etc.), disposing of trash in appropriate containers, and respect for one another as we are all made in God's image with dignity. **Inside the church,** proper etiquette is **using the holy water** to bless oneself with the Sign of the Cross, **bowing** when entering the church, and **observing silence and reverence** while in this holy space. **DO NOT BRING FOOD, DRINKS, GUM OR CANDY INTO THE CHURCH.**

DRESS CODE

Appropriate attire for church is to be observed for classes. Please observe the following:

NO hats inside the church or classroom space.

NO tank tops or short shorts/skirts.

NO bare backs or bare midriffs.

NO spaghetti straps or low-cut tops.

NO T-shirts with profanity, inappropriate pictures or inappropriate messages.

-

CHILDREN'S FAITH FORMATION POLICIES

FIRE, TORNADO, AND LOCK DOWN

When the fire alarm sounds, students are asked to quickly leave the church and/or classrooms in an orderly manner. Catechists will direct students where to go. In the event of a **tornado**, catechists will demonstrate the protective position and designate the safest locations. **Lock down** is conducted to keep the students safe if a dangerous or threatening situation occurs on the church grounds or in the surrounding community. During a lock down **ALL** students and staff would be locked and secured within the building. The staff would be instructed not to open the doors to anyone for any reason. Communication would be initiated by walkie-talkie or phone. The Pastor and the sheriff would be contacted regarding the situation.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

When Tropical Storms, Hurricane, or other Weather Emergencies arise, be aware we follow Pasco County weather alerts. If schools are closed, we are closed.

FAITH AND PARTICIPATION

When your child was baptized, you publicly promised to pass on the Faith to him/her. Because the Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our Catholic Faith, **Sunday participation in the Mass is essential to the Faith Formation of your child.**

We encourage parents to participate in the activities of Children's Faith Formation. Please introduce yourselves to the catechists and assistant catechists. Talk to your children about their lessons. **You are always welcome to join us in class!**

Children's Faith Formation Opportunities for Children & Youth

SUNDAY

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM – Ages 3 to 5

Young Disciples – 11:00 AM to 12:15 PM - Kindergarten, 1st Grade to 3rd Grade

LIFETEEN: Sunday Evenings, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM – Confirmation Preparation, LifeTeen

MONDAY

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – 4:45 PM to 6:00 PM – Ages 3 to 5, 6 to 8

Young Disciples – 4:45 PM to 6:00 PM - Kindergarten, 1st Grade to 3rd Grade

Kids in Christ (KIC) – 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM – 4th and 5th Grade

EDGE – 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM – 6th to 8th Grade

TUESDAY

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – 12:30 PM to 1:45 PM – Ages 3 to 5

WEDNESDAY

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – 4:45 PM to 6:00 PM – Ages 3 to 5, 6 to 8

Young Disciples – 4:45 PM to 6:00 PM - Kindergarten, 1st Grade to 5th Grade

EDGE – 4:45 PM to 6:00 PM – 6th to 8th Grade

THURSDAY

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd – 10:30 PM to 12:00 PM – Ages 3 to 5, 6 to 8

COURSE OF STUDY

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD – Level 1 Ages 3 to 5 and Level 2 Ages 6 to 8

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is a Montessori based faith formation. The children learn in a special environment called the Atrium where they can work hands-on with materials designed to deepen their understanding of liturgy and scripture. Space is limited to just 10 children per session.

Kindergarten: Alleluia! Growing and Celebrating with Jesus, Our Sunday Visitor

Kindergarten age children have vivid imaginations and are very open to new learning. As the children begin their journey, they will be introduced to God's creation of the world, animals and people, as well as an understanding of the self as part of a family. Children who participate in the Kindergarten program will receive introductory lessons to the Church, the Mass and on the life of Jesus. All while making new friends, helping others and growing, beginning their journey into their Catholic Faith. *Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be.*

1st Grade through 5th Grade: Alive in Christ, Our Sunday Visitor

The *Alive in Christ* series, which we use for our Faith Formation program, 1st Grade through 5th grade has seven central themes from the catechetical documents of the Catholic Church: Revelation, Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Church, Morality, Sacraments and the Kingdom of God. All of these remain true to the magisterium, the teaching office of the Church. This program is a spiral scope and sequence series, meaning each grade level will learn from each of these themes at their level of understanding, allowing families to grow in their faith together. Along with the seven themes, the children will also have seasonal chapters and learn about Catholic Social Teachings, hearing stories of people, communities and organizations that put faith into action and they will also respond to the challenge of living justly. Children will be working on these prayers throughout the school year:

GRADE 1: *Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition*

GRADE 2: *Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Ten Commandments.*

