



Family Faith Formation Handbook

Family Faith Formation Mission Statement

The Family Faith Formation program at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish is dedicated to providing adults, youth, and children with the knowledge, experiences and skills necessary to become faithful and fruitful disciples of Jesus. In keeping with their age, they will assume responsibility as vital members of the parish and be able to participate in the Church's mission to proclaim, celebrate and serve.

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OVERVIEW OF OLOL FAMILY FAITH FORMATION (FFF)

The Our Lady of Lourdes Family Faith Formation program is for all adults and children registered in OLOL parish. Family Faith Formation is the practice of exploring, strengthening, and developing our belief in God and the way of leading our lives here on earth. Our faith should never reach final completion but should always be in a process of rejuvenation and growth. Family Faith Formation is continually striving to help each individual to grow spiritually.

ELEMENTARY LEVEL (PRE-K THROUGH 5TH GRADE)

Our textbook series, God Made Everything series is a comprehensive kindergarten program [Loyola Press] and Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts [Loyola Press] Grades 1-5 are based on a spiral curriculum that integrates the fundamental themes of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. This comprehensive program provides sound doctrine, Scripture, Tradition, and prayer through experiential activities that make these essential lessons part of a lifelong practice of faith. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen.

The God's Gift series [Loyola Press] is also used for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist Sacramental Preparation Sessions. This sacramental preparation program offers meaningful experiences that pass on the truth and beauty of our Catholic faith and of the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist to children and their families. These fully integrated programs engage children's hearts and minds through prayer opportunities, interactive elements, beautiful commissioned artwork, and practical parent resources.

JUNIOR HIGH LEVEL (6TH GRADE THROUGH 8TH GRADE)

Junior High Youth Ministry will be mirroring the structure of High School Youth Group with the vision to bring youth closer to Christ by fostering a personal relationship with Him and His Church. We strive to accomplish this through Wednesday night Family Faith Formation sessions, also known as Junior High Youth Nights. The format is presented with all of grades 6-8 meeting together in a large group in the Grotto Room of Madonna Hall. We follow a four-part program of Gather, Proclaim, Break and Send with fun games, interesting teachings, inspiring group discussions, and experiential prayer.

In addition to the Youth Nights we have many opportunities to pray together and play together through weekend retreats, conferences, summer camps, Christian concerts, social events, and service projects.

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL (9TH GRADE THROUGH 12TH GRADE)

The Youth Ministry vision is to bring youth closer to Christ by fostering and deepening a personal relationship with Him and His Church, while forming and strengthening them to become leaders in their lives and communities. We strive to accomplish this through Wednesday night Family Faith Formation sessions, also known as Youth Nights. The format is presented with all of grades 9-12 meeting together in a large group in the Upper Room of Madonna Hall. We follow a four-part program of Gather, Proclaim, Break and Send with fun games, interesting teachings, inspiring group discussions, and experiential prayer. The High School Program will be more in depth and focused on making the Faith our own and learning to share that Faith with others. In addition to the Youth Nights we have many opportunities to pray together and play together through weekend retreats, conferences, summer camps, Christian concerts, social events, service projects, and leadership opportunities.

ADULT LEVEL

In today's Church, more and more people realize the tremendous need to be Christians who are in lifelong faith formation. Our faith is not fully mature when we are confirmed or graduate high school. Our faith journey is a lifelong one and requires religious education through which we grow in our relationship with God and others.

Throughout the year various programs are offered for adults. Bible study, speakers, sacramental preparation, liturgical themed presentations, etc. take place during the year. Please check the church bulletins for information or call the parish office.

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION POLICIES

These Family Faith Formation policies provide the directions for admission, registration, class times, drop-off and pick-up procedures, attendance, tardiness, dress code, code of conduct, respect for school property, and discipline. Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church Family Faith Formation Program reserves the right to amend these policies as necessary to meet the requirements for effective religious education in the best interests of the parents, their children and the Church. We will notify parents in writing if changes are made to any policies and procedures during the school year.

