

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON PARISH

Faith Formation & Sacramental Formation Parent & Student Handbook 2020-2021

Religious Education and Formation Staff

Carole Yaney—Director of Formation/RCIA
cyaney@seasfw.org
432-0268 X 107

Kim Conte—Director of Youth Formation
kconte@seasfw.org
432-0268 X 118

Connie Feit—Youth Formation Administrative Assistant
cfeit@seasfw.org
432-0268 X 143

Dear Parents,

At St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, we recognize the family as the Domestic Church and are committed to helping strengthen the formation of the faith of each of our families. This can only be achieved by engaging all members of the family together.

That is why our Youth Formation/Religious Education program focuses on Family Catechesis in order to involve all members of the family in learning about their faith and sharing it with each other. This give faith a context and relevance that helps develop a love and understanding for the Catholic faith which, in turn, will provide a basis for a life-long relationship with Jesus and an identity as a Catholic.

Church "facts" and doctrine have their places, but the true role of catechesis is to form our children, and ourselves, as spiritual, moral and discerning persons. That is why there is an emphasis on families worshiping together, having meaningful discussions about faith and faith matters, and developing a personal relationship with Christ.

When you had your child(ren) baptized, you made a commitment to *make your constant care to bring [them] up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives [them] is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in [their] heart.*

—Rite of Baptism, Roman Catholic Church

This mission may seem daunting at first, but with the help of the Holy Spirit and practice, it becomes easier and feels more natural. Curiosity and a desire to know about God and his Son, Jesus, is a natural part of our children's natures and teaching about them is a natural role of the parent - just like helping our children learn to feed themselves or tying their shoes.

My mission is to make sure that you do not walk this journey alone. As Director of Youth Formation, helping parents and their families to grow in faith together is one of the primary goals of my ministry. My mission is to assist you in forming your children in their Catholic faith. In order to do this I will do my best to provide you with helpful information, meaningful catechesis, support materials, and opportunities to grow in community and spirituality.

If there is additional support that is needed, please do not hesitate to ask. I look forward to walking this journey with you and your family and you will continue to be in my daily prayers.

God Bless,
Kim Conte
Director of Youth Formation

Table of Contents

Letter to Parents.....	2
Mission Statement.....	4
Home and Parish Involvement and Roles of Parents and Students.....	4
Youth Formation Policies, Procedures & Requirements	
Bad Weather Policy.....	5
Registration and Fees.....	5
Parish Stewardship.....	6
Photography/Video Policy.....	6
Special Needs Students.....	6
Curriculum.....	6
Catechist Requirements.....	6
Student Code of Behavior.....	7
Discipline Action Procedure.....	7
Safe Environment Policy.....	8
Youth Formation Grades 1-6	
Class/Meeting Times.....	8
Description.....	8
Arrival and Dismissal.....	9
Homework.....	10
Attendance Policies.....	10
Youth Formation Grades 7 & 8	
Class Times.....	10
Description.....	10
Arrival and Dismissal.....	11
Homework.....	11
Attendance Policies.....	11
Homeschool Grades 1-8	
General Information.....	12
Sacramental Formation	
Mission and General Information.....	13
Meeting Information for 1st Communion & 1st Reconciliation.....	14
First Reconciliation.....	14
First Communion (including Gathering Day).....	15
Confirmation (sponsor information, service hours and meetings).....	15

COVID 19 Information:

It is the intention of the Youth Formation program to provide an environment for learning and Faith Formation where the health and safety of all students and volunteers is a primary concern.

- *Maximum class sizes have been determined will be adhered to as to allow sufficient social distancing during class.
- *An additional session for grades 1-6 has been added to allow for smaller sessions which provides the opportunity for social distancing for adults and children.
- *Planned activities such as crafts or group projects will take into account the need for individual materials so that materials are not shared and so that students can maintain proper social distance.
- *The need for students to wear masks will be taken into consideration.
- *Classrooms will be thoroughly sanitized after each session.
- *For those families who do not wish to attend a physical class, a home schooling faith formation program will be made available.

