

Parent ~ Student Handbook



FAITH FORMATION AT

ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION

ST. ANNE'S MISSION



ST. AGNES

ST. PAUL'S MISSION

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I. What is the purpose of this handbook ?

This handbook seeks to inform parents, teens and children in our Faith Formation (FF) process about important policies and aspects of this ministry. In order that you might better understand and be able to support the philosophy and requirements of the Faith Formation apostolate, it is important that you thoroughly read this handbook. The mission of every Catholic parish is to provide opportunities for lifelong transformation in Jesus Christ, to be a light to the community, and to provide the means of putting willing souls to the sacred task of serving God and neighbor. Such service is a privilege and an authentic way of holiness for the Catholic faithful.

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”

Ephesians 2:10

II. Directory

Role in Parish	Name	Email/Phone
Pastor	Fr. Kevin Martin	207-532-2871 ext 1
Parochial Vicar	Fr. Ezekiel Yisi	207-532-2871 ext 2
Parish Catechetical Leader	Clare Desrosiers	207-532-2871 ext 5
Youth Ministry Leader	Kim Nedzweckas	808-381-7593
Grades 6-8 Catechist	Anne Kreysigg	207-694-2067
Grades 3-5 Catechist	Sue Hardy	207-538-5102
Year 2 Sacramental Preparation	Melissa Berube	207-521-1628
Kindergarten & Grade 1	Sasha Daughtrey	207-538-5973
Little Lambs (Babies - PreK)	Michelle Cyr	207-551-5574

Please do not hesitate to contact us, if you have any questions or needs.

III. Sacrament & Formation Schedule

Cluster 4 Mass Schedule:

Saturday Vigil:

4:00pm - St. Paul's - Feast of Divine Mercy - Columbus Day - No Masses after Columbus Day - Easter
 4:00pm - St. Anne's - Memorial Day - Columbus Day - No Masses after Columbus Day - Memorial Day
 4:00pm - St. Agnes - Sunday after Columbus Day - Easter
 5:30pm - St. Agnes - Feast of Divine Mercy - Columbus Day

Sunday:

8:00am - St. Mary's
 8:30am - St. Benedict's (1st Sunday of May-Last Sunday of September)
 10:30 am - St. Mary's & St. Benedict's (1st Sunday of October-Last Weekend of April)

Weekday Masses

St. Mary's - 7:30am Monday, Tuesday, Friday; Thursday - 6:00pm with Adoration
 St. Benedict's - Friday 9:00am

Reconciliation: Regular Hours are listed below or call the Cluster Office for an appointment

St. Mary's Sunday: 7:30-7:45am & 10:00-10:15am and upon request after Mass
 Weekdays: Upon request before or after any weekday Mass
St. Agnes Saturday: 3:15-3:45 - Seasonally from the weekend after Columbus Day through Easter
 Saturday: After 5:30pm Mass - Seasonally from Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday to Columbus Day weekend and upon request.
St. Paul's Saturday: 3:15-3:45pm - Seasonally from Feast of Divine Mercy through Columbus Day Weekend and upon request.
St. Benedict's Friday's 8:00am-9:00am or by appointment

Special Reconciliation Hours (Advent or Lent): Go to maryagnespaul.org under Parish News or the bulletin.

Cluster 4 Faith Formation Opportunities at St. Mary's (unless noted):

Sunday	9:10-10:25am	Parish Religious Education - Grades 0-12 & Adults
	10:30-11:45am	Christian Initiation for Adults
	11:45-12:45pm	Christian Initiation adapted for Older Children & Teens
Tuesday	8:00-9:00am	Rosary Prayer & Discussion Group
Wednesday	5:00-6:00pm	Podcast Posse Adult Discussion Group
Wednesday	6:00-7:30pm	Adult Faith Formation - Topic Varies
Monthly	Time/Date Varies See website or bulletin.	Well-Read Mom Women's Catholic Book Club
		Knight's of Columbus Men's Ministry
		Young Adult Ministry - 4th Sunday of the Month
		Secular Franciscan Fellowship
Sunday at St. Benedict's	9:30am-10:30am	Faith Formation - October - April

IV. Cluster 4 Education & Formation Ministry Mission

Cluster 4 Education and Formation Ministry delivers catechesis to adults and children which focuses on fostering initial and ongoing growth in a personal friendship with Jesus Christ through encounter with Him in the Sacraments, Sacred Scripture, prayer and sharing His mercy and love with others. For children, this effort is accomplished within the context of the student's family (the domestic church) and is supported by the parish community (the parish church).