GRADE 3: *Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, How to pray the Rosary*

GRADE 4: *Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, How to pray the Rosary, Hail, Holy Queen, Prayer to the Holy Spirit*

GRADE 5: *Sign of the Cross, Hail Mary, Our Father, Glory Be, Act of Contrition, Ten Commandments, The Apostles' Creed, How to pray the Rosary, Hail, Holy Queen, Prayer to the Holy Spirit, Gloria*

HOME STUDY PROGRAM, My Catholic Faith Delivered, Grades 1 – 5,

This is an online program. A Home Study program is offered for students in grades one through five as an excellent alternative for families who are unable to attend the parish program due to scheduling conflicts, health concerns, transportation difficulties, or other reasons. Parents and students will be provided with the necessary materials for lessons at home through online and this group will gather on scheduled Sundays one time a month for 8 sessions of Family Faith Formation.

Kids in Christ – KIC – Grades 4-5,

This is a dynamic approach to the foundations of our catechetical documents of our Catholic Teachings. Fourth and Fifth graders will dive deep into their Catholic Faith understanding the Sacraments, the Mass and the Catholic Church. All while growing in their leadership skills. Understanding that our faith is not just going to Mass but about participation in ministry through various options.

Lenten Mission for Children – Kindergarten through 5th Grade

This is for children to deepen their understanding of Holy Week, through skits, crafts, music and prayer. Registration for this program is required.

Vacation Bible School – Pre-K through 5th Grade

This is a week-long program for our students during the evening hours of summer. This program includes skits, crafts, video, snacks, music, games and prayer. This is a very interactive program including, children, teens and adult participation.

Children’s Liturgy of the Word

All children who can sit independently are welcome to come and participate at the Saturday, 6:30 PM Mass or Sunday, 9:30 AM Mass. The children will hear the same readings and Gospel which is heard in the main Church, but a more suitable adaptation for the comprehension of the proclamation for children through various media, such as puppets, video or lecture.

Sacramental Preparation – Sacrament of Reconciliation and Sacrament of First Eucharist

This program is for students who have been baptized Catholic and have participated in Faith Formation for two years, starting in the first grade or higher. Students will be required to participate in Faith Formation along with Sacramental Preparation (in the second year). Sacramental Preparation is Family Sessions, parents and students must attend seven sessions including Orientation, Two Reconciliation Sessions, Four First Holy Communion Sessions. Readiness is determined by the parent and priest/deacon.

Please contact the Children’s Faith Formation Department with any

questions or concerns at:

813-949-2699



What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd?

Level 1 ages 3-5, Level 2 ages 6-8

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was developed in 1954 by Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi. These two amazing ladies developed this program by integrating the methods and insights of Maria Montessori by using hands-on, developmentally appropriate materials that put the Scriptures and lessons into the hands of the child with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This program continues to grow throughout the nations and the world. Each Catechist must go through very detailed training in order to be certified to teach in the Atrium. Volunteers who wish to assist in the classroom do not need the formal training but will undergo some basic training to understand what is happening in the classroom.

During our time together in the “Atrium”, the classroom which is prepared for the age, the development and the religious needs of the child, they will work with various materials this may include Practical Life Exercises, Sacred Scripture through presentations from the Catechist, Prayer, and the Liturgical Calendar.

What is a Presentation? The catechist will sit with a small group of children to proclaim the Biblical text (we use the New American Bible as this is what the child will hear in the readings at Mass). The catechist will bring out manipulatives (dioramas or materials), identifying them for the children and uses them appropriately during the solemn reading of the Scripture. The child is then introduced and invited to do personal work following the presentation.

What are Practical Life Exercises? Practical Life Exercises foster independence, help the child in his/her development, concentration and contemplation, and teach care for self, others and the environment. These exercises serve as a foundation for the other works found within the Atrium.

Child’s Paperwork: Each child has a folder in which they keep their papers. Twice per year we usually give the papers to parents (Christmas Break/End of Year). Please do not expect paperwork after each session, since one of the key Montessori principles is the process and not the end product.

Mass: Parents and children are encouraged to attend regular Sunday Mass, as the children need to experience Mass in order to make the connection in the Atrium for their work.

Calendar: The Atrium follows the liturgical seasons of the Catholic Church, but we also have a yearly calendar for class dates and times.

Attendance: Regular attendance in the Atrium is vital. Each child works at their own pace, so each week builds on the next. Please be consistent with their attendance. Please understand that if your child is ill they should stay home.

Arrival: Before arriving to the Atrium please be sure children have had a snack and gone to the bathroom. Please remember to remind your child to use their Atrium voice and walk in the Atrium, just like at church, as it is a reverent environment of prayer. Arrival time is very important as to not disrupt group presentations.

