



**SACRED HEART CHURCH
FAITH FORMATION
PARENT HANDBOOK**

**Grades 1 - 8
Sacramental Preparation**

Forming Disciples in Jesus Christ

"Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Mt. 28:19-20)

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A Message from the **Catechetical Office of the Archdiocese of Newark:**

Catechesis: A Source of Energy for the Life of the Church...

Catechesis involves the intentional and systematic efforts to nurture the faith of adults, youth and children in developing their relationship with Jesus and growing toward maturity of faith and to living committed lives as disciples of Jesus. It includes the preparation for adult initiation, infant baptism, and formation for the sacrament of Confirmation and Eucharist and Reconciliation.

Catechesis has four aims:

- **to proclaim the Christian message**
- **to prepare for prayer and worship**
- **to build community**
- **to motivate for Christian living and service.**

In order to achieve these ends, catechesis involves an essential collaboration with the Catholic Christian family, the parish community and with catechists who serve at all levels of the ministry. Since catechesis is about faith-sharing, it is a people intensive ministry. It requires faith-filled, skilled and knowledgeable people who are striving to grow in faith themselves and who desire to share that faith with others. The people who serve the Christian community as catechists, carry out, in the name of the Church, the systematic and intentional efforts to enable people to grow in their faith. This makes the parish one of the most critical and central focal points for the carrying out of the catechetical ministry. It is in support of the local parish's catechetical efforts that most of the catechetical energies at the diocesan, national and even the universal levels are aimed.

Please visit:

<https://www.rcan.org/office-and-ministries/catecheticaloffice/catechetical-office>
to learn more about the mission of the Catechetical Office at the Archdiocese Newark.

A Message from the Sacred Heart **Faith Formation Office**

We, at Sacred Heart Church, are pleased to offer a variety of programs for those interested in faith formation. We have our youth programs from first grade through to our junior high Confirmation Preparation Program. Our programs and materials are presented by our volunteer catechists, who so generously share their time, talents, faith, gifts and their love of Church, with the youth.

Our program supports the catechists with ongoing training, materials and suggestions of how to best present the materials and meet the learning styles of all our students. Therefore, it is important that parents share with us any special learning, medical and/ behavioral concerns or disability issues that their child may have so that we can do our best to accommodate their child's needs. All student and family records are held in strictest confidence at all times.

Sacred Heart Church offers a welcoming environment for all children who participate in the Faith Formation Program. We strive to complement the family shared experience of love and caring for one another, by bringing God alive in their daily lives. Each child will learn about Catholic teachings, prayers, practices, morals, values, responsibilities and mission helping them grow in their faith and deepen their personal relationship with Jesus. We strive to make all disciples in Christ.

A Journey of Faith

Using a traditional classroom model, our students formally begin in first grade. Students learn about the Catholic Church and its teachings while developing their faith and personal relationship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit within them. As a journey of faith, this is accomplished over time with active participation in the faith community as an integral part. Topics are introduced in developmentally appropriate stages. Key topics include: the learning of traditional prayers; how to use and read the Bible; the Ten Commandments; the Trinity; the Rosary; Prayer- types and styles; Catholic Social-Justice Teachings; Church History; and the Marks of the Church- one, holy, catholic, and apostolic and what it means to be a Catholic Christian in our world today. Intertwined within this program is the Parish Sacramental Preparation Programs for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist, as well as Confirmation.

All our programs are in conformity with the guidelines and policies of the Archdioceses of Newark. Further, Sacred Heart Church staff and volunteers, who come into regular contact with children, have completed and are current with the requirements of the Archdiocese of Newark, Office of Safe Environments.

Please review this handbook in its entirety. All of the guidelines that are outlined within this guide will be followed throughout the year. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may require removal from the program.

Sacred Heart Faith Formation Program **Policies and Procedures**

Faith Formation Program (Grades 1-8)

Overview of the Text Materials: Finding God Series

“The perfect place to start a life of intentional discipleship is with *Finding God*. Employing the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Finding God provides all the tools to engage the whole child— mind, heart, and soul—uniquely guiding children to practice prayer and reflection, to explore Scripture, and to find God in all things.

