



SAINT BERNADETTE CATHOLIC CHURCH
G.I.F.T. (Growing In Faith together!) Family Handbook

OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT: Seek to Strengthen Our Relationship with God and All People Through Acts of Charity, Justice, and Love; Proclaiming the Gospel; Sharing the Eucharist; Developing Our Ministries

SAINT BERNADETTE MASS TIMES

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday: 8:15am

Tuesday at 12:00pm followed by Adoration

Saturday: 4:00pm | Sunday: 8:30am and 11:00am

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Tuesday 6:00pm – 7:00pm

The program reserves the right to revise rules and regulations if necessary.
Such revisions will be announced to students and communicated to parents/guardians.

(Last revisions: August 2025)

Welcome to the G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith together) Religious Education Program at Saint Bernadette Catholic Church

Parents/guardians prepare the soil and plant the first seeds of faith. It is within the family that we first learn about love and forgiveness. Therefore, our religious education program at Saint Bernadette attempts to nurture the whole family on their faith journey, especially since growing in faith is a never-ending process.

Our work as Christian educators is to help each child fulfill God's great Commandment of love of God and neighbor. By encouraging Christian morals and values, we strive to instill in each child an appreciation of God, of others, and of self. No matter what the intellectual capacity of the children, we work to make them aware of their moral, physical, educational, and spiritual responsibilities.

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Community life is important in the life of Catholics. We count on our G.I.F.T. families coming to weekend Mass. Full, conscious, and active participation in the life of your parish community is what truly forms a person in the life of Catholicism.

WE INVITE PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO BE INVOLVED

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops: "Catechesis that involves the whole family is a particularly effective method of catechesis for young children because it helps parents to become more confident in sharing their faith with their children and encouraging their children's emerging faith." Therefore, parent/guardian participation is essential for G.I.F.T. to be an effective program for faith formation for your child. We invite you to be active in the G.I.F.T. Program.

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION POLICY

Registration and payment are offered online on Saint Bernadette's website www.stb2008.org/childrens-formation

You must be registered in the Parish to enroll your child(ren) in our G.I.F.T. Program. You must also be enrolled in the G.I.F.T. program or another formation program for one full year prior to beginning your sacramental preparation.

The enrollment period for students ends on October 1. (Exceptions will be made for anyone joining the parish after this date).

Parents are asked to contact the Children's Formation Office (502) 815-3108 whenever they need to update general information such as address, telephone number, cell phone number, etc.

COST

The cost of tuition is \$75.00 per child. If there is an issue regarding tuition, contact Wendy Meade, Director of Children's Faith Formation, at 502 815-3108 or wendym@stb2008.org.

BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES

G.I.F.T. students are asked to have a Baptismal Certificate on file. Send a digital copy (picture or scan) of your child's Baptismal Certificate (unless baptized at Saint Bernadette, Mother of Good Council, or Transfiguration of our Lord) to Wendy Meade at wendym@stb2008.org. If your child was baptized at Saint Bernadette, Mother of Good Council, or Transfiguration of our Lord, please share the approximate date with Wendy Meade at wendym@stb2008.org. The parish record books can be verified here.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The Archdiocese of Louisville promotes a model of inclusion for children with mild disabilities in catechetical formation. It is believed that children with mild disabilities can be successful within the regular classroom setting when strategic teaching methods are utilized, and appropriate accommodations are implemented. We make every effort to be sensitive to the special needs of the child. We use *"Adaptive Finding God: Faith Formation for Children with Autism and Special Needs"* by Loyola Press for children with special needs.

SAFE PARKING FOR G.I.F.T. FAMILIES

Please Park in a parking space when dropping off or picking up your children; then, escort them to their classroom. The advantages of this include ensuring their safety. No parking against yellow lines in front of SMA, even if just for a minute. This poses danger to your children and others.

ATTENDANCE

Help your child to be as faithful as possible about attending G.I.F.T. If you know your child will be absent, please notify your child's catechist in writing/email the week before the anticipated absence. We worry about kids who miss class, and sometimes we have special events planned.

MISSED CLASS WORK

Assignments for a missed class should be handed in the week after missing to their teacher. The student should read the missed assigned chapter & complete the Chapter Test.

An important note for 1st, 2nd, 7th, and 8th grade families: There are specific attendance requirements. ***Sacrament Preparation is a 2-year process.*** The preparation starts the year before the year the Sacrament is to be received. Children who are in Sacramental prep years (First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, or Confirmation) need to attend every class. Every class is important while preparing to receive a sacrament; therefore, if your student misses a class, it will be especially important for you to request makeup work from your catechist.