Youth Formation Mission Statement

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish seeks to accomplish the fundamental tasks of catechesis outlined by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops:

HOME and PARISH INVOLVEMENT

Faith is God's gift to your child, but the realization of that gift takes place in the day-to-day living of family life. The seeds of faith will take root and grow only if you nurture them at home. It is vital that you to take an active role in your child's spiritual growth.

At the same time, the Church, and the parish in particular, also has the responsibility of bringing all of its members closer to Christ. Our formation and catechetical team are here to support your efforts and to give communal witness to our faith in and love of Christ.

- Teaching the message of Jesus
- Celebrating the sacred mysteries
- Engaging students in prayer
- Forming followers of Christ
- Fostering community
- Developing a sense of mission
- Providing opportunities for Christian service

Parental Role

- Attend Mass with your children every Sunday.
- Pray with your child at home on a daily basis.
- Be positive and encouraging about classes, meetings and assignments.
- Make sure your child completes missed lessons.
- See that your child brings his/her textbook and Bible to class.
- Volunteer to help with classroom activities, carpool, office work, child care, snacks, transportation etc.
- Attend parent and family meetings and adult education classes.
- Feel free to call the Director of Youth Formation if you have any concerns.

Student Role

- Bring your textbook and Bible to class each session and take it home afterwards.
- Complete all assignments neatly and on time, including those missed because of illness.
- Follow the behavior code. (See page 7 of this handbook.)

YOUTH FORMATION

BAD WEATHER POLICY

If St. Elizabeth School cancels school or closes early due to bad weather, Religious Education classes are also cancelled that day. If Sunday classes are cancelled, a flocknote will be sent to all families, and the announcement will run in the cancellations on local TV channels. Directions to sign-up for flocknote alerts will be available at the beginning of the year and on the website as well. The information will be noted on the *Religious Education Page* of the parish website (www.seasfw.org).

GENERAL POLICIES, PROCEDURES and REQUIREMENTS

Student Registration

- Students/Families currently enrolled in the Youth Formation program will not have to register for the upcoming year. Students will be automatically advanced to the next grade level.
- A notification will be sent to families in July for fee payment and to make any changes to their current registration information and select which session they will attend.
- **NEW FAMILIES AND FAMILIES WITH A FIRST GRADE STUDENT SHOULD FILL OUT A REGISTRATION FORM**
- Students are placed in classes by the Director of Youth Formation and not by individual teachers. Any requests or changes must be referred to and approved by the DYF.

Parent/Guardian Financial Support

- Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the Youth Formation program are financially responsible to the parish. An annual fee will be charged to help cover the cost of the program. The program fee must be paid – or other arrangements for payment made with the Director of Formation – prior to the student being placed in a class. The fee for 2020-21 is \$95 per family. After July 20 the fee will increase to \$125 per family.
- **A reduced fee of \$45 is offered for parents who are catechists.**
- Families who participate in home-based catechesis are required to buy and use textbooks and other materials that are used in the parish Youth Formation/Religious Education program and to pay an administration fee of \$95 per family.
- Financial assistance is available for those for which the fee is a hardship

Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure

Families who participate in the youth formation/parish religious education program are expected to practice stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

- Time and talent is service to the parish and/or youth formation/religious education program. Many opportunities are listed on the Stewardship Pledge Form.
- Treasure is financial contributions for the needs of the parish, the Church and charity.

Photography/Video Policy

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish maintains a website for sharing information related to ministries at the parish. This website may include pictures to highlight participation in these ministries and their activities. For this reason the parish may determine it beneficial to publish minor children's pictures on the website from time to time. As a policy, names of children are not published unless there are special circumstances and at that time specific parental consent would be requested. **If parents do not wish to have their children to be photographed or to be videoed they should contact the Director of Youth Formation.**

Special Needs

Students with special needs are always welcome in Youth Formation/Religious Education program and arrangements can be made for aides, or for a modified curriculum as needed. Information about special needs shall be provided to the Director of Youth Formation. This information is held in confidence and shared only as necessary with the child's catechists.

