

2025-2026
HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

FAITH FORMATION FAMILY HANDBOOK

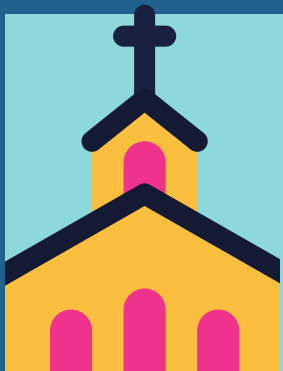
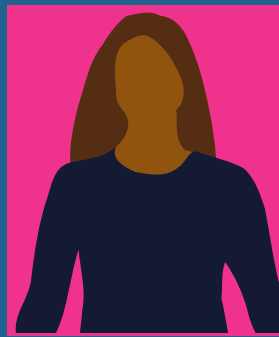
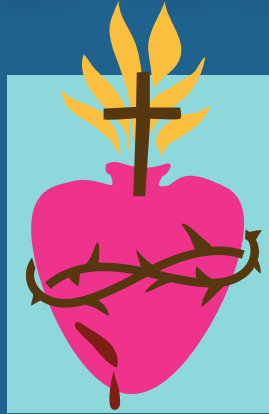


TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER TO FAMILIES	PAGE 1
OUR VISION	PAGE 2
COMMUNICATION	PAGE 3
CURRICULUM	PAGE 4
TUITION AND PAYMENT	PAGE 4
VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS	PAGE 5
ABSENCE REPORTING	PAGE 6
ATTENDANCE POLICY	PAGE 6
ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY	PAGE 7
CODE OF CONDUCT	PAGE 8
DISCIPLINE POLICY	PAGE 9-10
GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES	PAGE 11
SACRAMENT OF FIRST RECONCILIATION	PAGE 12
SACRAMENT OF FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST	PAGE 12
SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION	PAGE 13
PARENT/FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES	PAGE 14-15

Hello and welcome to another exciting year of Faith Formation at Holy Spirit Parish! We are privileged to continue to build and grow in faith with your family this year. If you're new to our program: Welcome! We're thrilled to have you. And, if you're somewhat of a veteran to our Faith Formation program: Welcome back! It will be a joy to see your faces again this year.

It's also important to remind you who we are, and why we do what we do. As you may know, within the last couple years we had an opportunity for the parish to evaluate and redevelop areas of our Faith Formation program where we saw the greatest need. The updates have been such a wonderful addition for the parish, and the positive feedback continues to ensure us we're moving in the right direction.



My name is Leah Ackley, and I've been blessed to serve on staff at Holy Spirit Parish for seven years. This fall, I look forward to directing my fifth year of Faith Formation for grades K-5. This year, I've assigned the name Manna to our K-5 programming, inspired by the bread from heaven that God provided to the Israelites in the wilderness. Just as manna nourished God's people each day, this ministry is meant to nourish the faith of both children and families week by week as we journey together in trust, wonder, and community. I also lead preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion for students in both our Faith Formation program and Holy Spirit

School. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me..." and I take that to heart. I love finding ways to help our wigglers feel welcomed, known, and engaged as they grow in relationship with Jesus and learn about the rich traditions of our Catholic faith. As a mom of four children myself, I understand the joys and the chaos of parenthood—and I care deeply about helping parents feel confident, supported, and equipped to lead their little ones in faith (aka the domestic Church) as well. With my own kids in the Kimberly School District and enrolled in Faith Formation, this "work" feels like a natural extension of my own family life. It's a privilege to walk alongside you and help build a foundation of faith for all our children—together.