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

To be admitted to our Family Faith Formation programs, the parents or guardians of each child must be registered parishioners of Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

Follow the steps below to register your children:

- Family must be registered in Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. A registration form may be obtained from the parish office and on the parish website.
- A registration form (one per family) and the attached medical/consent/liability waiver form must be filled out to attend the Family Faith Formation sessions. Please, fill out forms completely and accurately.
- A Baptismal certificate is needed for any child celebrating First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, or Confirmation. If your child was not baptized at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, a copy of the Baptismal certificate is needed by the Parent Orientation Meeting. We must use the child's name as it appears on the Baptismal certificate.
- Parents of children and youth who will celebrate First Reconciliation (Confession), First Eucharist (Communion) or Confirmation should check the Sunday bulletin or call the parish office to see when the additional preparation classes meet for each of these sacraments.
- There is a \$30.00 book fee per child. If there is a financial need, there are scholarships available.
- Registration forms are available on the tables at the back the Church, and in Our Lady of Lourdes Website. Please complete and turn in by mail, e-mail, place in the collection basket at the back of the Church during Mass or placed in the drop box outside the parish office or mail it to the parish office. *Make sure you fill out the Consent and Liability Waiver Form.* Online registration is available at ololchurch.org/online-registration

CLASS TIMES

Family Faith Formation classes for all grades are held on Wednesday from 6:00 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.

First Eucharist and First Reconciliation sacramental preparation classes will be held on Sunday evenings as scheduled. Confirmation II Preparation classes will be held one Sunday each month, usually a daytime session. Refer to the Family Faith Formation Calendar or the weekly church bulletin for the exact times and dates. A copy of the "Family Faith Formation Handbook" can be found on the Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church website, ololchurch.org. Hard copies are available upon request.

CHILDREN FAITH FORMATION PROCESS

Collaboration among, staff, catechists and parents is important. Each week your child may be asked to do a home assignment (i.e. daily prayers, reading, or other homework activity). Please contact your child's catechist (teacher) if you have questions or need more information. Open a dialogue with your child's catechist to become more involved with sharing your child's religious education. You, as parents, provide the most and best examples of spirituality for your child.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Parents and guardians of sacramental candidates (First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation) will receive reminder notices for upcoming events. These reminders will be sent home with the students and will be posted in the Sunday church bulletin and Our Lady of Lourdes Flocknote.

Note: All Sacramental preparation classes missed must be made up.

No more than one sacramental class may be missed to remain in this year's program.

FIRST RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) AND FIRST EUCHARIST (HOLY COMMUNION)

The celebration of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist occur during the second-grade year for students who have been baptized. Older students who have not received either of these sacraments are eligible if they have been baptized.

Sacramental preparation is the responsibility of the parent. To aid you in this process, a parent orientation meeting and three sacramental preparation classes for First Reconciliation will be presented. For First Eucharist a parent orientation meeting and three preparation classes will be presented. Refer to the calendar on Our Lady of Lourdes website or a hard copy will be provided for the scheduled times and dates. The parent/parents or an approved designated adult and the child must attend these classes. Older candidates will also be required to complete the same take home materials with a parent/approved adult. These materials are designed to help everyone prepare to receive each sacrament.

CONFIRMATION

“Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace” for “by the Sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit...” [Cf. Roman Ritual, Rite of Confirmation (OC), Introduction 1] [LG 11; OC Introduction 2].

At Our Lady of Lourdes, we have three levels of Confirmation preparation:

Confirmation I: 9th grade year, or first year attending High School Faith Formation/Youth Nights. The youth spend this year exploring their faith and getting ready for immediate Confirmation preparation the following year. Candidates are expected to attend 80% of Youth Nights in order to qualify to participate in Confirmation Year II. In a typical semester, this means youth are allowed to miss no more than 2 Youth Nights. At least one retreat in 9th grade focused on building community in Christ is also required.