Be a Saint - What Else is There?

We are all made to be saints, so now we must become what we are! This is made possible through ongoing faith formation that enables us to encounter Jesus Christ and be changed by Him.

In the formation of teens and children, the program seeks to create an atmosphere of genuine cooperation with parents, in recognition of the latter's primary role in the education of their children, with the overall goal of developing in the children an authentic and personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a dedication to the Church He founded.



“You are my witness,’ says the Lord,
‘and my servant whom I have chosen . . .”

Isaiah 43:10

The staff, catechists, and all volunteers of Cluster 4 Education and Formation Ministry consider it a joy and a privilege to participate in helping our present and next generations of Catholics receive the most precious heritage that we have to give – our faith. Such an important mission implies that catechists and staff work prayerfully and with the diligence to be expected of those serving God's own. All Catholic adults are called to seek the salvation of their own souls, seek the will of the Lord for their own lives, and fulfill that will by whatever vocation God has called them to serve.

Service to Our Parish Communities through Your Prayer Life

Prayer works. Any work of God accomplished through us will succeed only to the degree that it is nourished by prayer. Cluster 4 Education and Formation Ministry process needs the help of all parents to offer their time to pray for the work being done here.



“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our
weakness; for we do not know how to pray
as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes
for us with sighs too deep for words.”

Romans 8:26

V. Faith Formation Registration for Children & Youth

- a. Online registration for the upcoming faith formation year is available every July at maryagnespaul.org. Postcards with links to the online rform and other relevant information are mailed in August. Printed forms may be picked up at the back of St. Mary's or at the Faith Formation Office. Signed release forms need to be dropped off the first day of Faith Formation or mailed to the Church Office. Announcements are made in the parish bulletin and at all the Masses in the weeks preceding and during registration.
- b. For first-time enrollees, a copy of each child's baptismal certificate must be provided by the parents (this should not be the original).
- c. Families are asked to donate either \$25/child OR \$50/family to defray the cost of workbooks and online access to faith formation programming. Families can donate online when registering their children. Families with children in Year 2 Sacramental Prep are asked to donate \$75/child.

“... true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share.”
Declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum educationis*



VI. Policy of Non-Discrimination

Cluster 4 Faith Formation admits students of any sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this faith formation process.

VII. Attendance and Absences

- a. Consistent attendance at class demonstrates to your child the importance of learning about God and developing a Christian way of living. Therefore, students are expected to attend every class (except due to illness or other emergency). We strongly discourage regular early dismissal or late arrival. Inconsistent attendance leads to confusion about content and removes the opportunity for youth to build faith-based relationships with their peers and catechists.
- b. If a student will be absent, notify either the child's catechist or the Parish Catechetical Leader.
- c. If the student is out for more than three sessions, one of the Cluster priests will reach out to the student's family.

VIII. Dress Code

The students are expected to display modesty and respect when entering the House of God either to attend weekly Mass or faith formation classes. When necessary, a home contact will be made seeking parental cooperation and assistance. The following is unacceptable attire during all faith formation or church activities:

- Spandex shorts and shirts
- Shorts, skirts, dresses, or slits in dresses more than 4 inches above the knee
- Tight tops, pants, or dresses
- Sleepwear/pajamas; pajama-like pants
- Pants or sweatpants with wording on the seat
- Barebacked or bare midriff tops, shirts, or dresses
- Low cut apparel, tank tops, tube tops, spaghetti straps, or fishnet mesh shirts
- Hats, hoods, etc. may not be worn in the building
- Clothing with inappropriate, profane or derogatory wording or graphics.