Absences: Please call the Children's Faith Formation Office at 813-949-2699 if your child will be absent. Please leave a message with your child's first and last name, which session they attend and a call back number you can be reached in case we need to call you.

How to determine if your child is ready to join the Atrium:

- Can/Does your child follow simple directions?
- Can/Does your child communicate in simple sentences?
- Can/Does your child transition from one activity to another easily?
- Can/Does your child interact with other children?
- Does your child separate from you easily?
- Is your child completely potty trained?
- Is your child able to care for their bathroom needs without assistance?

Please know that this program works with very small classroom sizes. Level 1 is allowed only 10 children per Atrium and Level 2 is only allowed 12 children. Some children develop quickly and may move up to some Level 2 items prior to age 6. Every child is an individual and will be treated as such.

As parents, we all want to know what our children are learning. Because of the uniqueness of this program not every child works on the same project when they are in the Atrium, as we may have 10-12 children in the classroom and there will be 10-12 different works happening simultaneously. So here are a few suggestions for you to ask your child about their time spent in the Atrium:

- What did you hear in the Atrium today?
- What material did you work with today?
- Did you enjoy your time with God today?



Welcome! Bringing your child to the Church for Baptism and or First Holy Communion is one of the most important and potentially life-changing steps you have ever taken as a parent. We rejoice that you have brought your child to the Church to learn more about God and the Catholic way of life.

We believe this step is just one of the many steps you and your child will take together in your journey of faith. And, we strongly believe that God's Holy Spirit is guiding you throughout this wondrous journey.

Now that you have brought your child, let us talk in more detail about how the Church prepares children to receive Baptism and or First Holy Communion. The Journey, the Church's name for this journey, that leads to Baptism and Eucharist is RCIA.

RCIA stands for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults adapted for children. The RCIA is the Church's way of preparing your child to receive his or her Sacrament. We call it a journey of faith because it's not just some classes where we teach your child about the Catholic Church. Instead, we walk with you and your child together as you deepen your relationship with God and learn about the Scriptures, traditions, and teachings of the Catholic Church.

Here are a few helpful things to know about this journey of faith that we call RCIA.

1. Parents Accompany the Child

Imagine sending your child on a magnificent journey where she or he learned amazing truths and grew and developed and changed. You would want to be a part of it, wouldn't you? Well, that's exactly why we ask you to accompany your child on this journey of faith. On this pathway, called RCIA, your child will grow in his or her understanding of God, the Scriptures, and the Church. She or he will develop a deeper relationship with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. This spiritual growth and development is a type of "conversion," albeit a conversion that is appropriate for a child. The conversion is to the person of Jesus Christ. And we ask that you, the parent, be a part of that conversion journey. Our hope is that your child will "fall in love with Jesus" and want to become his disciple. We also hope that RCIA will be a positive, faith-enriching experience for you. Becoming a follower of Jesus is a main goal of the RCIA process, and it is important that you accompany your child as he or she learns what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of His Church.

2. It's a Gradual Process

Learning how to be a follower of Jesus takes time. The RCIA is a gradual process that varies according to the needs and religious history of your child. Some children and their families may have a well-developed relationship with God and an in-depth understanding of the Scriptures. Others may need more time to learn the stories of the Bible and the traditions of the Church. Whatever your story, we take time to get to know you and your child.

3. What's the process?

Your child will be enrolled in our **Young Disciples Program** to be with their peers and begin a relationship with them and their teachers. They will meet weekly with that group (please see Young Disciples Calendar). Please **register** for Young Disciples.

Your child will also be enrolled in our RCIA adapted for children program in which they will meet monthly **accompanied by a parent** to prepare for their Sacraments. Please **register** also for RCIA adapted for children.

Please contact Deacon Frank & Kathy DeSanto today!
We'd love to discuss any particular questions you may have
and share more information with you:

(813)536-0988 or email kathyd@ladyrosary.org

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Baptism

Any student **age 7 to 17 that has not been baptized or baptized in another faith and has not previously attended any Catholic classes in religious education**, must attend two (2) years of RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation adapted for Teens or Children). After satisfactory completion of the two years in either process, the students will receive Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation/evaluation from the priest.) **For more information please contact Deacon Frank & Kathy DeSanto: (813) 949-4565**

**A copy of the child/student's Baptismal certificate is required
for First Communion and Confirmation.**

First Reconciliation / First Communion

All children who attend first and second grade and are baptized Catholic are preparing to receive First Reconciliation and First Communion at the end of second grade. These sacraments can be administered in the second grade or older. **Requirements include: a copy of the Baptism certificate** (upon registration for classes), **80% attendance** in both the first grade and the second grade years. Also required is attendance of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Preparation Sessions (offered at a separate time from the regular Faith Formation classes), and TWO scheduled interviews with one of our parish priests or deacons; one interview prior to First Reconciliation and one interview prior to First Holy Communion. Parents are required to take their child for First Reconciliation following a successful interview with one of our parish priests or deacons. **Contact Connie Whittington at 813-949-2699 for more information.**

Confirmation

Students in high school are eligible to receive Confirmation.