Confirmation II: 10th grade year, or second year attending High School Faith Formation/Youth Nights. Candidates spend this year in immediate preparation for the Sacrament. The Sacrament of Confirmation “involves God sealing the relationship (introduced at Baptism) with the strength needed to live out the calling to build God’s Kingdom as a disciple of Jesus within the Body of Christ” [Diocesan Confirmation Guidelines, 5]. With parents and sponsors serving as the beginning foundation for Confirmation, preparation is achieved with full and active participation in the following areas:

- Sunday Liturgies
- Retreats (weekend and Summer Retreats)
- Confirmation Sessions
- Youth Nights
- Service Projects
- Community Conferences/Retreats
- Liturgical Rituals
- Holy Week Service

Teens in 10th grade or older are invited to participate in Confirmation II if they have attended 80% of the previous year’s Youth Nights and have been baptized, celebrated First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Through Confirmation preparation, candidates have the personal responsibility to choose to complete initiation into the faith life of the Church by meeting all necessary guidelines to receive the Sacrament.

Confirmation III: Post Confirmation, 11th - 12th grade years, or 3rd/4th year attending High School Faith Formation/Youth Nights. Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation is not the end – it’s the beginning! The

Confirmed youth spend these two years in leadership roles while growing deeper in faith. During these two years youth can be a leader by helping with Confirmation I and II, Children's Faith Formation, Youth Nights, music ministry, hospitality ministers, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (if 18 years old).

Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation. Our hope is that this Confirmation process will aid our youth in accepting the call to be active members of the Catholic community and to live as disciples of Jesus Christ.

NON-BAPTIZED CHILDREN (7 YEARS OR OLDER)

The Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) for Children is a program designed for children seven years or older who have not been baptized and wish to become Catholic. Sacramental preparation sessions are held prior to the scheduled sacrament dates for those children who desire to be baptized Catholic. Both the child and their parent(s), or an approved designated adult must attend each session, plus the child is required to be enrolled in and attending at least 80% of the regular Family Faith Formation weekly sessions. Please contact the parish office if your child or children need to be baptized. You will be notified of the time and dates of the sacramental sessions.

DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

Parents or Guardians are asked to use the drive through of Madonna Hall to drop off their children. Staff members will be available to supervise Kinder through 5th grade students in Madonna Hall.

High school students who drive their own vehicle MUST park in the parking lot behind Madonna Hall and the Pavilion. Students may not socialize in the parking lot before or after class periods. Parents will be contacted when this occurs.

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Parents and guardians may use the drive through area to pick up children in grades Kinder through 12.

High school students who drive their own vehicle MUST park in the parking lot behind Madonna Hall and the Pavilion. Student socializing in the parking lot is not permitted.

ATTENDANCE

Your child's regular attendance and participation in Family Faith Formation is important. Keep in mind that Family Faith Formation volunteer catechists spend several hours each week preparing the lesson plans for their classes. More importantly, regular attendance is an important factor that will help your child deepen his/her understanding of our Church's teachings, Holy Scripture, prayer, and participation in the Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Community.

Parents are encouraged to help their children learn their prayers and discuss what was covered in each class with their students every week.

We emphasize that learning is most effective in the home. As parents, you are your child's primary teacher of our Catholic faith.

If there are special circumstances regarding your child's participation in the program, please meet with the Coordinator of Religious Education in advance, if possible. Other options, such as home study is available. Age appropriate textbooks are available.

CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Students are always to behave in a Christian manner and be respectful of and cooperative with any adults helping with the program. Students should actively participate in classroom activities and discussions. They should attend class regularly and complete any assignments and homework. All students should honor the dress code as well as the code of conduct.

Each week, your child may receive a take-home assignment. Please spend time helping your child complete each assignment.

ASSISTANCE FROM THE COORDINATOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND FAMILY FAITH FORMATION STAFF

Parents may meet with a Coordinator of Religious Education (CRE) and Family Faith Formation staff at the Information Desk located near the entrance of Madonna Hall on Family Faith Formation session days to obtain answers to questions or to discuss Family Faith Formation activities.

The Family Faith Formation staff's principal objective is to serve the religious education needs of our children and youth. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please share them with your child's catechist (teacher) or call the Family Faith Formation Office.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

We ask that parents provide the Coordinator of Family Faith Formation and Coordinator of Youth Ministry with telephone numbers where you can be reached in emergencies during class times. If these numbers change, please provide the updated telephone numbers. We should be able to immediately contact you during class times.

