

ST. MICHAEL PARISH



FAITH FORMATION FAMILY HANDBOOK PRESCHOOL - GRADE 6 2011-2012

ST. MICHAEL FAITH FORMATION OFFICE

~ Faith Center ~

317 W. Willow Ave.

Wheaton, IL 60187

630-682-3650 (phone)

630-690-3324 (fax)

Welcome Parents!

We are pleased that you have chosen to enroll your child in our program.

Religious Education classes alone cannot instill faith in your child, nor is it the purpose of this program to do so. A program of this nature is meant to SUPPORT and NURTURE the faith that you share with your child in the home. When your child was baptized, the Church community promised to assist you in the responsibility of being the vital link between your child and our God. We can assist you in bringing your child to faith by providing formal catechetical instruction, by modeling a Christian lifestyle, and by leading your child to experiences of faith in sacramental celebrations and stewardship. But the values and attitudes established in your home actually define the faith of your child. Your child is being formed by YOUR FAITH, the faith which you live in your home.

St. Michael's Faith Formation staff and catechists take the commitment to work with you seriously. We will pray with you and for you, as together we share responsibility for the spiritual development of each child. We rely on your support in our effort to pass on Catholic tradition and values to your children.

May God guide and bless all of us on our journey of faith.

St. Michael's Faith Formation Staff
Fr. Don McLaughlin, Pastor



FAITH FORMATION OFFICE HOURS

September through May

Monday - Friday

9:00 - 4:00

Saturday

CLOSED

Sunday

8:00 - 12:00 (when class is in session)

The office will also be open Monday until 6 p.m. & Wednesday evenings from 6-8:15 p.m. when classes are in session.

June

Tuesday and Thursday

9:00 - 3:00

July

Building closed for maintenance. Registration can be mailed or brought to the Parish Office. Any questions please call 630- 682-3650. Please leave a message and your call will be returned.

August

Tuesday and Thursday

1st - 15th

9:00 - 3:00

Please call ahead for additional hours.

Monday -Friday

16th - 31st

9:00 - 3:00

FAITH FORMATION STAFF

The Faith Formation Office is located in the Faith Center at 317 W. Willow Avenue. Please call ahead to schedule an appointment if you need to talk with someone specifically.

Preschool/Kindergarten has its own Coordinator to address the special needs of this age group. Each lesson revolves around the fundamentals of our faith stated in terms the children can understand and remember. Songs, games and crafts are used creatively to reinforce Gods' goodness and love and to introduce the children to our great Catholic traditions.

Jen Hickey, Preschool Coordinator

E-Mail: jenhickey@stmichaelcommunity.org

Phone: 630-462-5046

Grades 1-6 are under the guidance of the Director of Religious Education. Catechists teach an appreciation and understanding of Catholic faith, traditions and practices. There is a strong emphasis on liturgy and the ways in which we are enriched by Scripture. Catechists also offer students a variety of prayer experiences and opportunities for Christian service to others. Although Reconciliation and Eucharist are first celebrated in the 2nd grade, there is a focus on understanding and celebrating the fullness of the sacraments in all the grades.

Magdalena Glaz, Director of Religious Education

E-mail: mglaz@stmichaelcommunity.org

Phone: 630- 462-5043

Junior High (Grades 7 & 8) strives to support all of the junior high youth. Catechists and Shepherds walk this two year journey of continued faith formation culminating in the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The many components of these classes provide time for catechesis, social gatherings, liturgy, and service.

Cathy Swanson, Junior High Coordinator

E-mail: cathyswanson5044@gmail.com

Phone: 630- 462-5044

Youth Ministry for Grades 9-12 and College Age: Our goal at Youth Ministry is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today, drawing them to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community. It is our hope that this will support and companion them into their Catholic adulthood.

Leslie Stopka, Director of Youth Ministry

E-mail: stmccyu@yahoo.com

Phone: 630-462-5047

Adult Faith Formation: A variety of programs for adults, from young adults to seniors, including Retreats, Bible study, Catholic Faith topics, Spirituality and prayer, social justice issues, Vatican II. A formation program is available for adults interested in becoming Catholic, for Catholics desiring the sacraments of Eucharist and/or Confirmation, and for inactive Catholics who wish to return to the practice of their faith.