Please contact Chris McBride, 813-949-7331, for further information.

Baptized students who require First Reconciliation, First Communion and/or Confirmation

A student age 8 through 13 (elementary or middle school age) who requires First Reconciliation and First Communion **and HAS BEEN BAPTIZED CATHOLIC** but has **NOT** attended any Catholic Faith Formation will attend class and meet with **Deacon Frank and Kathy DeSanto: 813-949-4565.**

IMPORTANT PRAYERS EVERY CATHOLIC SHOULD KNOW

SIGN OF THE CROSS: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

OUR FATHER: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. AMEN.

HAIL MARY: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. AMEN.

GLORY BE: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. World without end. AMEN.

ACT OF CONTRITION: My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy. AMEN.

GRACE BEFORE MEALS: Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your bounty. Through Christ, our Lord. AMEN.

APOSTLES' CREED: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. AMEN.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GO TO RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Before going to reconciliation, each person should examine his/her conscience carefully, to see where he/she has sinned.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross
2. Say, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned.
3. CONFESS YOUR SINS.
4. The priest will give you a PENANCE to do. He may tell you to say some prayers, or do a good deed. You will need to do these things right after you have left the RECONCILIATION ROOM.
5. Say the ACT OF CONTRITION.
6. The priest will give you ABSOLUTION. This is a long prayer of forgiveness, which ends with the words, "I absolve you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
7. Say, "Thank you Father."
8. Leave the RECONCILIATION ROOM and DO YOUR PENANCE right away.

ACRE ASSESSMENT OF CATECHESIS/FAITH FORMATION

The NCEA (National Catholic Educational Association) offers an assessment instrument designed to strengthen catechetical/Faith Formation programs. ACRE (Assessment of Catechesis/Faith Formation) helps parish and diocesan leaders evaluate the faith knowledge and questions related to religious beliefs, attitudes, practices, and perceptions of students in parish –based religious education programs. **The NCEA ACRE is a multilevel, age appropriate tool used in grade 5 (Level 1), and grade 8 (Level 2).**

NCEA ACRE Content Specifications-based on six Domains and Key Concepts:

- Knowledge of the Faith
- Liturgical Life
- Moral Formation
- Prayer
- Communal Life
- Missionary Spirit

NCEA ACRE reports on a set of seven graphic summaries:

- Relationship with Jesus
- Images of God
- Catholic Identity
- Morality
- Relationship with Others
- Perception about Parish Religious Education Program

The ACRE is administered in the spring. NCEA partners with Computerized Assessments & Learning (CA&L) in Lawrence, Kansas, in delivering the student portions of the assessment process. CA&L handles all orders and prepares the score reports for the NCEA IFG: ACRE edition.

As a result of the assessment, we know that the students in the Faith Formation program at Our Lady of the Rosary Church have a highly positive attitude toward their religious education experience. Their faith knowledge compared to the national norms is average to above average. The report indicates areas for improvement at both levels (5th and 8th grade). However, we must keep in mind that the results are not a measure of what is learned in just 5th and 8th grades, it is a cumulative growth throughout their Faith Formation.

LOOKING TO SHARE YOUR TIME AND TALENT?

The Children's Faith Formation program at Our Lady of the Rosary offers several opportunities for parish ministry. If you feel that God is calling you to serve His people in one of the following ministries, **please call the Children's Faith Formation Office, 813-949-2699.**

CATECHIST. A catechist is trained to pass on the living faith. If you have the faith and feel a desire to pass it on to the young disciples of our parish, God may be calling you to the exciting ministry of catechist. We will provide training and materials for you, as well as offer ongoing support and training.

ASSISTANT CATECHIST. This person assists the catechist in a variety of ways including: attendance, class activities, providing special attention to those young disciples who need it, and occasionally filling in for the catechist, when necessary.

FLOATER SUBSTITUTE: This person is here on a consistent basis and assists the catechist and assistant in a variety of ways including attendance, class activities, craft projects and other duties as needed. This person may "float" from class to class depending on the need of the catechists for the session time.