IX. Supervision/Behavior/Discipline

- a. Students should not arrive earlier than 10 minutes before class begins. Students are not allowed in the classroom alone until the catechist (or assistant) is present. There is no supervision beforehand.
- b. Parents are responsible for prompt pick-up of their children. Catechists often need to go on to Mass or other obligations and it is difficult if all the children have not been picked up. We appreciate parents' help on this point.
- c. All students must be picked up at the classroom door by a parent or other designated adult. For safety and security reasons, children should not be "wandering" in the buildings or in the parking lots.
- d. A parent should notify the office if a former spouse is or is not allowed to pick up a student. Specific notice of custody arrangements should be on file with the Faith Formation Office.
- e. Parents should exercise extreme caution when driving around the Church grounds, especially at dismissal. Parents should discuss safety rules with their children.
- f. Students who are found to be in possession of an illegal substance or weapons will be subject to search and seizure of such items and will be subject to expulsion from the program. In addition, we reserve the right to inspect a student's personal property when there is a reasonable belief that the participant is violating the rules, regulations, and policies of your program.
- g. All catechists and other adults working with children are required to submit to a background check and attend the VIRTUS training provided by the Diocese of Portland. Faith Formation staff and volunteers are required by law to report any signs of neglect or abuse to the appropriate authorities.

h. Our goal is to create a climate where students can learn and enjoy their time in the faith formation process.

Ideally, all students will show to others the same love and respect they receive. Sometimes, certain regulations are needed to help those who fall short in respecting others and property. Our goal in setting these standards is to help students develop a sense of self-discipline and responsibility to themselves and others. Standards for all faith formation programs follow:

- All students are expected to be on their best behavior at all times, both inside and outside the building. They should show respect for all catechists, assistants, staff, other students, and any volunteers or visitors present.
- Respect for the church and other property is required. Damage or theft done by a student to a room or personal property must be paid for or replaced by the student.
- Appropriate dress promotes good behavior. (See the Dress Code p. 7).
- Students are expected to follow the following classroom/group rules:
 - Respect Others
 - Listen while others are speaking or giving directions.
 - Do what Catechists ask of you.
 - Use positive words & speaking tone.
 - Treat others like you want to be treated.
 - Stay on Task
 - Go where you are asked to go in a timely manner.
 - Participate fully in all the activities and discussions.
 - Know Your Boundaries
 - Act safely and show respect towards your own and others' Circles of Grace.
 - Use words and actions that represent the truth.
 - Identify and maintain appropriate and healthy boundaries.
 - If there is a question that appropriate boundaries are violated, talk with parents/trusted adult.
 - During activities take turns, share, and be courteous to your group members.
 - With the exception of Youth Ministry, students should not have food or drink in classrooms.
 - Electronic items are not allowed at any Faith Formation learning sessions, activities or events.
 - Gum is not permitted in the classrooms. Students found chewing gum will be asked to throw it away.



i. If a student fails to meet the above expectations and his or her behavior disrupts the faith formation process for them or others, the following actions will be taken:

- A verbal warning will be given to the student.
- If the behavior does not improve, the child may be sent out of the class to the Parish Catechetical Leader (PCL). Parents will be notified if this occurs a 2nd time.
- If necessary, a meeting between the priest, parents, PCL, and student will be arranged to discuss the child's continuation in the program.

X. Emergency Procedures/Inclement Weather Policy

- a. In the event of severe weather or other emergency situations, the Parish Catechetical Leader will contact parents/guardians via text and email regarding cancellation of classes.
- b. In the event of severe weather warning or civil defense alert at the time of dismissal, children will be held at the church until an all-clear signal is made known, or they may be released to a parent or guardian only.
- c. Catechists will review the fire drill procedures and exit plans with students at the beginning of the year. A fire drill will be held within the first month of classes.
- d. In the event that parish Faith Formation classes have to be evacuated for any reason, Children will be escorted to the Rectory by catechists. Parents will be contacted and instructed to meet in the eastern parking lot of St. Mary's rectory. Classes will be escorted to that area by walking as a group.

