

Grouping 101
**All Saints/St. Bonaventure/Holy Spirit/
St. Aloysius**

Parent Handbook

Encounter Jesus
Follow Jesus



Children's Faith Formation Mission Statement

“Our mission is to be an active partner with parish families in the nurturing of children in the Catholic tradition by helping them to encounter and follow Jesus Christ. We seek to lead our children and their families into a personal relationship with Jesus through catechetical formation, moral teaching, prayer, and the sacramental life.”

PARENTS AND THE HOME

“Parents are the first and foremost catechists of their children. They catechize informally but powerfully by example and instruction. They communicate values and attitudes by showing love for Christ and His Church and for each other, by reverently receiving the Eucharist and living in its spirit; and by fostering justice and love in all their relationships. Their active involvement in the parish, their readiness to seek opportunities to serve others, and their practice of frequent and spontaneous prayer, all make meaningful their professions of belief. Parents nurture faith in their children by showing them the richness and beauty of lived faith. Parents should frequently be reminded of their obligation to see to it that their children participate in catechetical programs sponsored by the Church” **(NDC 54)**.

“When children are baptized the Church community promises to help parents foster their faith “and assists them specifically in their role as catechists of their children, whether they assume complete responsibility or look to the school or parish religious education program for support **(NDC 54.C)**.”

“Parents, pastors, catechists, and teachers need to cooperate closely to ensure that the catechesis offered children is truly an ecclesial catechesis that is consistent with Christian values lived in the family. Pastors have a serious obligation to assist parents and educators in their mission to hand on the faith to future generations **(NDC 48 E2)**.”

Registration

Parents need to annually register their children for faith formation. Registrations forms are available online at: <https://egmcatholic.org/> or can be obtained at the church offices. All children must have either been baptized in our parish grouping or supply a baptismal certificate to keep on file in the Children's Faith Formation office. There is a yearly registration fee due at time of registration. The cost is on the registration form.

In order to protect each child attending religious education programs, in instances of divorce or legal separation, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent or parents to provide the catechetical administrator with a **most recent copy of the official court order** as to the terms of custody and access to the child and his or her records. Unless the catechetical administrator has been provided with a court order to the contrary, both parents' rights are to be respected.

Special needs should be identified on the registration form. Catechists are not trained professionals so parents may need to help the catechist and DRE to accommodate specific needs.

Food and drinks are occasionally offered during the program. Please advise us on allergies. **No peanuts or tree nuts are allowed.**

Attendance at Meetings

Parents are to attend regularly scheduled events such as meetings, sessions on parenting and catechesis, and prayer services conducted in the beginning and throughout the catechetical year as relevant to their particular children. They are also to attend meetings scheduled in connection with programs of sacramental preparation for their children.

Parents are **not** to attend Children's Faith Formation unless invited for a group activity.

Attendance

Children are to participate in catechetical instruction in school grades of first through eighth. Catechesis during the kindergarten year is recommended but optional. Skipping grade levels is unacceptable or attending only for sacramental years. Students are to attend regularly. Please provide an excuse for all absences. 30 hours of religious instruction is the minimum. Students can make-up classwork or ask the DRE for accommodations for extended absences. Students with chronic absences or lack of regular attendance cannot progress to the next level.

Drop-off and Dismissal

- Procedures are site specific and will be explained at the initial parent meeting.
- Doors to the facility will open 10 minutes prior to the session time and will be locked when the session begins.
- Requests for early dismissals must be in writing.
- Students can be dismissed to only parents or legal guardian unless parents provide written permission.
- Tardy students must be signed in by their parent or guardian.
- Parents are **not** to remain in the building during catechetical sessions except for scheduled group activities.
- All visitors must sign in with the DRE.

Communication

The Director of Religious Education as well as the catechist will keep parents update on The Children's Faith Formation program via email, phone and notes sent home with the child. Adult staff and volunteers are **not** to communicate directly with the student via email or social media. Also, families' confidentiality is to be respected by all.

Catechist will evaluate and give feedback to parents about child's progress.

Behavior and Discipline

Students

- Respect and obey all teachers, staff and volunteers
- Speak, dress and act appropriately
- Respect other students in word and action
- Respect the faith formation materials and building
- Actively take part in the class
- Be truthful and candid if observing behaviors that could be a form of bullying
- Be courageous to report behaviors to a teacher or administrator
- Make it a point to include all students who are easily left out

No weapons, controlled substances or bullying will be permitted or tolerated. This behavior is to immediately be reported to the DRE and parents where appropriate actions will be decided upon.

Correction procedure depending on the severity of the offense and number of offenses

- Verbal correction and warning
- Timeout in the classroom
- Timeout in the Faith Formation Office
- Parent contacted

- Parish Administrator advised and student temporarily removed from program
- Removal from program

Contact Information:

Elaine Magill
Pastoral Associate/Director of Religious
Education/Social Minister
412-821-2099
pa@holyspiritmillvale.org

Marian Goetz
Director of Evangelization and Catechesis
412-286-2602 ext. 155
faithformation@stbonaventureparish.org

Jonah Soucy
Youth Ministry
412-486-2606 ext. 200
youthministry@stbonaventureparish.org