KIDS IN CHRIST CORE MEMBER. This person is here weekly to assist 4th and 5th graders along their journey to know Jesus, must have a desire to pass on their faith, and be willing to work with small groups.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS. Our catechists need parents and teenagers who are willing to assist with occasional craft projects, testing the young disciples on their knowledge of prayers and other special activities.

SECURITY VOLUNTEERS: Security volunteers patrol the property during classes, check the classrooms before and after classes, and help monitor traffic while the young disciples are going to and from classes.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: Our VBS is held for one week in the summer for young disciples between the ages of 4 and 10. Young disciples age 11 (who has completed 6th grade) and over are welcome to help with the various group activities: Storytelling, Music, Crafts and Snacks. The young disciples have a lot of fun while learning about the Bible and our Catholic Faith.

LITURGY OF THE WORD FOR CHILDREN: We invite parents and High School teens to assist us with this ministry of presenting the Word of God to young disciples age 10 and under, during the Saturday 6:30 PM Spanish Mass and Sunday 9:30 AM Mass. Adults and teens are also invited to assist as supervisors, as we attract a large group of young disciples.

YOUTH MINISTRY: Our **LIFETEEN** ministry for High School Teens meets Sunday evenings, 6:30 PM – 8:15 PM. The **EDGE** is for 7th and 8th grade students who meet Monday evenings, 6:30 – 8:00 PM and/or Wednesday 4:45 PM – 6:00 PM. Both groups are always looking for volunteers either as Small Group leaders, Core members, security volunteers who assist with food service for LIFETEEN. If interested, call Chris McBride or Patricia Ikhwan in the Youth Ministry office at 813-949-7331.

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

SAFE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAM

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Office of Child and Youth Protection require that every diocese adhere to specified mandates in presenting the safest and most secure settings possible as our young people worship, study, or participate in activities we sponsor.

Parents, clergy, educators, church personnel, **volunteers** and others regularly involved with minors **must** be trained in recognizing, reporting and preventing child abuse, including sexual abuse.

This training is **online** through the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Volunteers must be re-certified every five years in the Safe Environment training program as required by the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

ELECTRONIC FINGERPRINTING

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires all volunteers age 18 and above to be electronically fingerprinted through the diocese. There are several locations throughout the diocese for volunteers to go for fingerprinting. Electronic fingerprinting for the Diocese of St. Petersburg must be renewed every five years.

Please contact the Office at 813-949-4565 for the area you are interested in volunteering and they will direct you to the proper department.



Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

(Revised and Approved July 2017)

INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of St. Petersburg is committed to the well-being of those served by the Church. The People of God have a right to be able to trust those who minister to them in God's name. The violation of this trust through Sexual Abuse by any Church Personnel is a source of great physical, mental and emotional pain for those involved and for the entire Church community. The Diocese published its first policy for the protection of Children and Youth on June 10, 1991, which required both Employees and Volunteers who work with Children and Youth in any parish or Catholic School program to complete written employment or Covered Volunteer applications respectively for service with accompanying references. Beginning April 15, 1992, the diocese required background screening and fingerprinting of all Employees who have the care, responsibility, and/or supervision of Children and Youth.

In July 1997, the Province of Miami required all dioceses to add Vulnerable Adults to the protected classes of Children and Young People. Background screening, reference checking, fingerprinting, and written employment and Covered Volunteer applications were now required of those desiring to work or volunteer with Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults. In November of 2001, contractors and vendors were added to the list of those requiring background screening. In June 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (Charter)*, which required background screening and Safe Environment Program training for all who may have the care, responsibility, and/or supervision of Children and young people. The USCCB obtained confirmation by the Holy See for the *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies* dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by priests or deacons in November 2002.

The Diocese of St. Petersburg revised its policy to comply with the *Charter* and the *Essential Norms* in December 2002 and again in May 2006 in response to the first revision of the *Charter* in 2005. The diocese publishes this revision as a response to the second revision of the *Charter* in 2011 and of its current policy as part of a continuing commitment to its pastoral responsibilities and to the gospel. This revised policy in combination with procedures and guidelines provides for the implementation and enforcement of a safe environment for our Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults.

POLICY AND SCOPE

Policy to Protect. The Bishop of the Diocese of St. Petersburg will make every reasonable effort to prevent Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults, and to respond promptly to all credible Allegations of abuse. As such, the Diocese of St. Petersburg will comply with all obligations of civil and canon law and will promote healing where it is needed, provide education, training and guidance when it is appropriate, and endeavor to prevent any Sexual Abuse of Minors and

Vulnerable Adults with firm justice and mercy towards all. No person, including Clergy, who has been determined to have engaged in Sexual Abuse of a Minor or

Vulnerable Adult, will be allowed to remain in active ministry. Such actions violate Christian principles and are outside the scope of duties and employment of all Church Personnel. The diocese will not tolerate such behavior. This policy applies to all diocesan entities and their

Contractors and Vendors to include parishes, schools, early childhood centers, and associated activities within the diocese. Care will always be taken to protect the rights of all parties involved, particularly those of the person claiming to have been sexually abused and the person against whom the charge has been made. When the accusation has been proved to be unfounded, every reasonable step will be taken to restore the good name of the person falsely accused.