My name is Sarah Elmer. I have been Holy Spirit Parish's Youth Minister for the past 20 years! Ouch, that sounds old! However, my four kids will tell you, I am the biggest dork around, always up to check out the latest trends, and can win any burp contest! I am truly blessed to work alongside my fellow assistant youth ministers in curating an all-encompassing Youth Ministry program. We will be using a youth ministry model of catechesis called Life Teen that our Bishop has approved for use within our Diocese. That means no more classroom model of catechesis for grades 6-12; but instead, a relational approach as we walk alongside of our youth and parents in

sharing, learning, and praying our faith. I look forward to partnering with you as we embark in a new age of Faith Formation— one that is aimed at the hearts of young people. Thank you ahead of time for your patience as we continue to navigate new waters and forge new paths in teen discipleship. And lastly, thank you for trusting us with your most treasured possession— your kiddos!

It is important to us that you feel you ALWAYS have a place in our parish, in our program, and in our prayers. We take our roles in this ministry humbly but seriously. Please reach out to us at any time for support, questions, concerns. We will be here. We also place our trust in your prayerful hands. Please pray together as a family regularly for us and the many dedicated volunteers helping to lead Holy Spirit Parish's Faith Formation program.

Please use this handbook to provide your family with pertinent information for the Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation Program and the policies and goals we have for the year. Be sure to take time to read it so you will know and understand the guidelines and policies.

Here's to an amazing year!

In Christ,

Leah Ackley
Director of Child and Family Ministry (K-5th)

Sarah Elmer
Director of Youth Ministry (6th-12th)



OUR VISION

Holy Spirit Parish's Faith Formation team strives to partner with our parish families as they answer their call to teach our children the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the richness of the Catholic tradition. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, together we can:

- Deepen the awareness of God's presence in all our lives
- Enhance our place in God's design as beloved and irreplaceable children of God
- Foster an atmosphere of love and respect for others
- Mentor children and young people to live as intentional disciples of Jesus Christ including responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Church
- Nurture personal and spiritual growth of each child and young person through prayer, participation at Mass, and the Sacraments

COMMUNICATION

Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation
620 E. Kimberly Avenue
Kimberly, WI 54136

www.holyspirit-parish.org/faith-formation

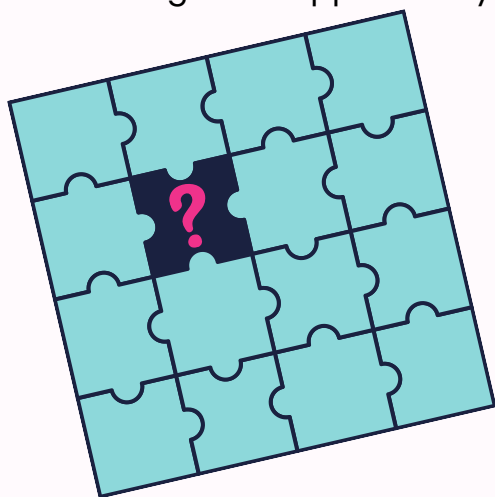


Leah Ackley	Director of Child and Family Ministry Grades K-5th First Reconciliation/First Communion Prep	ackleyl@holyspirit-parish.org (W) 920.788.7640 x1005
Rowan Underhill	Administrative Assistant Child and Family Ministry, Grades K-5th First Reconciliation/First Communion Prep	underhillr@holyspirit-parish.org (W) 920.788.7640 x1006
Sarah Elmer	Director of Youth Ministry Grades 6th-12th Confirmation Prep	elmers@holyspirit-parish.org (C) 920.450.6440
Olivia Eickman	Assistant Youth Minister Grades 6th-12th Confirmation Prep	eickmano@holyspirit-parish.org (W) 920.788.7640 x1036

To effectively partner with the parent/guardians of our children and youth, communication is of utmost importance. Families should expect to receive weekly communication from the Faith Formation leadership team via email and texts using a 3rd Party communication tool.

Upon registration, your email and phone number will be automatically added and assigned to a distribution list based on your family's registration information (e.g. Grade 2, Edge, Life Teen, Confirmation, etc.).

