



September, 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to another Faith Formation year!

Our Faith Formation Program is about much more than learning. It is about growing, learning, leading, doing, and being in our Catholic community! As we begin this year together, we remind you of your awesome power as Christian parents. The parish, through pastor, parish staff, and volunteer catechists, desires to work as a team with parents. Together we provide our children with a sound foundation to help them become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our goal is to teach the faith through information (church rules, commandments, works of mercy), as well as formation (experiencing scripture through discussion, music, role playing, crafts), which leads to knowing and loving God in a personal relationship.

This Faith Formation Handbook is designed to help you by providing information and guidelines for our program. The society in which we live today demands that we consider not only religious and educational areas, but also legal issues and pastoral concerns. Therefore, you will notice that we touch on all of these areas.

On behalf of St. Aloysius Parish, we thank you for your time and talents in passing on the faith to your family. Please continue to pray for Christ's blessings in all our efforts and feel free to contact us at the Faith Formation Office with any concerns you might have.

We look forward to walking with you and your family on this journey of faith,

Monica Ebelhack  
Director of Faith Formation

*When you enroll your child(ren) in our Faith Formation Program, you agree to comply with the policies set forth in this handbook to the best of your abilities. Please look through this handbook carefully. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.*

## **ATTENDANCE**



Regular attendance at Faith Formation classes is an important factor in deepening a child's understanding of God through the study of Scripture, prayer, Church teaching. Excused absences are limited to illness and emergencies.

Partial attendance at any class of any time less than 55 minutes for Kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> Grade and 1 hour and 10 minutes for Grades 7 & 8 will be considered non-attendance and your child will be marked absent.

Please call the Faith Formation Office if your child will be absent. If your child has **more than five (5) absences, they must make up the work they missed** in order to advance to the next Faith Formation grade level.

Schedules for the year are available on our website. You may turn in make-up work to your child's catechist or to the Faith Formation Office.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**



To insure adequate supervision, please **do not drop your child off earlier than 10 minutes before class time.** We also ask that you pick up your child after class in a timely manner.

For the safety of your children, **parents/guardians of students in Kindergarten through 2nd grade must accompany their children to their classroom and pick them up from their classrooms at the end of class.** If your child is in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, they may meet you after class at a predetermined spot.

Children are expected to be on time for Faith Formation class. Arriving late disrupts and delays what short class time we have. It is equally important for the safety of the children and in consideration of our volunteers, that parents pick up their children on time.

Since the safety of all of our children is our main concern, please use extreme care when entering and leaving the parking lot, especially during arrival and dismissal. **At no time may anyone drive, park, or stop in the fire lane or along the curb on 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.** All drivers are expected to observe the driving lanes and NO PARKING areas as specified in the parish parking lot. **Please exit onto 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

## SAFETY

**Your child's safety is a top priority!** In Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, a parent or pre-designated older person **must** walk your child into and pick your child up from their classroom.

- If you arrive at your child's class before the catechist (teacher) is present, **do not** leave your child unattended.
- **For safety and security, all classroom doors will be locked 5 minutes after classes start and unlocked 5 minutes before class ends. Please come to the Faith Formation Office if your child's classroom is locked when you arrive.**
- **A Catechist will release no child to anyone under the age of 12.** If a parent is not picking up their own child, the catechist or the Faith Formation Office must receive notification in writing.
- Because of the large number of children we have in Faith Formation and the limited size of our classrooms, we cannot accommodate anyone not registered for the class. If your child has an overnight guest, please make other arrangements for your visitor during Faith Formation class.
- Early pick-up of a student is **strongly** discouraged. If your child must leave class early, a parent or pre-designated older person **must** sign them out in their classroom before a child may be dismissed early. **No child will be dismissed early directly to a car.**
- Our catechists volunteer their time and talent, for which we are extremely grateful. Please be prompt when picking up your children.



## INCLEMENT WEATHER

**Wednesday classes:** If Hickory **City** Schools cancel school or after school activities because of inclement weather, we will not have Faith Formation.