Policy to Respond to Allegations. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will respond promptly to any Allegation where there is reason to believe that Sexual Abuse of a Minor has occurred. The diocese will utilize an objective outside investigator to investigate any such Allegations. The diocese will maintain a Victim Assistance Minister to coordinate assistance for the immediate pastoral care of persons who report Sexual Abuse incidents that occurred when they were Minors by Clergy or other Church Personnel. The procedures for those making a complaint are readily available on the Internet via the Diocese of St. Petersburg website at <http://www.dosp.org/safe-environment/how-to-file-an-abuse-complaint/>

I. **Toll Free Contact Number for the Diocesan Victim Assistance Minister: 1-866-407-4505**

Policy to Report. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will report an Allegation of Sexual Abuse of a person who is a Minor or Vulnerable Adult to the appropriate civil authorities. The diocese will comply with all applicable civil laws with respect to the reporting of Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults and will cooperate in the civil authorities' investigation in accord with Florida state law^[i]. The diocese will cooperate with civil authorities about reporting cases even when the alleged victim is no longer a Minor. In every instance, the diocese will advise those who allege abuse of their right to make a report to civil authorities and support this right.

Call in all reports of actual or suspected abuse to the local law enforcement agency (911) or to the state Department of Children and Families (DCF) Abuse Hotline Registry: 1-800-96ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). Any person who knows or suspects child abuse, abandonment, or neglect and who knowingly and willfully fails to do so, or who knowingly and willfully prevents another person from doing so, commits a felony of the third degree, punishable by one year in jail and a \$5,000 fine.

Policy on the Diocesan Review Board. The Diocese of St. Petersburg Diocesan Review Board functions as a confidential consultative body to the bishop. The majority of its members will be lay persons not in the employ of the diocese in accordance with *Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons, 2006*. This board will assist the Diocesan Bishop in assessing Allegations and fitness for ministry, and will regularly review Diocesan Policies and Procedures for dealing with Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults. Also, the Board can act both retrospectively and

prospectively on these matters and give advice on all aspects of responses required in connection with these cases.

Policy on Removal of a Priest or Deacon from Ministry. Sexual Abuse of a Minor by a cleric is a crime in the universal law of the Church (*CIC*, c. 1395 §2; *CCEO*, c. 1453 §1). Those who habitually lack the use of reason, regardless of age, are to be equated with Minors (*CIC*, c.99). The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (Motu proprio, *Sanctissimum sacramento sanctitatis tutela*, 2001, revised 2010) has reserved this jurisdiction because of the seriousness of this matter. Even after a single act of Sexual Abuse of a Minor— whenever it occurred—which is admitted or established after an appropriate process in accord with canon law and the *Essential Norms*, the offending priest or deacon is to be permanently removed from ministry and, if warranted, dismissed from the clerical state. If an Allegation of Sexual Abuse of a Minor is made against the bishop, the Apostolic Nuncio shall be notified and the investigation shall proceed according to his direction. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will follow the requirements of the universal law of the Church and the *Essential Norms* approved by the USCCB, along with all state and federal laws concerning the protection of Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

Policy on the Standards of Ministerial Behavior. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will maintain standards of ministerial behavior and appropriate boundaries for Clergy and for any other paid personnel and Volunteers of the church in positions of trust who have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. This policy can be viewed on the diocesan website at <http://www.dosp.org/safe-environment/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/Practical-Standards-of-Professional-Responsibility-for-Priests-.pdf>

Policy on Communications. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will be open and transparent in communicating with parish, other church communities, and the public about Sexual Abuse of Minors and Vulnerable Adults within the confines of respect for the privacy and the reputation of the individuals involved.

Policy on Distribution. A copy of this policy will be distributed to all diocesan entities in printed form for posting to the general public. This policy will also be posted on the diocesan website at

- I. <http://www.dosp.org/safe-environment/policy-for-the-protection-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults/>

Policy on Background Screening. The Diocese of St. Petersburg require that all Church Personnel, candidates for ordination, Contractors, and Vendors who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of Children undergo a Level 2 FDLE/FBI Criminal History Background Screening, currently using the Volunteer, Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) and must meet the Diocese of St. Petersburg Minimum Standards of Moral Conduct. Employees must also receive a Level 2 background check as a condition of employment. The Safe Environment Program Office is responsible for administering the background screening function for the diocese.