An important note for G.I.F.T. students who play SMA sports: There are also specific attendance requirements for those who participate in a Saint Mary Academy sponsored sport. For a full explanation, please see page 6 in this handbook.

ARRIVAL (9:40 AM) & DISMISSAL (10:45 AM)

Pre–K through 5th Grade

- Arrival: Parents bring students to the classroom.
- Dismissal: Students should be picked up at the classroom door by parents. If a parent is late – the child will be in the cafeteria awaiting your arrival.

6th, 7th, 8th Grade

- Arrival: Students report to their classrooms.
- Dismissal: Student exits the classroom. Parents are not required to pick up middle school students at the classroom

REMIND

Remind is a free text app that is safe and easy. It enables us to communicate with our families safely and efficiently about important information relating to GIFT, including inclement weather cancellations or special reminders. For text messages, enter 81010 or (502) 694-1051 in your “message” section of your phone, then text this message: @giftstb To receive messages via email, send an email to: giftstb@mail.remind.com

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Our greatest concern is your safety. The Children’s Faith Formation Office will decide on snow closings and will communicate through Remind (see above). Classes canceled due to inclement weather will not be made up. Classroom assignments from the canceled week are to be completed per the syllabus provided at the beginning of the school year.

OUR CURRICULUM

G.I.F.T. uses the textbook *Christ In Us! Parish Edition* published by SADLIER. *Christ In Us* is a blended-learning catechetical program that integrates print and digital resources into a seamless religious education curriculum that supports parishes and families. It is designed to be used flexibly in the context of busy lives. This blended approach to religious education ensures that all users can accompany one another as they connect. The Subcommittee on the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found *Christ In Us* to be in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Each parent and student will receive the link to access the *Christ In Us* portal from the student's Catechist.

FAMILY HOMEWORK

Families play an active and meaningful role in catechesis with *Christ In Us*. Parents can access unit and lesson resources for guiding and supporting faith formation for their children. Every lesson ends with an “At Home” activity. The Catechist has a little less than an hour to reach and teach your children faith formation. Families are asked to complete the simple and fun activity and assist the Catechist in reinforcing the material.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Sacramental preparation is a key component to the spiritual growth of the students in the G.I.F.T. program. First Reconciliation and First Communion are typically offered during 2nd grade, while Confirmation is typically offered during 8th grade. **A year of formal faith formation is expected prior to the Sacramental preparation year.**

Attendance at parent meetings and/or sponsor meetings is expected. These meetings are designed to provide parents/sponsors with information regarding the theology of the sacrament; provide you an opportunity to share your faith experiences; and allow families to receive information and ask questions.

Not in 2nd or 8th Grade? But still need Sacraments or missed a previous Sacrament? Please let Wendy Meade, Director of Children’s Faith Formation, know of your sacramental needs.

DISCIPLINE

The words “discipline” & “disciple” come from the same Latin word, *discere*, which means “to learn”. Our goal is to foster self-discipline—to help students make good choices and behave appropriately. Therefore, we will make every effort to use positive statements, structure the environment, reinforce good behavior, redirect, and be consistent. We expect respect and cooperation from every student. If problems in the classroom arise and can’t be resolved, the child may be removed from the classroom setting. They will then work on G.I.F.T. classroom materials while being moderated by the G.I.F.T. Coordinator or adult volunteer.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Students are expected to be respectful to staff and volunteers who serve the G.I.F.T. community.
- Students should treat each other with respect and dignity. Pushing, kicking, throwing objects, or fighting will not be tolerated. Profanity, abusive language, and verbal or physical harassment will be subject to disciplinary action.
- No suggestive clothing may be worn. NO t-shirts or other attire which contains offensive vulgar wording, off-color pictures, or demeaning or threatening symbols may be worn at any time.
- Being blessed with the use of the wonderful classrooms at Saint Mary Academy means an added level of responsibility. At all times we will respect personal, classroom, and church property.
- Students may go to the G.I.F.T. Director or Hall monitor(s) for emergencies and, if necessary, they will assist the student in making a required phone call.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

The G.I.F.T. Program Director and volunteers are NOT permitted to administer any form of medication to students. Sudden medical emergencies will be handled by calling 911 if necessary, and by calling the emergency contact information you provided at registration. Please remember to keep us up to date on any changes.