Matt Pozen, Director of Adult Faith Formation

E-mail: mipozen@stmichaelcommunity.org

Phone: 630-462-5045

CATECHISTS

Our teachers in the Faith Formation program are called CATECHISTS. A catechist is “one who echoes the Word of God.” Our Catechists are all volunteers who freely share their time, talent and faith with the children of our parish. Please support them in prayer through the coming year and offer your help any time they need assistance in the classroom.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

It is important for parents and Catechists to support and encourage each other. Catechists supplement, in a more formal way, the education in faith, which occurs informally in the home. Please be supportive of Faith Formation in the following ways:

- Please check your child’s Faith Formation folder each week after class for weekly communications.
- Attend Mass with your child(ren) on Sundays and Holy days and receive the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation (Confession) frequently. Your example speaks volumes.
- Join your child in participating in the service opportunities offered in the parish and in his/her Faith Formation class.
- Show an interest each week in the activities happening in your child’s class. Invest a few minutes each week to review the material your child covered while in class and to check for homework assignments that need to be completed and turned in on time.
- Make an effort to introduce yourself to your child’s Catechist and stay in contact throughout the school year. Communicate any concerns you may have with how your child is doing and also let them know when everything is going great.
- Support our parish family with your prayers, the gift of your time and financial support.
- Call the Faith Formation Office (630-682-3650) if your child will be absent from a class.

CONTACTING CATECHISTS

We ask parents desiring to contact a Catechist to please call the Faith Formation Office at (630) 682-3650 to leave a message for them. Home phone numbers are not given out without the Catechist’s permission.

WEEKLY CHECKLIST

Each student is asked to bring the following supplies to class each week:

- Two-pocket folder provided
- Textbook provided
- Pencil or pen
- Bible (as requested for 4th, 5th and 6th graders)

HOMework/FAMILY PAGES

Occasionally, a homework assignment may be given by the Catechist, especially in the upper grades. These assignments will serve as an extension of the lesson covered in class. Your support in sharing our Christian faith and helping your child complete these activities is appreciated.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Evaluations will take place twice a year. The evaluations will be recorded and sent home to parents in January and late April. These reports indicate how successfully certain goals are being met by the students. They are not meant as an evaluation of your child's personal faith.

SPECIAL NEEDS / MEDICATIONS

Please contact the Faith Formation office, at 630-682-3650, to help us facilitate the best experience possible for all our children with special needs. Also note that Faith Formation staff and Catechists may not dispense medications. If a child requires medicine, a parent or guardian should dispense it or make other arrangements.

SAFETY ISSUES

Parents and students crossing between the school and the Faith Center should do so at the Wheaton Street /Willow Avenue corners only. Please do not stop to drop off or pickup your child(ren) nor park in the fire lanes as cars may be ticketed and/or towed by the Wheaton Police. **Orange cones are placed in this area as a reminder.**

- **Arrival and Dismissal:** Students must walk while in the building at all times. All students are required to wait outside the classroom until the Catechist or Aide has arrived. No student should be dropped off more than 10 minutes prior to the start of their class. A parent, guardian or an older sibling is required to drop off and pick up children, 3 years old through 2nd grade, at the classroom door. Please be prompt in picking up your child after class ends. If you are delayed, they will be brought to the Faith Formation Office. Please inform your child's catechist if someone other than the usual person will be picking up your child after class.
- **Parking:** Please be aware there is no parking in either Second Hand Rose or West Suburban Bank parking lots while the businesses are open. You may be ticketed.

SECURITY ISSUES

All Coordinators, Catechists, Aides, and Office Volunteers will be given a name badge to wear at all times while in the building for security and safety reasons. We therefore ask that all classroom visitors report to the office prior to any class visitation. All students should carry the folder given to them at the beginning of the school year to each class. The label on the outside cover of the folder serves as their Faith Formation ID. If you lose your folder, we ask that you request a new one from the Faith Formation Office.