The FBI requires that background checks only be used for the purpose intended. Therefore, the diocese does not accept FBI background checks or background checks run by other entities for other purposes. The diocese does not accept proof of Level 2 background checks or letters from

other entities certifying a Level 2 background check. All Church Personnel, candidates for ordination, Contractors and Vendors who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of Children will be required to undergo a Criminal History Background Screening conducted by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) and the FBI Volunteer & Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) every five years. Church Personnel who move from one entity to another within the Diocese of St. Petersburg with no break in service must submit a personal request in writing to the Safe Environment Program Office asking that proof of his or her background check be transferred from the losing entity to the gaining entity or entities. If there is a break in service, a re-screening must take place.

Background Screening Reports and Clearance Letters for employees and covered volunteers will be secured in locked containers at the respective parishes, schools, or other diocesan entities. Only the parish pastor, the school principal, diocesan entity head or their specifically-authorized delegates will have access to these records.

Copies of Contractor Criminal History Records and Background Screening Reports will be kept on file and secured at the Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office. Contractor/vendor employers will only receive clearance or non-clearance letters for their employees.

Policy on the Diocesan Safe Environment Program (SEP) Training. Under Article 12 of the *Charter*, the Safe Environment Program Office is responsible for the administration of Safe Environment Program Training. The Diocese of St. Petersburg will require SEP training of all Church Personnel, Contractors, Vendors, and candidates for ordination who may have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults. These individuals must complete the required SEP training, which is offered online. This training expires five years from the initial date of training and also qualifies the recipient for employment or volunteer ministries which involve the care, responsibility, or supervision of Vulnerable Adults. SEP training re-certification is required every 5 years thereafter.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound and Pastoral Care Providers who wish to have the care, responsibility, and or supervision of Vulnerable Adults must complete the online Safe Environment Program, in addition to the training required for those who exercise this ministry. This training expires 5 years from the initial date of training and also qualifies the recipient for employment or volunteer ministries which involve the care, responsibility, or supervision of Children. SEP re-certification is required every 5 years thereafter. The diocese does not accept safe environment program training from other archdioceses, dioceses or eparchies because state laws, policies, procedures, and program jargon differ. Individuals coming into the Diocese of St. Petersburg must complete the online Safe Environment Program training. The Safe Environment Program Office will oversee training and education in cooperation with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations. It will require education and training for Children, Youth, parents, ministers, educators, Volunteers, Contractors and Vendors to make and maintain a safe environment for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults.

The Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office is also responsible for maintaining a central database that will track the training and background screening status on all program participants. Appropriate staff members of parishes, schools and other diocesan entities are to inform those persons requiring 5-year recertification training prior to the expiration of their 5-year certification period.

Definitions:

Adult: An individual who is 18 years or older and who is no longer in high school.

Allegation: A statement or accusation of abuse, especially Sexual Abuse.

Care, Responsibility and or Supervision: Unsupervised access by members of the Clergy and/or Religious Institutes, Seminarians, Lay Persons, Employees, Covered Volunteers, Vendors or Contractors to any Child or Vulnerable Adult participating in any ministry or activity of the Diocese or any parish, school or other diocesan entity. This includes clergy, members of religious institutes, seminarians and lay persons.

Child, Youth, or Minor: A person less than eighteen (18) years of age unless emancipated by law. Minors and the combined term “Children and Youth” are used interchangeably.

Church Personnel shall mean all of the following:

Clergy: All priests and deacons who possess or desire faculties for ministry in the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

Contractors and Vendors: This class of persons shall be understood for purposes of this policy and in accordance with the VECHS User Agreement to include Contractors, Vendors, Licensees, Consultants, and Memo of Understanding (MOU) personnel who have unsupervised access to Children, disabled or elderly persons for whom the diocese provides care, responsibility and/or supervision.

Covered Volunteer: Any unpaid person who is engaged or involved in any diocesan institution or parish activity, and who is entrusted with the care, responsibility, or supervision of Children or Vulnerable Adults. Covered Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older and are not in high school. Individuals younger than 18 years old are not permitted to assume the primary care, responsibility and/or supervision of Children, Youth or Vulnerable Adults, although they may be permitted to assist an adult who meets the criteria to do so.

Criminal History Background Screening: An investigation of an individual’s background that may be contained in the public record to include municipal, county, state, federal law enforcement, Social Security and state driving records. The Diocese currently conducts its screening through VECHS but reserves the right to use other third-party professionals.