LOST AND FOUND

Any items found in the school building or on the grounds should be given to the G.I.F.T. Program Director so that they can place them in the lost and found G.I.F.T. basket in the cafeteria. Items placed in Lost and Found remain there for 30 days. After 30 days, they are donated to charity.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Our G.I.F.T. program abides by the Child Abuse Prevention, Adoption, and Family Services Act. This law mandates that all cases of suspected abuse and/or neglect be reported to Child Protective Services.

State Law {KRS620.030(2)} requires school officials and all adults who 'suspect' the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, or neglect of a child must report this to Child Protective Services. The G.I.F.T. program is required to report any suspicions of abuse or neglect in the home to the proper agency for investigation.

We must permit agents from Child Protective Services to interview a child at G.I.F.T. classes if requested. A pastoral staff member will remain with the child during the interview if the child requests them to do so. G.I.F.T. pastoral staff, catechists, aids, and other officials are not required to notify parents/guardians that a child is being interviewed by Social Workers.

POLICY CONCERNING G.I.F.T. STUDENTS ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY SAINT MARY ACADEMY SPORTS

For a child to participate in a Saint Mary Academy sponsored sport:

- The child must be enrolled in and **consistently attend** the parish G.I.F.T. faith formation program.
 - Consistent is defined as attending $\frac{3}{4}$ of all class days.
 - Missed classes must be made up by completing work at home.
- The child's parents must be **registered members** of Saint Bernadette Parish.
- The child must be a **baptized Catholic** having completed the sacraments of initiation appropriate to his/her age. (Please contact Wendy Meade if you have any questions.)

Saint Mary Academy (SMA) offers a variety of sports programs for all ages including football, volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, soccer, track, softball, and baseball. You can register and pay online on the Saint Mary Academy website: <https://www.stb2008.org/sma-athletics>.

Our G.I.F.T. program along with Saint Mary Academy Sports follows the Louisville Sports Catholic Athletic Association (CSAA) rules and regulations. As a participant, parent, or coach, you agree to comply with all policies and procedures set forth by the CSAA and the Athletic Board. Each participant,

parent, and coach must review the [CSAA Handbook](#) and the [Saint Mary Athletics Bylaws](#). All volunteers must complete the [Archdiocese of Louisville SAFE Environment training](#).

The Children's Faith Formation Office will be given a list of names to check after sign-ups for each sport. Any child who misses $\frac{1}{4}$ or more of the scheduled G.I.F.T. classes for the school year and does not complete makeup assignments at home for all missed classes will be dropped from the team. In addition, that child will be ineligible to play in any other Saint Mary Academy sponsored sport for the remainder of the current school year. This will also affect the child's eligibility to participate in the next year's Saint Mary Academy sports program.

If a child who is enrolled in the G.I.F.T. Program misses two (2) consecutive weeks of classes without an excused absence, the child's coach may be notified, and that child may sit out the next scheduled league game. (An excused absence is granted for illness or other extenuating circumstances.)

To continue eligibility for the current and next year, the child must continue to attend the G.I.F.T. Program even after the season's conclusion of the sport in which the child has played. Any child who fails to continue to participate in the GIFT Program after the conclusion of the sport which the child has played, will be ineligible to participate in the sports program next year.

EXPECTATIONS OF FAMILIES WHEN PARTICIPATING IN SAINT MARY ACADEMY SPORTS

*All SMA and Saint Bernadette families participating in Athletic Programs must volunteer one time at an athletic game or **athletic** hosted event, for each season your child plays sports. Seasons are defined as Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer and result in a maximum of three (3) volunteer requirements per family. **By confirming this agreement you are acknowledging your responsibility for meeting the Athletic volunteer requirement.** If your family should not volunteer the required amount of times per season played, then you agree to pay \$100 per unfulfilled Athletic volunteer requirement up to a maximum of \$300.*



Saint Bernadette

Saint Mary Academy

SAINT BERNADETTE G.I.F.T Parent Agreement

I, _____ the parent/guardian of _____, have read and reviewed the G.I.F.T. Family Handbook with my student. I understand that not following the policies outlined in the handbook may result in loss of privileges from the program.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

MEDIA RELEASE

I, _____ the parent/guardian of _____, give the parish permission to use personally identifiable information, including photographs, name, and/or art works for publication, advertising or other lawful purposes including newsletters, bulletins, social media, and websites.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____