Curriculum

All basal and supplemental texts and materials are available for review in the RE office.

Catechist Requirements

A catechist is a role model of Catholic teachings and values, and must meet the following requirements:

- Catechists shall be living within the rules of the Catholic
- Participate regularly in Sunday Mass and participate as fully as possible in a sacramental life style.
- Adhere to the Catholic Church's teachings on morality and behavior.
- He/she shall be a Christian example through witness and prayer.
- Catechists are required to attend training meetings to prepare them for this ministry.
- Catechists are encouraged to continue their own faith formation through participation at workshops, courses, retreats, Bible studies or other avenues.
- They are required to complete all Diocesan requirements for

- background checks and Diocesan Safe Environment training.
- They should work as a team with the Director of Youth Formation, co-catechists, other members of the faith formation team, the pastoral staff, clergy and parents and to recognize that parents are the primary catechists of their children.
- If a catechist is a parent of one of a student in grades 1-6, then they will be provided with the notes from the parent meeting or they can choose to attend the other session.

Student Behavior Code

- Please make every effort to be in class on time.
- If you are absent, you are responsible for making up missed work.
- No candy, gum or drinks are to be brought into class unless it is for a special event, or okayed by the catechist.
- Hats are not to be worn in class and hood of hoodies must be down.
- Students are to be respectful and courteous toward catechists, volunteers, classmates, and visitors.
- Inappropriate behavior or improper language or comments will be allowed.
- Students will not talk when the catechist is talking
- Students are expected to treat books and materials with care, and to respect parish property and the personal property of others.
- No toys or other items of entertainment are to be brought to class without permission of the catechist.
- It is preferable that students do not bring electronic devices to class. If a parent desires a student to have a cell phone, the cell phone must be kept out of sight and silent. Cell phones may be used after a class is over. If a device is used during class, for a purpose not authorized by the catechist, it will be confiscated and brought to the Youth Formation office and returned only to the parent.

Students are responsible for their own actions and will be held accountable for disrespectful and harmful behavior toward others and damage to property.

Disciplinary Action Procedure

If, in any given class period, a student repeatedly distracts the catechist or other students, the following procedure will be put into action.

1. Catechist speaks to student privately.
2. The student is sent/brought to the office. The student will discuss the incident with the Director of Youth Formation and decide upon a strategy to correct the problem. He/she will also offer apologies as required.
3. If the student is sent to the office a second time, parents will be notified by phone.

4. If the student is sent to the office a third time, or if the incident is serious, the student will not be permitted to return to class until a conference has been held with the parent(s), Director of Youth Formation, and the catechist. The student will be included when appropriate.

Safe Environment Policy

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish Youth Formation/Religious Education Program follows diocesan policies and procedures regarding safe environment for students. Everyone involved in the program is expected to treat others in a Christian manner.

- All volunteers working with youth undergo a thorough background check and training.
- All students will receive age-appropriate instruction as directed by the diocese. Each age appropriate lesson teaches our students to recognize God's love by helping them understand their own (and other's) dignity in mind, body, and spirit. If you **do not** want your child(ren) to receive this information in class, please notify the Director of Youth Formation before classes begin in August/September.
- Any harassment—whether physical, verbal, or sexual—should be reported immediately to the Director of Youth Formation or Pastor.

YOUTH FORMATION GRADES 1-6

Monthly Class Times for Students and Parents

- Student/Parent MONTHLY Meeting Times (September thru April)
Sunday Session A (after the 11:30 am Mass) 12:45 pm to 2:00 pm
Sunday Session B (before the 5:30 pm Mass) 4:00 pm to 5:15 pm
Monday: 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm

The intention is that Student/Parent meetings will be held on the first non-holiday Sunday/Monday of each month.

Description:

Students in Grades 1-6 and their families will participate in a family catechesis program by Sophia Institute Press which is a structured program based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and will be in lieu of traditional weekly Religious Education classes.