Employee: Any lay individual who is employed by or engaged in ministry with the Diocese, Parish, School or other entity affiliated with the Diocese of St. Petersburg, who receives compensation for services (regardless of form) rendered in which the obligation to withhold for payroll tax (FICA, Medicare, and withholding) exists, whether part-time or full-time. All Employees, even those under 18 years of age (14 – 17 years of age) are subject to background screening as a condition of employment. Parental consent is not required in the state of Florida to sign the FDLE VECHS Waiver/Agreement. “Personnel” as defined herein, has reference only to

the applicability of this policy and is not indicative of any agency or employment relationship between the diocese and the party whose compliance with this policy is sought.

Pastoral Care Providers: Volunteers who are entrusted with the care, responsibility and supervision of any Child or Vulnerable Adult, who provide various types of service and assistance to the sick and shut-in as a form of ministry. Types of ministry-in-service may include but are not limited to Vehicle Drivers, Errand Runners, Bereavement Ministers, Care Givers, Pastoral Ministers, Health Ministers, Helping with Chores, etc.

Qualified Entity: The Diocese of St. Petersburg is a Qualified Entity within the FDLE Employee, Volunteer Criminal History System (VECHS).

Sexual Abuse: Any act as defined by Chapter 39 and Chapter 415 of the Florida Statutes.

Vulnerable Adult: A person as defined by Chapter 39 of the Florida Statutes.

End notes:

[1] The statutory confidentiality of privileged communications established in Section 90.505, F.S., shall be observed when applicable to all reporting required under this paragraph. Section 90.505, F.S. establishes a privilege with respect to communications to Clergy, if made privately for the purposes of seeking spiritual counsel and advice from a member of the Clergy in the usual course of practice or discipline and not intended for further disclosure.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

Diocesan Victim Assistance Minister (toll-free):	(866) 407-4505
Diocesan Safe Environment Program Office:	(727) 344-1611, ext. 5377
Florida Department of Children & Families	
Abuse Hotline Registry (toll-free):	(800) 962-2873
Local Law Enforcement Agency:	911

**Harassment Policy for Non-Employment Situations in
Schools/Centers, Parish Religious Education and Parish Youth Ministry
Programs of the Diocese of St. Petersburg**

POLICY:

The Diocese of St. Petersburg requires that each parish, Catholic school or early childhood center establish and adopt this policy that prohibits any form of harassment by any individual. The Diocese of St. Petersburg strives for the establishment of a Christian, professional and supportive educational environment for all persons engaged in or involved with religious education programs, schools and early childhood centers, and parish youth ministry programs in non-employment situations. No parish, school, or early childhood center will be responsible for off campus harassment, unless it occurs at a parish-, school-, or early childhood center-sponsored event.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY:

The policy intends:

- that each individual is free from physical, psychological or verbal intimidation and harassment in the schools, early childhood centers, religious education and youth ministry settings;
- that each individual involved in schools, early childhood centers, religious education and youth ministry programs maintain and further develop attitudes and behaviors which express respect for others and are reflective of each persons' God-given dignity;
- to encourage a heightened sensitivity toward behaviors that others may find offensive and intimidating, whether these behaviors refer to race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, familial status, veteran status or disability.

This policy is not intended to otherwise limit the expectation of staff, children, students and volunteers to engage fully in the traditions of teaching, celebrating, participating in and being formed by the Catholic faith, including but not limited to curriculum, catechesis, the Sacraments, other liturgies, worship services and ministries.

EXPLANATION OF HARASSMENT:

Harassment can result from a single incident or from a pattern of behavior involving verbal, written or physical conduct or communication.

Harassment encompasses a broad range of behaviors, which could include, but are not limited to:

1. Physical, mental or verbal abuse
2. Insults, jokes, or derogatory slurs based on one or more of an individual's protected status(es)
3. Unwelcome sexual advances or touching
4. Implicit or explicit requests for sexual favors
5. Unwanted sexual comments (serious or humorous)
6. Unwanted sexually suggestive telephone calls, letters, e-mail, etc.
7. Comments or jokes based on issues of modesty and developing social awareness
8. Unwanted forced involvement in activities (e.g., physical, religious, etc.)
9. Coercion of religious styles or personal beliefs upon a participant
10. Intimidation in front of a group of forced personal sharing in groups
11. Inappropriate media or music use which would violate this policy

CONFIDENTIALITY:

The right to confidentiality, both of the complainant and of the accused, will be respected to the extent possible, but will be consistent with legal obligations and with the necessity to investigate allegations of misconduct and to take corrective action when this conduct has occurred.

**Please fill out and return the
Parent/Student Parish Faith Formation Policy and Safe Environment
Acknowledgement Form along with your registration packet.**