

# ST. MARY PARISH

## FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

### STUDENT/PARENT HANDBOOK

*Saint*  
**Mary**  
*Parish*

of the Emmaus Pastorate



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## *St. Mary Parish* *Mission Statement*

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The members of Saint Mary's possess a community spirit founded in the Catholic Faith, are open to new membership, inclusive in all aspects of service, and are looking to the future with vision and dedication.

Name	Position	Email	Contact Number
Fr. John Haugen	Pastor	dbq072@dbqarch.org	563-543-5873
Lori Keppler	CRE	dbq194re@dbqarch.org	563-880-1758
Marie Riniker	FFC	rinikerm@gmail.com	319-238-3581
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### *Introduction*

Welcome to St. Mary Parish and the Emmaus Pastorate. We are so pleased to have you and your child/children register in our Faith Formation Program. We have an exciting year ahead of us.

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide for students, parents, and catechists involved in the Faith Formation Program at St. Mary Parish. The philosophy, goals, policies, and rules contained in this handbook need to be understood and placed in the proper perspective.

Faith and religion are not the same thing! Our faith is in Jesus Christ and our religious practice assists us in developing a relationship with Jesus. Discipleship means living a lifestyle patterned after the examples and teaching of Jesus. Parents/guardians/Godparents are the first teachers of their children in the ways of faith. Faith Formation programs exist to assist and complement, but never replace the parental Baptismal role. The program is called faith formation because it centers on forming young people in growing in

the ways of Jesus. Formation is a life-long journey, beginning at home, and assisted by the local faith community. With that in mind we share the hallmarks of our program of faith formation in the Emmaus Pastorate:

- Growth in relationship with Jesus. Our Catholic faith is a way of living that impacts every area of our lives. Having a personal, prayerful relationship with Jesus gives us meaning and purpose in our lives.
- Growth in knowledge. Faith is more than a feeling, but rather is built on truths. These truths come to us through the Bible (Word of God) and Tradition (Lived experience of the Church through time). We come to know Jesus through His word and the lived experience of the Church.
- Growth in participation. Being a disciple is more than a “me and Jesus” relationship, nor is it just believing certain things. An active life of faith involves participation in the local community called the parish. Weekend worship is central to the life of a Catholic Christian.
- Growth in service to others. Christ came to serve, not to be served. The Gospel moves us to compassion and care for others. Our personal faith is the basis for our service and concern for those in need.

The policies in this handbook have been adopted by St. Mary Faith Formation Commission and apply to the religious education programs at St. Mary Parish. These policies have been adopted by the commission to give parents, students, and catechists a sense of direction in responding to the religious and spiritual needs of parish families.

Rules and regulations are made to help inform the students of the rights and needs of others, as well as to help serve as a guide for his/her own acceptable behavior. Rules and regulations help to create and maintain an environment wherein quality religious education and the safety of every child is of the utmost importance.

Parents and catechists are requested to acquaint themselves, as well as the children, with the contents of this handbook. Knowledge of the policies and rules of this handbook will help achieve the goals of our faith formation program.

Thank you for all your support. We are looking forward to a wonderful year of spiritual growth, prayer development and service to community. We will tie it all together with fun and entertainment for people of all ages.

*Faith Formation Session Times:*

6:30-7:45 p.m. Unless stated otherwise

*Tuition:*

Registered parishioners—\$50 per student—maximum of \$150 per family

Non-registered parishioners—\$100 student—maximum of \$300 per family

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## *Roles and Responsibilities*

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### *The Role of Parents/Guardians*

The church teaches that parents have the privilege and responsibility of being the primary educator of the faith of their children. This education and formation in faith occurs in many ways: by modeling faith in daily actions, by modeling good moral judgments, by sharing regular family prayer times, and by attending Sunday Mass as a family.

The religious education program can only reinforce what is taught and modeled in the home. If interest in and encouragement for the program is shown in the home, then students will have that same enthusiasm for their faith and will come to classes willingly.

During the brief time catechists have students for class, it is not possible to teach everything about our faith or to help them learn all their prayers. Therefore, it is essential that parents work with their children at home to learn these things and that there be dialogue between parents and children regarding what is being learned in the classroom.

The support of parents is evident in an all-encompassing way when they volunteer to help as a catechist, a classroom aide, or a volunteer. Please consider offering time in this way as an added support for the children.

### *Attendance*

St. Mary parish offers a comprehensive program of faith formation. Regular attendance (like school) is crucial for building relationships and growth in faith. Our program has the calendar for the year planned and families are asked to mark your calendars now to avoid any conflicts. Snow days or other weather-related changes will be

arranged at the time. Every effort should be made for students to make-up any missed material.

**In the case of absence, a phone call from the parent is necessary to let us know that your student will be absent.** This will help us ensure the safety of all students. Please contact Lori Keppler at 563-880-1758 before 6:15 p.m.

### *Participation*

All young people are encouraged to participate to the best of their abilities, and this includes weekend worship. The first part of every class is a discussion and review of the previous week's scriptures and message. Those who did not participate in Mass the previous weekend will be at a distinct disadvantage. It is assumed that weekend worship is central to the life of every family in our faith formation program.

### *Behavior*

Christian values and principles are the basis of our formation. This means respect, appropriate language, courtesy and cooperation are a must. The faith formation program (or the catechist) are not a "Catholic baby-sitting service". Parents will be contacted when young persons who are disrespectful or disruptive, and they will be asked to come, and either be with them or pick them up.

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## *Policies*

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### *Policy for the Protection of Minors*

The Archdiocese of Dubuque has established a program of pastoral assistance to people who believe that they or those in their care have been sexually abused as minors by clergy or other church personnel. This assistance will include help in informing civil and church authorities. Victim assistance coordinators are trained to facilitate access to appropriate professional and mental health services, social service agencies, support groups, and/or individuals who can provide spiritual care. Any individual desiring help from this program is invited to call toll free **800-803-6758** to report an allegation or to receive assistance.