The main goal of family catechesis is to involve the entire family with the hope of developing the family's Catholic Faith as a central part of family life and fostering the practice of faith as a continual journey.

Another benefit of a program like this is that working on lessons at home gives the family greater flexibility to do their lessons when it is convenient for their schedule and disposition.

Families will receive materials (a *Parent's Guide*, a Bible, and a

Catechism of the Catholic Church) to use as resources to help complete their lessons with their children at home. Each child will receive an *Activity Book* which will accompany each month's topic with lessons that incorporate age-appropriate activities.

This year students will begin in their classrooms where catechists will review the material covered the previous month and do various activities with them which may include breaking open scripture or other activities that are age/topic appropriate. The children will have classroom time with a catechist to reinforce what was discussed at home during the last month and give them an experience of community. Parents will be responsible for going over the remainder of the month's topics with their children at home and integrating it into their family faith life.

During the parent-part of the meeting we will go over the pertinent theological points that you will need to know in order to complete the lessons for the month. In addition parents will receive supplemental materials for the lessons that will be optional for you to use. This material will be intended to help vary the lessons some to make them more interesting. Also some information will be provided on which lessons are most important and some input on the best practices on teaching the lessons at home will be provided as well.

Parents will complete the two monthly lessons with their children at the family's convenience. Each lesson has various activities and takes about 30-45 minutes to complete in total.

Parents are encouraged to complete as much or as little of each lesson as they feel is needed for their family. Also, parents are encouraged to modify any of the activities to make them particularly meaningful for their children.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

Arrival:

Please drop off your child at their classroom before the meeting starts so that we can start the adult part of the meeting on time. It is important that the meeting begins on time and that everyone is present for opening prayer and sharing time.

Dismissal:

Students will be dismissed directly from their classroom to a parent. Parents will go to their child's classroom and pick up their child. Catechists WILL NOT release a child to "meet" a parent some place else in the building unless specific arrangements have been made prior to the class in writing.

Homework:

Even though families are encouraged to complete the parts of the lesson that they deem helpful, there will be direction given for a particular activity to be completed to be reviewed during the classroom portion of the next meeting. This will facilitate their classroom time which will be spent reviewing the key concepts from the previous month's topic and what they discussed with their families. It will be expected that the students bring their activity book with them to each monthly class meeting.

EXPECTATIONS and ATTENDANCE**Expectations:**

All children and their families in Grades 1-6 are expected to participate in this program in order to be ready to prepare for First Reconciliation and First Communion in Grade 2 and Confirmation in Grade 8. Those who do not participate in this catechetical program and wish to receive First Reconciliation and First Communion or wish to enter the Confirmation program in grades 7 & 8 will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Attendance:

At least one parent is required to attend each of the Student/Parent meetings to receive the catechetical information that will be presented to your family. For those who miss a parent meeting for an unavoidable reason, arrangements will be made to provide the needed information for that month. Arrangements can be made to attend the other session.

**YOUTH FORMATION
GRADES 7-8****WEEKLY CLASS TIMES**

- Grades 7-8
Sunday: 4:00 pm to 5:15 pm (before the 5:30 pm Mass)
Monday: 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm

Description:

The 7th and 8th grade program is designed to prepare students for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation in 8th grade. The students meet weekly to discuss relevant faith topics, learn about the Catholic faith in detail, and have conversations with adults and peers about Confirmation in and environment of prayer and community.

ARRIVAL and DISMISSAL

Arrival:

Please plan to arrive prior to your class start time. It is important that classes begin on time and that everyone is present for opening prayer.

Dismissal:

Students will normally be dismissed through door 28 of the school. This is the main entrance. Please pull your car along the curb and your child will come to your car. Please **DO NOT** park in the parking spaces and have your child walk through the parking lot to your car.

If you wish to come in to meet your child, enter through Door 2 (Parish offices), walk down the hall and wait for class to dismiss in the atrium. Please exit using Door 2.