Every week, parents should watch for reminder notes that are occasionally sent home with the students, as well as notices in the Church bulletin.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD

Because parents have a grave responsibility for the religious education of their children, please talk with your children after each class to determine:

- If notices or messages were sent home for the parents.
- Learning experiences—what was learned, what kinds of class activities took place
- If homework is required for the next session

TEACHING AND LEARNING PRAYERS

Parents, you are the chief educators of your children, because they listen to you and usually follow your guidance and know how to obey and follow your wishes. Consequently, you as parents should take an active part in your children's faith journey. This includes teaching your children how to say prayers and taking them to Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.

Commonly known prayers allow children to pray with adults and other children; furthermore, the content of traditional prayers helps preserve beliefs. Long-familiar prayers surface spontaneously and may provide solace in times of need when original words are hard to find.

The requirement to know, by heart, certain prayers is important. Teaching specific prayers is a catechetical requirement from our archdiocese. All students receive a list of prayers at the beginning of the year. The children are required to memorize these prayers and will be tested in class.

We learn prayers at home and at Family Faith Formation. Parents should assist their children in learning specific prayers through repetition at home. Set aside time for Bible reading, learning prayers, and talking with God. Put a copy of prayers on the refrigerator, on a bathroom mirror, etc. Help them make prayer bookmarks for gifts to give to family and friends. By praying new prayers several times during the week, at meals, at bedtime, and in the car, children will quickly learn them.

Children should know that prayer is talking with God. He wants to hear from us several times every day. Prayers can be short or long; written, spoken, sung, or thought; and prayed anywhere.

Do you need help finding a list of prayers? Obtain a copy of Catholic Prayer for Catholic Families to pray at home through the Family Faith Formation Office.

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION PROCEDURES

The following procedures explain how we expect to work with parents and students on a weekly basis.

INFORMATION DESK

As you enter Madonna Hall on Family Faith Formation days, you will find an Information Desk (Catechists Corner) on the right front corner of the main hall. Parents/Guardians may go there for assistance.

FAMILY FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

The Family Faith Formation Office in Madonna Hall is in the hallway across from the small kitchen. It is through the double doors, behind the Catechist Corner, and is the third door to your right.

TARDY STUDENTS

All students who come in late are to report to the information desk (Catechists Corner). There they will be checked in for their class and escorted to their classroom. This should minimize the number of disruptions to the classrooms after the students have gone to the classrooms. **No parent should be in the hallway of the school. Parents should line up and wait in their car for the children to be dismissed and pick up through the drive through of Madonna Hall.**

THE CATHOLIC DAY SCHOOL SHARES AND WE RESPECT THEIR PROPERTY

We share the school with the Our Lady of Lourdes Day School children. Please remind your child to respect the property of the Day School. The Family Faith Formation office will furnish ALL the materials and school supplies such as pencils and paper that are needed for Family Faith Formation classes.

DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

Bad behavior cannot be tolerated because any disruption by one or more students affects the education process in the classroom for the other students. All students are expected to share in the faith learning experiences of the Family Faith Formation program. If a child's behavior disrupts that learning process, the steps listed below will be followed to

ensure that class participation may continue:

First incident: The child will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior.

Second incident: The child will be sent to the Family Faith Formation Office for discussion of appropriate behavior with the Coordinator of Family Faith Formation. The student may return to the classroom and/or the parent may be notified of the inappropriate behavior at this time.

Third incident: After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the child will be sent to the Family Faith Formation Office to do their class work for the duration of class time. The parent(s) will be called to pick up their child and to discuss the situation.

Fourth incident: If the child's misbehavior continues, the child's parents will be called to pick up their child and to arrange for home study. A final examination will be administered by the Coordinator of Family Faith Formation at the year's end.

GUIDELINES IN YOUTH ROOM (THE UPPER ROOM)

These guidelines and consequences are posted in the Youth Room and explained at the beginning of each semester by the youth minister.

