

## Family of Faith - Handbook

Dear Parents/Guardians,

This year, our Family of Parishes will embark on the journey of our fourth year of ***Family of Faith***. *Family of Faith* is the ordinary means of religious education for ALL children and parents for both St. Cecilia and St. Mary Parishes. It is also the avenue in which children who do not attend St. Cecilia School or St. Mary School will prepare for the sacraments of 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation, 1<sup>st</sup> Communion, and Confirmation.

The philosophy of ***Family of Faith*** is rooted in the empowerment and equipping of parents to serve as the primary catechists of their children. This is completed by having one ***combined*** Sunday session per month held at St. Mary in Hyde Park. The children will be in a classroom with a certified parish catechist while the parents are in Robisch Hall for the parent session. During the parent session, parents are equipped with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to share the Catholic faith with their families using the remaining month's activities and lessons. The goal is to ignite a flame of love for God and prayer in the domestic Church, the Family.

In addition to our monthly class sessions, we will have community activities that will assist in reinforcing topics discussed in the classroom and help us grow in community together.

### DETAILS AND LOGISTICS

- 1<sup>st</sup> Session on Sunday, September 10, 2023
- Sessions are on the 2nd Sunday of each month from September–April
- **This year, we are combining into ONE Family of Faith program, hosted at St. Mary**
  - Families will continue to attend Mass at their home parish
  - Following Mass, all families will meet at St. Mary in Hyde Park. After enjoying light refreshments in Robisch hall and just before 12 PM, parents escort their children to their appropriate classroom at St. Mary School. After which, parents return to Robisch Hall (*under St. Mary church*) for the parent session.
  - Refreshments are served from 11:30 AM - 12 PM. All Classes start promptly at 12 PM and conclude at 1 PM.
  - At the conclusion of class, parents pick up their children from their classrooms.
- A parent guide is given to each family as well as a student activity book for each child.
- We will have a Spanish track available for Spanish speaking families
- This program is 100% **FREE**

### REGISTRATION & DEADLINES

To register for Family of Faith, please go to our [eastsidefaith.org/fof](http://eastsidefaith.org/fof) and fill out the online registration form. **The registration deadline for students receiving a sacrament is October 15th. All other registrations are on a rolling basis throughout the year.** If your child is receiving a sacrament, you must provide a copy of their baptismal certificate.



## MISSION STATEMENT

The ***Family of Faith*** Program exists to help your family develop a daily relationship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. We want your family to grow closer to the Lord by attending the sacraments, learning about the Catholic faith, reading Scripture, and experiencing the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

## GOALS

- Equip parents with the knowledge, understanding, and confidence to be the primary catechists of their children.
- Guide families toward a routine of daily prayer that has a foundation in the Mass
- Provide families with knowledge of the faith and a greater awareness of the Holy Spirit
- Promote the importance of knowing and reading Scripture
- Prepare 2<sup>nd</sup> graders to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and 1<sup>st</sup> Eucharist
- Prepare 7<sup>th</sup> graders to receive the sacrament of Confirmation

*\*Sacramental Preparation within Family of Faith are for those students who do **not** attend St. Cecilia School or St. Mary School*

## EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

All classroom materials are faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church. The program uses *A Family of Faith* by the Sophia Institute as well as supplemental resources for the children's monthly parish lessons. Each child will receive an activity book and each family will receive a parent's guide.

## GENERAL POLICIES - ALL GRADE LEVELS

1. Students must attend their monthly class and participate to the best of their abilities.
2. Parents must attend and participate in the monthly parent session.
3. Families must participate in the Community Sessions throughout the year.
4. As we will only meet as a group once per month, it is imperative that each family attend each month and avoid absences as much as possible. Children in the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grades who are preparing for a sacrament **MUST** attend all 9 monthly preparation sessions to receive the



# Eastside

FAMILY *of* PARISHES

sacraments. If more than 2 sessions are missed without a valid reason, we will ask the family to withdraw and re-register for sacramental preparation for the coming year.

5. Students must be on time and attend the full length of the class session. In case of illness, please do not send your child to class.
6. Everyone is to show respect and be cooperative with adults and other students.
7. If the student brings any type of electronic device to class, it must be turned off and not used during the class time. If a phone is used during class time, it may be taken and put on the catechist's desk until the end of class. This includes all cell phones and electronic entertainment devices.
8. Students are expected to wear modest clothing to all functions. Catechists and the Director of Religious Education will speak with parents/guardians if a student wears immodest clothing to a class or other program function.
9. Parents must manually pick up their students from their classroom in St. Mary School after the end of the parent lesson. Children will not be released from the classroom until a parent picks them up. No child will be driven home by a staff member or catechist.

## **MEDICATION**

Adult leaders of the Family of Faith Program are only allowed to dispense medication with written parent permission. This applies to both prescribed medication and over-the-counter medication. Adult leaders will follow all medication policies as designated by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. In case of emergency, adult leaders of the program may administer epi-pens with written parent permission. It is the parent's responsibility to give written instructions for using epi-pens to both the catechists and the Director of Religious Education.

## **CLASS CANCELLATION**

Parents will be notified through email & text if classes need to be canceled because of inclement weather. The decision will be made no later than 9:00 PM the day before class.

## **ABSENCE, ARRIVAL, AND EARLY DISMISSAL**

As we will only meet as a group once per month, it is imperative that each family attend each month and avoid absences as much as possible. Children in the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grades who are preparing for a sacrament **MUST** attend all 9 monthly preparation sessions to receive the sacraments. If more than 2 sessions are missed without a valid reason, we will ask the family to withdraw and re-register for sacramental preparation for the coming year. If parents plan to arrive late or leave early, please notify the DRE so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## **DISMISSAL**

Parents must manually pick up their students from their classroom in St. Mary School after the end of the parent lesson. Children will not be released from the classroom until a parent picks them up. ***No child will be driven home by a staff member or catechist.***

## **CATECHISTS AND AIDES**

Certified parish catechists lead the monthly sessions with the children. Catechist aides are assistant teachers with the primary role to assist the Catechist. All catechists and catechist aides are volunteers who practice their Catholic faith on a daily basis, which includes attending Mass on Sundays each weekend. Every volunteer in our program must complete an online background check and comply with the requirements of the *SafeParish* program.

## **INCIDENT REPORT**

If a health, safety, disciplinary, or other incident occurs during the class time, the catechist will complete an incident report and return it to the Director of Religious Education. The incident report will list the date/time/location of the incident, the type of incident, a description of the incident, and the response taken by the catechist at the time of the incident. The catechist and Director of Religious Education will then discuss and write down recommendations for handling such incidents in the future. The catechist and Director of Religious Education will sign the report once it is completed. A copy of the incident report form will be kept on file for parents or guardians to access throughout the year. The catechist or Director of Religious Education on the day of the incident will notify Parents/guardians.