XI. Medication/Illness/Accident/Early Dismissal

- a. Except in extraordinary circumstances, which must be approved by the PCL, those administering and volunteering for the Faith Formation program will not maintain, supervise the taking of, or administer medication to students.
- b. If a child becomes ill or is injured during a faith formation class, the office will immediately make every attempt to contact the parent or guardian. In the event that no one can be contacted or if time is of the essence, the PCL or a designated party will act in a manner that is both reasonable and responsible.
- c. Please send a written note with the child advising us of any early dismissal request. The early dismissal of a student will be granted only by the presence of a parent or guardian with prior written consent. Parents need to come to the student's classroom for early pick-up.



“As you sent me into the world, so
I have sent them into the world. And for
their sake I consecrate myself, that they also
may be consecrated in truth. . . .
that they may all be one.”

John 17:18-21

XII. Doctrine and Curriculum

- a. Each grade level in Faith Formation, from preschool through high school and into adulthood, is important, and each year builds on the previous material covered. Students in Pre-K and younger use *Sunday Celebration*. Students in Kingergarten through grade 8 use Augustine Institutes's "Word of Life" Series. High School Youth Ministry uses materials developed by the Diocese of Portland. Adult sessions are rooted in the Bible and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and seek to mature and deepen the adult's understanding of the Scriptures, the Catechism, and the practice of Christian living and discipleship.
- b. Catechists follow detailed guidelines for grade-level instruction developed by the Diocese of Portland. These guidelines are meant to complement the text and aid the judgment of the catechist.
- c. The Diocese of Portland requires that a minimum of two consecutive years of preparation are completed in preparing for the reception of 1st Reconciliation, 1st Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- d. Parent leadership and involvement is vitally important in all aspects of the child's religious formation and development. The effort to pass on the faith cannot solely be accomplished by any Parish Faith Formation process. In truth, the parents are the first and the best teachers of the faith for their own children. Parents should be forming their children as they form their families in their "domestic church." This leadership, participation, cooperation, and prayers of the parents are essential for the children and teens to truly be formed in living the explicit, fruitful, and mature faith they are called by God to have. For these reasons, we strongly encourage the following:
 - Intentionally making God a part of your family's lives.
 - Weekly church attendance; as well as on holy days of obligation.
 - Pray together as a family and pray for your family's deepening love for and communion with Jesus Christ.
 - Participation in and support of assignments given in class for work and discussion at home.
 - Conversations with your child on their learning and what a difference Jesus makes in their lives.
 - Attendance at parent learning sessions during faith formation sessions both to demonstrate the importance of ongoing formation and to equip you to lead your child in faith.



Family Faith & Fun - Babies - Pre-Kindergarten:

Family Faith and Fun provides an opportunity for parent fellowship and while children encounter the Faith through hands on activities from the *Allelu* program.

“Word of Life” Curriculum: Kindergarten-8th Grade

Word of Life is a comprehensive curriculum that catechizes both the head and the heart. When the faith is taught as information, students forget it. When it is taught as the answer to their deepest longings, students treasure it. *Word of Life* forms students in a Catholic worldview using Scripture and the teachings of the Faith. It includes resources to share with their parents and access to an on-line portal.

Kindergarten - God is Love:

This program introduces God the Father as a loving Creator with a plan of salvation. It also introduces children to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Church.

1st Grade - God's Promise of a Savior:

This program goes into further detail about God's plan for salvation. It introduces the ways in which God takes care of His people; the Ten Commandments; Jesus' life, death and resurrection; the actions of the Holy Spirit and the Sacraments, particularly Baptism.

2nd Grade - Year 1 Sacramental Preparation:

This program prepares children for their celebration of 1st Reconciliation and lays the foundation for in preparation for reception of Confirmation and 1st Communion at the end of third grade.

3rd Grade - Year 2 Sacramental Preparation:

Using the “Signs of Grace” series, students are prepared for reception of Confirmation and First Communion at the end of third grade.



4th Grade - The Creed: Truth and Our Response of Faith:

The fourth grade program focuses on the key tenets of our Faith as expressed through the Creed, connecting them to God's salvific work in our daily lives.

5th Grade - Liturgy and Worship:

The fifth-grade program focuses on the liturgy and sacraments, especially Eucharist, as center of Christian life.

6th Grade - The Word of God: Jesus Christ and Sacred Scripture

The sixth grade course focuses on Jesus Christ as the fullness of God's Divine Revelation through a careful reading of key scriptural texts from the Old and New Testaments. Each unit culminates in a christological chapter that centers on coming to know who Jesus is as revealed by Sacred Scripture.