Finding God: Our Response to God’s Gifts is based on a spiral curriculum that integrates the fundamental themes of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with Scripture and Catholic Social Teachings. As children are introduced to and revisit concepts and vocabulary from one year to the next, their knowledge and experience both broaden and deepen as they grow in faith as committed disciples of Jesus.”

The Finding God Series is used by students in Grades 1-8.

Students may register for the Faith Formation Program at Sacred Heart in the Spring before their 1st Grade year. Students returning to the program must register each year in order to reserve a spot in class. Parishioners that are new to Sacred Heart may contact the FF office at any time to register their children in our program. Attendance at Faith Formation class study or a Catholic school is required in order for children to be eligible to make their sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Communion, and Confirmation. Any students that have gaps in their religious instruction will need to complete makeup work upon their return to the program.

First Reconciliation and First Communion Preparation

Overview of the Text Materials: God’s Gift: Reconciliation and Eucharist

God’s Gift: Reconciliation and Eucharist offers powerful, meaningful lessons to help children and their parents understand, prepare for, and celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Engaging children’s hearts and minds through prayer opportunities, active learning, and compelling videos, *God’s Gift* leads children to a life of faith and discipleship.

The God’s Gift Series is used by students in Grade 2.

Students in Grade 2 may register for the sacramental preparation program after successfully completing Grade 1 of faith formation in class or attending a Catholic school.

*** All families that register for our Faith Formation Program must be registered parishioners of Sacred Heart Church.**

Confirmation Program

Overview of the Text Materials: Confirmed in the Spirit series

“Confirmation is a vital step in the journey of young Catholics maturing in their faith. Confirmed in the Spirit is a comprehensive, flexible Confirmation preparation program that speaks with relevance to the hearts and lives of young people. Through **Scripture, prayer, in-depth content, and age appropriate opportunities for reflective and active experiences**, Confirmed in the Spirit prepares young people for Confirmation and the next phase of their lives as Catholics. Lessons guide candidates to embrace the lifelong Catholic practices of worship, prayer, stewardship, service, pursuit of wisdom, and moral decision-making. Each chapter follows the model of Engage-Explore-Reflect-Respond and takes into account various learning styles.”

Students in 8th grade may register to join the Confirmation Program after completing religious instruction in class or Grades 1-7 or at a Catholic school. The Confirmation Program is a 1 year program – but students must have attended 7th grade faith formation here at Sacred Heart or a Catholic school in order to be eligible for the Sacred Heart Confirmation Program. The sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Communion must be made prior to receiving Confirmation. Any students that have missed faith formation during one or more grade level must successfully complete a makeup plan before registering for Confirmation.

We ask that prospective Confirmation Candidates and their families prayerfully consider their commitment to the program before registering. A commitment to the program includes mandatory requirements of class attendance, completion of all necessary paperwork and assignments, a Confirmation retreat, and regular Mass attendance.

*** All families that register for our Faith Formation Program must be registered parishioners of Sacred Heart Church.**

Registration Fees

One Student	\$125
Two Students	\$155
Three or more students	\$185

*** Registration fees are for all grades 1-8**

Sacrament Fees

Reconciliation / First Eucharist	\$50
Confirmation	\$100

Inclement Weather

We follow the inclement weather directives of the Rochelle Park school system. If the Rochelle Park school have early dismissal or a snow day, Faith Formation classes are also closed. If the Sage Day School building is closed in an emergency situation (no water, electricity, etc.), you will be notified that Faith Formation classes are cancelled. Parents will also be notified by email and text message through our Flocknote system in the event of a cancellation.

If you have any questions about classes being cancelled, please call (201) 843-1722 or email faithform@wearesacredheart.org

Parental Involvement

As stated in the documents of Vatican II, "...As it is the parents who have given life to their children, on them lies the gravest obligation of educating their family. They must, therefore, be recognized as being primarily and principally responsible for their education" (Cf. VAT. II Declaration on Christian Education, n. 3: (1965).

Sacred Heart Faith Formation classes act as a support to parents and guardians as the primary teachers of the faith to their children. Please keep in mind that each child should be learning their prayers and the foundations of their faith at home. We ask that parents and guardians take the responsibility of making prayer and Mass attendance an integral part of family life.