GUIDELINES

- Respect
 - Respect fellow youth
 - Respect adult volunteers
- Keep confidentiality in small groups
- Once you have arrived in the Upper Room/Youth Room, stay there until Youth Night is over
- Electronic devices must be silenced and not in use during the Youth Night
- Be open, participate, and have fun.

CONSEQUENCES

1st Offense: Warning

2nd Offense: Private Discussion

3rd Offense: Removal / Sent Home

*Certain behaviors call for automatic removal. Any adult volunteer/Core Team member can remove a youth from Youth Night at any time.

CELL PHONES / IPODS

Absolutely no cell phones, iPods, or similar electronic devices will be allowed to be used during the Family Faith Formation sessions. We do realize that many students own these items, and it is o.k. for them to have in their possession; however, they can be a major distraction and have no place during the Family Faith Formation sessions. For grades Pre-K4 through 8th grade, if any of these devices are **seen**, they will be taken from the student and will only be returned to the parent/guardian upon request. The first occurrence will be a warning; a \$5.00 fee will be charged for each occurrence thereafter. If a student needs to use a telephone, one will be provided in the Family Faith Formation Office. Ground rules for grades 9 through 12 are mentioned in the “Guidelines in Youth Room (The Upper Room),” in the previous section.

FOOD, DRINK, AND GUM NOT ALLOWED

Food and drink will NOT be allowed in the classrooms. Classes may go to Madonna Hall to eat their snacks during their Family Faith Formation sessions. Skates and gum are NOT allowed anywhere in the buildings or classrooms.

WEAR APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

We ask that all students dress appropriately for Family Faith Formation classes. Appropriate school and church clothes should be worn to class. Inappropriate language or graphics on clothing is not permitted. Clothing that is too tight, too short, or too revealing is not permitted. Students are not to wear clothing that exposes midriffs or breasts. **If a student comes to class inappropriately dressed, he or she will be sent home.**

ABSENCES

Students absent four or more times from Family Faith Formation will receive a phone contact from the Family Faith Formation Office. Four absences are considered excessive and will require special consideration. **All sacrament preparation classes missed must be made up. Missing more than one Sacramental Preparation class will require the candidate to postpone the sacrament until the following year.** Special situations need to be directed to the Coordinator of Family Faith Formation, immediately.

RIGHT TO AMEND

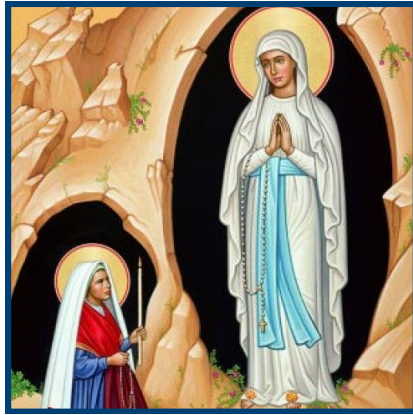
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church FFF Program reserves the right to amend this handbook, as necessary. Parents will be notified in writing if changes are made to any procedures or information contained in this handbook during this school year.

EMERGENCY CANCELLATION OF CLASSES

When SFISD, HISD and other local schools have closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, Family Faith Formation classes will generally be canceled for that day. If you have any questions about cancellations, please call 409-925-3579 before bringing your child to class. Heavy rain does not automatically cause a cancellation. Please use your best judgment about whether to bring your children to class.

CALENDAR FOR FAMILY FAITH FORMATION

The calendar of events and special holidays are sent home on the first night of Family Faith Formation. Post your calendar on your refrigerator or some other convenient place to keep informed of important events. Extra copies are available at the "Catechist Corner" on Family Faith Formation night, at the parish office, and on Our Lady of Lourdes website (ololchurch.org).



Prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes

O Holy Virgin, in the midst of your days of glory, do not forget the sorrows of this earth. Cast a merciful glance upon those who are suffering, struggling against difficulties, with their lips constantly pressed against life's bitter cup. Have pity on those who love each other and are separated. Have pity on our rebellious hearts. Have pity on our weak faith. Have pity on those we love. Have pity on those who weep, on those who pray, on those who fear. Grant hope and peace to all.

Amen.