In order to continue to provide a secure environment for the students, there will be limited access to the school building. On Monday afternoon the front doors of the school will be open. **Door 4 will be open from 4-4:40 pm and again from 5:35-5:55 pm. The doors to the Faith Center will be locked 15 minutes after class starts.**

ATTENDANCE

Please call the Faith Formation Office at 630-682-3650 to report your child's absence. Calls can be made any time during the week. If no one is in the office when you call, please leave your name, your child's name, grade, time class meets and reason for absence on the voice mail. (We appreciate it if you would speak clearly and spell unusual last names.) If no call is received for a child prior to the beginning of class, the parents will be called in compliance with Diocesan policy.

TARDINESS / EARLY DISMISSAL

Classes begin promptly at their scheduled time. Starting class times are: Sunday 8:45 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., and Monday 4:30 p.m. Students are expected to be in their seats, ready to go, before the beginning of class. Please respect the Catechists and Aides, who have given so much of their time preparing each lesson, by arriving on time.

If your student arrives late for class, please notify the office at 630-682-3650, or check in with the Attendance Volunteers; otherwise parents may receive a phone call reporting the student absent. (This can cause confusion as to whether or not the student is in class or is missing.) A student can only be dismissed early if he/she has a written notice from a parent/guardian. The notice should be shown to the classroom Catechist and also to the Attendance Volunteer in the Office before leaving the building.

MISSED LESSONS

If a student is absent, he/she will be expected to make-up the lesson at home. Parents are asked to review materials with their child and see that the missing lessons are completed and returned to the catechist upon their return to class. (A schedule of lessons for the year will be in each preschool - 6th grade child's folder.) When possible, please plan family vacations on days when there are no classes scheduled.

DISCIPLINE

Thoughtfulness and consistency is our guide for discipline in the Faith Formation program. A conscious effort in resolving any substantial or ongoing problem will be taken immediately within the classroom setting by the Catechist. Respectful behavior, representing the Christian ideals of our parish, is expected at all times. Disrespectful language or behavior will not be tolerated. Students will treat the property of St. Michael School and Faith Center with respect. Students must dress appropriately at all times. Valuables, electronic items and toys are to be left at home.

Behavior problems in the classroom will first be handled by the Catechist. If the behavior problem persists, the Director, Coordinator, parents and child (when appropriate) will be asked to become involved in correcting the situation.

SCHOOLREACH

SchoolReach is a telephone broadcast system that will enable us to notify all households and parents by phone within minutes of an emergency or unplanned event that causes early dismissal or school cancellation. The service will also be used to communicate general announcements or reminders.

When used, the service will simultaneously call all listed home phone numbers in our parent contact list and will deliver a recorded message. The service will deliver the message to both live answer and answering machines. The maximum number of rings before hang up is 6, so if your machine is set to answer after 6 rings, you may miss the message. If your machine greeting is long you may only get half of the message.

SNOW/ EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In case of hazardous winter road conditions, Religious Education classes will be canceled. The decision to cancel class will be made by the Director or Coordinator of Faith Formation. We use the SchoolReach program to inform our families of closings and other important announcements. A SchoolReach message from the Faith Formation Office will be delivered to both live answer and answering machines. We may also post closings through the website Emergencyclosing.com. To check that information:

- Go to the website: www.emergencyclosings.com and search for St. Michael Religious Education Program.
- Receive an e-mail notification of a change by signing up on the website: www.emergencyclosings.com.
- Listen to WGN Radio 720-AM, WBBM Radio 780-AM or watch CBS Channel 2, NBC Channel 5, ABC Channel 7, FOX 32 or CLTV cable for closing information.

Do not assume that your child's class will be canceled just because another day's class was canceled.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

The St. Michael Community celebrates our unity by bringing the school and the Faith Formation families together for the celebrations of First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist are celebrated in the 2nd Grade. A two-year preparation period is necessary for celebration of these Sacraments. First Reconciliation is celebrated in winter and First Eucharist is celebrated in the spring.

Parents are expected to participate in their child's sacramental preparation. Parent meetings are held to help better prepare their child(ren) for the sacred Sacraments.