Homework

Students will receive homework to reinforce/review the information presented in class and to delve deeper into their personal relationship with Christ. It is the responsibility of the student to complete homework assignments and return them to their catechist on their due date. If homework is not being completed on a regular basis, the parents will be notified. **If the failure to do homework is long-term, the grade may not be considered complete at the end of the year.**

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

Students are expected to attend all scheduled Faith Formation classes and sacramental meetings/events. Please plan travel, family events and sports participation accordingly. Please recognize that class time includes many activities such as prayers, videos, and group discussions that cannot be made up. **It is important that students attend every class.**

If special circumstances occur that require several absences or an extended absence, please contact the Religious Education office as soon as possible. **Communication is very important in questions regarding attendance and arrangements can be made.**

Acceptable Attendance

- **If your child is sick, do not send him or her to class. Call the RE office or e-mail the Religious Education Administrative Assistant, Connie Feit at cfeit@seasfw.org or call 432-0268 ext. 143 before class if possible.**
- Students are expected to make up all work covered during class and turn in review material due for that class. Make-up work can be found at www.seasfw.org/make-up-work. If make-up work is done for a missed class, then the class will not be counted as an absence.
- **Because grades 7-8 are considered sacramental formation years, students may not miss more than 2 classes. Additional absences may delay reception of the sacrament(s). If a student completes the make-up work for the missed class, then the absence will not count toward the 2 missed classes.**

Make-up work can be found on the parish website at www.seasfw.org/make-up-work

Procedure when a Student Is Tardy

Students who arrive after class has started should go directly to their assigned classroom where they will be marked tardy on the attendance record. Time missed from all classes will accumulate and could result in an absence.

Procedure when a Student Must Leave Early

Arrangements for all early dismissals need to be made with the Youth Formation Administrative Assistant (Connie Feit) or the Director of Youth Formation (Kim Conte) prior to class.

Do NOT ask the catechist to dismiss a student early or go to the classroom to pick up a student. Students must be met at the RE office where the YF/RE Assistant will assist you in picking up your child

Home School Faith Formation Grades 1-8

Home Schooling families use the *Alive in Christ* textbooks/curriculum from Our Sunday Visitor. Families will complete the weekly 26 chapter program during the Youth Formation/Religious Education year (September through April).

Lesson planning and online support (videos and other resources) will be provided.

Parents and the students being home schooled will meet with the Director of Youth Formation two to three times during the year to turn in end of chapter assessments and homework, check progress, and discuss any issues that may have arisen. Those times should coincide with the beginning and ending of each year and between the two semesters.

Sacramental Formation for the Reception of Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation

Mission Statement

The mission of the Sacramental Formation Program at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is to provide the children of our parish an environment that is both educational and spiritual where they can embrace the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation fully.

We strive to provide a setting that encourages conversion of heart through focus on prayer, Christian service and learning to live a life that proclaims the Word in speech and action. We believe that families are crucial to the development of a child's faith and welcome the privilege to walk this journey together.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN GENERAL

- Sacraments are, first and foremost, acts of Jesus, in union with the members of His Body, the Church. The Church, therefore is responsible for determining the specifics of sacramental preparation and celebration
- It is understood that families of children who are wishing to receive any of the sacraments are participating in the basic life of the Church in the following ways:
 - Attending weekend Mass
 - Praying as a family
 - Participating in Youth Formation/Religious Education Classes or Catholic School
 - Living on a daily basis a Catholic lifestyle appropriate to one's age and spiritual development.
- Students must regularly attend classes in a Youth Formation/ Religious Education program prior to and during their sacramental years. **(For complete details regarding attendance, please see pages 10 & 11 of this handbook.)**
- Students must complete grade 1 to celebrate Reconciliation and Eucharist in Grade 2.
- Students must complete a minimum of grade 7 in Religious Education to receive Confirmation in Grade 8.
- Parents/guardians, sponsors and students are required to attend the preparatory meetings scheduled prior to reception of the sacrament of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. Before receiving this sacrament, students must complete sacramental preparation materials with their parents and

sponsors.