### *Senior Graduation Policy*

All St. Mary graduating high school seniors who are actively participating in their respective religious education programs are eligible to participate in the Baccalaureate Mass. Seniors must not miss more than 70% of classes the senior year to participate.

### *Cell Phone Policy*

Upon arrival, students should place their cell phones in their assigned cell phone slot in the classroom docking station. Phones should be turned off completely while docked. At dismissal, students should retrieve only their own phone. Adult and teen volunteers should not use their cell phones during class or other events unless being used for classroom activities and learning. Should parents need to get a hold of a student due to an emergency, please contact Lori Keppler to get the message to the student in the classroom.



## *Local Faith Formation Policies*

1. Attendance at programs, classes and weekend worship is essential to develop a sense of belonging to St. Mary parish family, for growth in your child's relationship with God, and for a gradual understanding of our Catholic faith.
2. Students are expected to attend ALL classes in ALL grade levels, K-12, including extra classes that may need to be scheduled for the preparation of graduation and/or receiving sacraments. Too many unexcused absences will have to be brought to the Pastor and Faith Formation Commission for further evaluation. Parents are expected to attend all sacramental preparation meetings.
3. Except for long-term illness, serious accident, or a personal family situation, parents must notify the teacher in advance if their child will be absent from class. Before the next class, the student is responsible for obtaining and completing the lesson covered during his/her absence.
4. If a student is disrupting the class, he/she will be asked to leave and attend a separate session with a board member for the remainder of the class. The FFL will contact the parents, and the student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the lesson covered during his/her absence before re-entry into the next class.
5. Records on attendance and evaluation of students' participation will be kept on file for all grade levels.
6. During the winter, there will be no snowball throwing before or after class.
7. No food or drink is allowed in the classroom except on occasions sanctioned by the catechist.

8. Students are expected to participate in a cooperative and respectful manner in all religious education activities.
9. Students are expected to show respect for other persons and property at all times. Disrespectful behavior will be reported to parents immediately.
10. It is the policy of St. Mary parish and the Archdiocesan Board of Education to maintain an environment that is free from any type of harassment. (Definition of harassment: verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability.)
11. It is the policy of St. Mary parish and the Archdiocesan Board of Education that weapons or any other dangerous objects are prohibited on the church grounds. Any weapon or dangerous object found in the possession of a student shall be confiscated, the parents of the student will be notified immediately, and the incident will be reported to the Faith Formation Commission to determine if further action is necessary.
12. Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse: any employee of St. Mary who has a reasonable belief that a child under the age of 18 has been abused by a person responsible for the care of the child, as defined by law, shall report the suspected abuse verbally to the Department of Human Services (DHS) within 24 hours, and follow the verbal report with a written report on appropriate forms. Reports of child abuse remain confidential, as required by law.
13. Child Abuse of Students by Employees: employees will not commit acts of physical or sexual abuse, including inappropriate and intentional sexual behavior, toward students. Any employee who commits such act is subject to disciplinary sanctions up to and including discharge.

## *Weather Related Cancellations*

If Starmont school is dismissed early or cancelled due to **weather conditions** on the Wednesday of faith formation, sessions will not be held. If classes need to be cancelled due to poor weather on a day school was not cancelled, we will do so via text message, email and notice on St. Mary Faith Formation Facebook page.

Feel free to text or call Lori Keppler on her cell (563-880-1758) for a check on cancellations.

## *Sacramental Preparations*

All children are required to be enrolled in the Faith Formation Program (or attend Catholic school) prior to sacramental preparation for Confirmation. Parents, as the primary educators of their children, are expected to fully participate in the sacraments themselves and sacramental preparation of their children in the following ways: regular church attendance and celebration of reconciliation, participation in parent meetings, and participation in other formation events. Continued participation in religious education and faith formation is critical and expected following the reception of sacraments.

## *Role of Catechist, FFL, Faith Formation Commission*

The role of the catechist is to extend the presence of Jesus to his/her students by the designated curriculum. The catechist will endeavor to lead the children to a better understanding of the Catholic faith. The FFL and Faith Formation Commission function to support and guide the catechists in their ministry. This support occurs in the form of providing catechetical materials and resources, as well as in-service opportunities to each catechist.

## *Teaching of Basic Catholic Prayers and Practices*

It is the responsibility of parents, as the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith, to ensure the learning of age-appropriate prayers. As such, parents are responsible for the teaching of memorized prayers and the general spiritual support

and guidance of their children. The catechists will introduce the prayers as well as assess the progress being made.

Common prayers are included in the prayer book handed out to each study to assist parents in this role.

### *Keeping The Lines Open!*

Any worthwhile formation involves good communication. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's catechist, local coordinator or the Pastor if you have questions or concerns, or simply need help in being your daughter/son's primary catechist. It takes a village, for sure! Let us help you to be the best you can be.

*Student/Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form  
2019 - 2020*

As a parent, or legal guardian, with one or more children enrolled in the St. Mary Faith Formation program, we have read and understand the contents of the 2019- 2020 Parent/Student Handbook for St. Mary Parish.

My children and I pledge to follow the guidelines, responsibilities and expectations of the handbook to the best of our ability. If at any time we have questions or concerns, we are to contact the Faith Formation Leader.

Name(s) and signature of child(ren) enrolled in the St. Mary Faith Formation Program:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

To be signed by one or both Parents or Legal Guardian:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return signed acknowledgement form with registration.





Catholic Parishes of  
the Emmaus Pastorate

...and they recognized him  
in the breaking of the BREAD