Volunteers

Our programs cannot be run without your help. We are always in need of volunteer catechists, assistant catechists, and substitute catechists. For those new to the program, the catechists are responsible for teaching the class and the assistants help the catechist with lessons, attendance, projects, etc. Substitute catechists fill in for the catechists and may specify the grade they would like to substitute for. All volunteers must complete mandatory Archdiocesan paperwork including a background check and attend a Protecting God's Children workshop.

*** All catechists children attend our program for free.**

Mass Attendance

It is our obligation as practicing Catholics to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. It is a vital part of the religious formation of all, regardless of age. It is essential that Catholic children participate in the liturgical life of the parish through weekly attendance at Mass. Families are encouraged to attend the 10:00 am Mass as there will be CLOW (Children's Liturgy of the Word) in the lower Church Hall.

Our Mass times are as follows:

Weekend

Saturday: 5:00 pm

Sunday: 8:30 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 pm, 6:30 pm

Weekday

Monday-Saturday: 8:00 am

Please see our bulletin or website for a listing of Holiday/Holy Day Mass times.

Class Attendance & Drop Off/Pick Up Policy

Sunday Classes (Grades 1-5)

Drop-off: Students may be dropped off in the cafeteria of the Sage Day school building. This door is located parking lot behind the Parish Center. This is the only door that will be unlocked at drop-off time – doors are open from 10:50 am to 11:15 am and is supervised by a staff member. After 11:15 am, all of the outside doors are locked until class dismissal.

Pick-up: All students (Grades 1-5) must be picked up by a parent or guardian at the cafeteria door. Students will not be released unless a parent or guardian is visible for pick up. If someone else is going to be picking up your child, you must notify the office and your child's teacher.

Absences: Students in Grades 1-5 are allowed two excused absences from class. If a third absence occurs without a provided doctor's note or extenuating circumstance, the student will be placed on home instruction. Students will be responsible for completing work that is missed in class during an absence.

Wednesday Classes (Grades 6-7-8)

Drop-off: Students may be dropped parking lot behind the Parish Center. They may enter through the Sage Day school cafeteria door. This is the only door that will be unlocked at drop-off time – doors are open from 6:50 pm to 7:15 pm and is supervised by a staff member. After 7:15 pm, all of the outside doors are locked until class dismissal.

Pick-up: All students (Grades 6-8) will be dismissed through the cafeteria door. If someone else is going to be picking up your child, you must notify the office and your child's teacher.

Absences: Students in Grades 6-8 are allowed two excused absences from class. If a third absence occurs without a provided doctor's note or extenuating circumstance, the student will be placed on home instruction. Students will be responsible for completing work that is missed in class during an absence.

Walking Home: Students who are allowed to walk home must provide a note to the Faith Formation office from their parent or guardian.

*** If a student has excessive absences, they will be required to repeat the classes the following year.**

*** If a student is in a Sacrament program and has excessive absences, they may be delayed receiving their Sacrament until all material is completed.**

Books and Supplies

Students will be supplied with grade level appropriate books each year that they are responsible for bringing to class each week, along with a writing utensil. If a student misses class, they will be responsible for completing the lesson(s) that they missed. The current price of the book will be charged to replace a lost book. Students and catechists will be provided any additional classroom and art supplies that they need during class.

Learning Environment

Students will be expected to follow classroom rules and regulations. Courtesy, cooperation, and respect are expected from students towards each other and the catechists. Care must be taken of all Sage Day School property including tables, chairs, walls, school projects, etc. Cell phones should be used for emergency purposes only. No texting during class time; all cell phones are to be turned off. Any use of a cell phone to bully or harass another student (example: taking photos to post on social media) will not be tolerated.

Student Regulations

- Dress appropriately—no hats or hoods.
- Students should act respectfully toward all adults and use their last name to address them.
- No food or drink should be brought into the classroom. All snacks are to be consumed in the cafeteria before class. Only water will be permitted.
- No toys or games.
- Students may not write on chalk or dry-erase boards unless it is for the purpose of the lesson.
- Cell phones should be used for emergency purposes only. Any cell phone that is observed in use during class will be collected and given back to a parent at dismissal.

Disruptive Behavior Policy

First step: Catechist will speak to the students in class, notify the director and email the parent.