- Students who enter the program in Grades 3–8 and have not received the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Eucharist and/or Confirmation generally must attend Religious Education classes for one full year prior to preparation for each sacrament but will be evaluated on a case by case basis.
- Students who are in grades 7 or 8 and above who are entering the Confirmation program for the first time will be evaluated on a case by case basis by to determine path of catechesis. Previous catechesis and reception of other sacraments will be taken into account. Evaluation will be done by Director of Youth Formation and Director of Formation/RCIA
- **Failure to complete the requirements outlined in this booklet may result in the delay of a student receiving a sacrament.**
- **Students with special needs are welcomed into the program. It is imperative that parents and staff work together to provide an environment, possibly on an individual basis, where students with disabilities can receive the sacraments.**

FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST COMMUNION REQUIREMENTS

Parent/Child Meetings

Parents, Guardians and students are **required** to attend the preparatory meetings scheduled prior to the reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Eucharist. This includes the following:

Grade 1 Family Gathering

Grade 2 First Reconciliation Meeting

Grade 2 First Communion Meeting

Dates of these meetings will be announced via e-mail and publication in the bulletin.

Materials

Before receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, students will be provided with materials (usually in workbook form) that are to be completed at home with their parents. The completion of these materials will be checked during their religious education class.

First Reconciliation

Usually in mid-November, students will celebrate their first Reconciliation. Multiple priests will be in attendance to facilitate this event and parents and older siblings are highly encouraged to participate in the sacrament at this time also.

First Communion

Gathering Day and Practice

All students receiving their First Communion are required to attend Gathering Day which is a time of retreat, preparation and practice for the students. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help during this time. This event usually takes place on a Saturday before First Communion and coincides with the Mass that was chosen for First Communion

First Communion Mass

Families of students receiving First Communion will have a choice of two times to attend Mass: Saturday Evening at 6:30pm and Sunday Afternoon at 1:30pm. Families will make that choice at the Grade 2 First Communion Meeting. Masses are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Confirmation Sponsors

Student sponsor information should be provided before the beginning of Faith Formation Classes. Sponsors should be someone who the candidate relates to spiritually and who is a good Catholic role model. According to Canon Law sponsors must be:

- At least 16 years old, Confirmed, and actively practicing the Catholic faith
- Able receive all sacraments and if married, they must be in a Catholic marriage or their marriage has been blessed
- A sponsor cannot be a parent

Confirmation Student/Sponsor Meetings

All students who are registered to be confirmed in the Spring of 2021 are required to attend 3 Student/Sponsor meetings with their confirmation sponsor. If their sponsor is unable to attend this meeting, then a parent can attend with the student. Dates for these meetings will be published at the beginning of the YF/RE year. Notification of the meetings will also be sent via e-mail and published in the bulletin.

Service Hours

All students who are enrolled in the Confirmation Preparation program (grades 6, 7 & 8) are required to complete service hours. Hours can begin to be accumulated beginning May 1 after the completed YF/RE year. Signatures for the total service hours and the brief reflection must be turned in by the designated date in order for a student to move to the next YF/RE level. A log sheet can be found under the **Youth Formation/Religious Education** tab at the parish web site: www.seasfw.org/confirmation-service-hours. Requirements are as follows:

YF/RE Grade	Number of Hours	# Different Activities (minimum)	Due Date
Grade 6	6	2	April, 2021
Grade 7	12	4	April, 2021
Grade 8	18	6	February, 2021 Confirmation Interviews

Award certificates will be given to those students who complete at least 1.5 times the required number of hours.

Confirmation Retreat

All students who are planning to be confirmed in the spring of 2021 are required to attend a Confirmation Retreat. This is a one-day Saturday retreat held on St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Property. The retreat is held after the first of the year on two separate weekends so students have a choice. Dates for the retreat weekends are published at the beginning of the YF year.

Parents are encouraged to chaperone the retreat. All chaperones must complete Diocesan Safe Environment training.

Confirmation

Confirmation is usually held in the spring (April time-frame). The date of Confirmation is determined by the Bishop.