7th Grade - Responding to Jesus' Call to Discipleship

Seventh Grade program presents the moral life as a response to Jesus' call to discipleship in Mark's Gospel. In accepting Jesus' radical invitation, students will find happiness, meaning, and their identity.

8th Grade - The Witness of the Saints:

Eighth grade considers the great cloud of witnesses from throughout Church history who have boldly responded to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Students come to know these great men and women through carefully curated excerpts from the writings and teachings of the saints and Doctors of the Church.

9th –12th Grades - Various Curricula:

While all the previous grades continually develop what has been taught in previous years, the high school years focus on encouraging youth to grow deeper in relationship with the Lord by living their faith each day and by encountering the Lord through prayer and in their relationships with others. Catechists aim to focus on building strong personal relationships with youth and to provide experiences of living the faith as part of the ministry experience.

Accommodations for Children & Youth with Disabilities:

Cluster 4 Education and Formation Ministry will work with families to tailor curricula and programming to the needs of children and youth with disabilities. For more information, reach out to the Parish Catechetical Leader.

Family of Faith Resource for Families

Beginning in 2026, Cluster 4 Faith Formation will be introducing Sophia Institute's *Family of Faith* home learning and activities books for families to use during the week to grow their faith life.

Family of Faith is created to help children come to know the Catholic Faith through fun games and activities designed specifically for use in the home with their parents as their faith formation guide. The program includes a children's activity book as well as a corresponding Parent's Guide.

Content includes:

- Scripture memorization and copy work
- Instructions for activities and craft projects
- Prayer memorization and saints' biographies
- Games, crafts, drawing and coloring pages
- Journal pages and prompts for original prayers

More information about *Family of Faith* can be found here:

<https://sophiateachers.org/promo/a-family-of-faith/>

XIII. Prayer Chart - See Yellow Family Formation Prayer Book for Prayers

Parents, please work on the prayers for your child's grade level, as a minimum, so your child will know by heart at least these prayers. Prayers and Facts of Our Faith to teach at each grade level can be found in the yellow *Family Formation Prayer Book*.

Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten

Sign of the Cross
Genuflection
The Our Father (Lord's Prayer)
Guardian Angel Prayer
Hail Mary
Glory Be Blessing
Grace before meals
Morning Offering (Young Child's Version)
Facts of our Faith (p. 3)

1st Grade

All of the above
Prayers of the Mass
Spiritual Communion Prayer (p. 8)
Facts of our Faith (p. 9)

2nd Grade

All of the above
Act of Contrition
10 Commandments
The Great Commandment
Prayer After Communion
Steps to Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation
Facts of our Faith (p. 12)

3rd Grade

All of the above
Morning Offering
Prayers of the Rosary (Apostle's Creed, Fatima
Invocation, Hail Holy Queen, Prayer after Rosary,
Prayer of St. Louis de Montfort)
Facts of our Faith (p. 17-18)

4th Grade

All of the above
The Beatitudes
The mysteries of the Rosary (see p. 13-14)
Acts of Faith, Hope and Love
Facts of our Faith (p. 21-22)

5th Grade

All of the above
Prayer to the Holy Spirit
St. Michael the Archangel Prayer
Facts of our Faith (p. 24)

6th, 7th, and 8th grades

All of the above
The Angelus
Regina Coeli (Queen of Heaven)
Divine Mercy Chaplet
Memorare
Nicene Creed
Daily Examen
Prayer of Abandonment (p. 34)
Prayer for Vocations (p. 40)
Facts of our Faith (p. 32-33)

The Faith Formation Office desires to serve all parishioners in their ongoing formation in Jesus Christ. We especially feel called to serve parents and support them in their vocation as the first, best, and primary educators of their own children in the faith. If you are in need of any assistance or have questions or need resources, please do not hesitate to call our office and we will do our best to assist you. God bless you in all you strive for with your families. God bless you in all you do to support the parish and the catechetical endeavor. Please pray for us that we will faithfully serve you in accordance with the will of God!

Questions? Please call the Faith Formation Office at (207) 532-2871