Second step: The student will be sent to the Faith Formation director. The director will call the parents and notify them of the situation.

Third step: The parent will attend class with their child or the student will be placed on home instruction.

*** If excessive or extremely disruptive behavior occurs, the student may be asked to leave the Sacred Heart Faith Formation program.**

Change of Address / Phone Number

Please notify the Faith Formation Office if your home or email address, or phone number(s) change during the year. We frequently email meeting notices and important information.

WE MUST BE ABLE TO REACH YOU BY PHONE AT ALL TIMES WHILE YOUR CHILD IS ON SACRED HEART PROPERTY.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of all of the students in our Faith Formation program is our utmost priority. Please list any and all allergies, medical conditions, and/or special needs that might impact your child while they attend our program on your registration form. All information is kept confidential.

EPI PENS: The Archdiocese of Newark has instituted an EpiPen Policy to be followed by all Faith Formation Programs. A copy of that policy is attached to this handbook.

If your child is attending the Sunday Program for Grades 1-5 and requires an EpiPen, please fill out the **Option C form** located on page 13. Option C requires that a parent or guardian (or person delegated to administer an EpiPen) attend class each week with their child in order to administer an EpiPen if necessary.

If your child will be attending the Wednesday Program and requires an Epi Pen, please fill out the **Option B** form located on page 14. Option B requires the student to carry their own EpiPen and allows them to administer it themselves if necessary.

Snack Policy

Due to the rising numbers of food allergies in the students in our Faith Formation Program, we will no longer be allowing food, candy or parties. Students should eat prior to coming to class.

NO FOOD is allowed in the classroom during the school year except bottled water. If your child arrives to class with a full snack (example: Starbucks beverages, Dunkin Donuts, etc.) they will have to leave their snack in the cafeteria until after class.

Policy Regarding Epinephrine Pre-filled Auto-injectors in Catechetical Class Settings

Option B – Self Administration of Epinephrine with a Pre-filled Auto-injector: In the event that a child/adolescent has the competencies necessary to carry and self administer the epinephrine with a pre-filled auto-injector the parent/guardian must complete the “**Epinephrine Administration Form – Option B**” and return it to the Parish Faith Formation Office. The parent/guardian must also provide the necessary documentation from their child’s physician. (See attached forms.) A medical professional or “designee” must be present during catechetical sessions in order to ensure that the necessary steps are taken following the self-administration of epinephrine and to provide other assistance if needed. This form must be renewed on a yearly basis. (See attached form.)

OR

Option C – Parent/Guardian present during Religious Education Classes:

A parent/guardian of the child, or a “designee” appointed by the parent/guardian, must be present in the building during the class period to administer the epinephrine with a pre-filled auto-injector should it be necessary. Such a parent/guardian must fulfill the requirement of the Child Protection Policy, undergo the background check and attend Protecting God’s Children as required by the policy. A “designee” selected by the parent/guardian must be approved by the Parish Catechetical Leader and must meet the requirements for “designees” as outlined in Option A above. The parent/guardian must complete the “Epinephrine Administration Form – Option C” and return it to the Parish Religious Education Office. This form must be renewed on a yearly basis. (See attached form.)

Option C: In cases where the parents/guardians are on premises to administer the epinephrine, they understand that they are responsible for bringing the pre-filled auto-injector with them to every session and take it home with them after every session. In cases where the parents/guardians are on premises to administer the epinephrine, they understand that they are responsible for having the pre-filled autoinjector containing epinephrine on their person at all times while present at program sessions.

Should the administration of the epinephrine be required, emergency ambulance services must be called immediately via 911 and the patient must be transported to the hospital emergency room for further treatment once the epinephrine has been administered. This treatment and course of action cannot be refused by the patient nor by the parents/guardians of the patient. This requirement applies even if the student’s symptoms appear to have resolved.

If neither Options B or C are possible, the family may opt to home school the child according to arrangements made with the Faith Formation director.

**SACRED HEART FAITH FORMATION
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AGREEMENT FORM**

Your signature below indicates that you have read, understand, and agree with the Policies and Procedures found in the Sacred Heart Faith Formation Parent Handbook.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

* Please sign and return to the Faith Formation office no later than **September 30, 2019**