**Sunday & Wednesday classes:** Class cancellations will be broadcast on WBTV-3, WSOC-9, and WCNC-36.

Because conditions can vary greatly, ***please use your best judgment and stay home if you feel it is not safe to drive.*** But, please notify the Office of Faith Formation to say your child will be absent.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF BEHAVIOR**

We have established the following guidelines for our Faith Formation Program so that we can all work and learn together in an encouraging Christian environment:

1. A respectful and courteous attitude is to be displayed toward everyone, both adults and other students. This includes good manners, polite language, and non-disruptive behavior.
2. No running, yelling, shoving, hitting, or fighting on church property. This includes the classrooms, halls, stairways, and parking lot.
3. The church is a holy and prayerful space. All behavior in church will be reverent and respectful. There will be no unnecessary conversation **when passing the sanctuary.**
4. **The church, offices, and classrooms are now designated gum-free areas. Please remove your gum before you enter.**
5. The church and the surrounding buildings and property will be treated with care and respect. **Destructiveness (such as writing on the doors or walls) will not be tolerated and parents or guardians will be notified after the first offense.** Parents/guardians will be responsible for any repairs.
6. The elevator is to be used for the elderly and disabled only.
7. It is the Faith Formation policy to discipline with love, respect and understanding. If any of the above behavioral problem occurs, the following procedures will be followed:  
  
    **1<sup>st</sup> Offense** – The catechist will warn the child/youth regarding the misconduct and the subsequent consequences.  
  
    **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense** – The child/youth will be sent to the Faith Formation Office to discuss the misconduct and the possible consequences with the Director of Faith Formation.  
  
    **3<sup>rd</sup> Offense** – The Director of Faith Formation, the catechist, and the parents/guardians will meet and discuss what action will be taken.

Please read these guidelines and discuss them with your child/youth before the next session of Faith Formation.

## **COMMUNICATION**

In order for us to maintain effective and timely communication with our families, it is important that we have your most current and up-to-date information on file. If your phone, email, or address changes, please contact the office as soon as possible.

Through St. Aloysius' weekly bulletin and through notices distributed in class, we keep our families informed of important information. **Please check your child's Faith Formation folder weekly for information.**

Please also check our website throughout the year for additional information, such as schedule changes, weather closings, etc.

**If you provided us with an e-mail address, any important information, including any schedule changes, will be e-mailed to you.**



## **SPORTS ABSENCES**

While we recognize that sports help to make our children well-rounded individuals, **we ask that parents not allow our children and youth to miss Faith Formation due to sporting activities.** This sends the erroneous message that sports are more important than learning about their faith. Please make every effort to schedule other activities so as not to conflict with Faith Formation.

## **APPROPRIATE CLOTHING**

Keeping in mind that we all want to set a good example, students are required to wear modest clothing to all classes and, for Jr. High Edge students, at all functions sponsored by St. Aloysius.

**Girls:** No low cut tops, see-through garments, bare midriffs, tube tops, or extremely short shorts or skirts. This includes sports or cheerleading uniforms. No underwear should be visible.

**Boys:** Pants or shorts need to be worn at the natural waist. No underwear should be visible.

## **ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT/CELL PHONES POLICY**

As hand-held electronics become more prevalent, the Faith Formation Program is taking steps to restrict their use during Faith Formation. Students will be asked to turn off their cell phones at the beginning of each class. After this, if a teacher sees a cell phone, he/she has the right to take the phone from the student. In order to regain the confiscated phone, the student's parent must pick up the phone from the catechist at the end of class.

**Please leave all other hand-held devices at home.**

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY**

Substance abuse is defined as "the possession of, use of, selling or distributing any unauthorized, illegal drug, chemical, alcohol, or tobacco-like substance, which can be introduced into the body through ingestion, inhalation, or injection." Any student found in possession of an illegal or unauthorized substance on parish property or at parish-sponsored events will be immediately suspended from the program and a parent will be called to pick them up. Any student selling or distributing will be turned over to local authorities.

## **WEAPONS POLICY**

We are committed to maintaining an environment that is free of violence or any threats of violence, which compromise the safety and well-being of our participants. In keeping with this commitment, anything that may be considered a weapon, i.e. a pocket or pen knife, should be left at home during class and parish-sponsored events.

The use, concealment or display of any weapon is cause for immediate discipline of the student. Any participant who has knowledge of a violation of this policy should report it to a Catechist, the coordinator or the director.