Keep in mind, your family may be assigned to more than one distribution group if you have more than one child enrolled in Faith Formation and/or preparing for a Sacrament this year. Consequently you may receive multiple text/emails throughout the week. Texts and emails will have the distribution name listed at the top of the message to avoid confusion. All of our communications are designed to provide helpful resources and important updates—so we encourage and appreciate you making time to read them.



ABSENCE REPORTING LINE
920-788-7640 X7

CURRICULUM

Holy Spirit Parish's Faith Formation curriculum is in compliance with the standards set forth by the Diocese of Green Bay. These standards are on file in the Faith Formation office. For more information about the curriculums, please visit our website at www.holyspirit-parish.org/faith-formation.

FEES AND PAYMENT

We are grateful for every dollar we receive and pledge to be good stewards of the funds all going directly towards the education of our most valuable treasure, our children. We have updated our tuition schedule as of the 2024-2025 school year, eliminating a cost differential for out of parish members. You might also notice that sacrament fees for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation have been removed as a separate charge and absorbed into the new tuition cost.



Individuals serving as Lead Catechists/Core Team receive free tuition for their immediate family.



Holy Spirit Parish does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color or national or ethnic origin in administration of its policies, supplementary programs or any other program-based function. No child shall be denied a Catholic Christian education based solely on the inability to pay tuition. Volunteer discounts, payment plans, and tuition assistance are available. Please contact Leah Ackley at the Parish Office for more information.

With the exception of families new to the area and/or Holy Spirit Parish, full tuition payment (or approved payment arrangements) must be received by September 24, 2025. To ensure a smooth experience, we kindly ask that all requirements be completed before participating in any Faith Formation programming. This policy ensures that we can properly plan for the safety, materials, and volunteer support needed, while also upholding the financial responsibility of our faith community to support the ongoing work of this ministry.

2025-2026 TUITION SCHEDULE

1 CHILD

\$145

**Sacramental Fees
included in tuition**

2 CHILDREN

\$290

**Sacramental Fees
included in tuition**

3+ CHILDREN

\$380

**Sacramental Fees
included in tuition**

SCHOLARSHIP



Assistance Available

**Contact the HSP
Faith Formation staff
for more information.**



FAITH FORMATION *engaged family, enriched faith.* VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

We believe that the family “is our first community and the most basic way in which the Lord gathers us, forms us, and acts in the world” ([Follow the Way of Love](#)). The goal of our Faith Formation program can only be accomplished when families and ministry leaders work together. **To this end, it is expected that each family commit to volunteering a total of three class nights during the faith formation year: elementary program (K-5th); Edge (6th-8th); or Life Teen (9th-12th).**

These volunteer hours may be served as Crossing Guard, Hall Monitor, Office/Admin Assistant, food donations, classroom aides, etc. We did our best to make it easy for parents/families to say “Yes”. Grandparents, aunts and uncles may also volunteer on behalf of a parent instead to ensure volunteer expectations are met.

Why?

Holy Spirit’s Faith Formation program is large—and continues to grow! To run smoothly and offer meaningful, Christ-centered experiences for our children and youth, we depend on the active support of parents. Volunteering is not just about filling spots; it’s about building a vibrant, faith-filled community that our children can see, feel, and grow within. When parents are authentically engaged, the impact is lasting and powerful.

Our ministry (as with most every parish ministry) relies on families to provide the extra hands and eyes needed to carry out our programs effectively and, above all, to help ensure the safety and well-being of every child entrusted to our care. This is more than a request—it is a shared responsibility and a vital part of the success of our faith formation mission.

Who?

The Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation staff is committed to tracking volunteer hours accurately and fairly. Mid-year, families will receive an audit of their volunteer hour progress. While we will work with you to find opportunities that suit your schedule and strengths, a fee may be applied if requirements are not met. This policy reflects the seriousness of our commitment to creating a secure, supportive, and thriving environment for all participants with the help of volunteers.

What?

All employees (regardless of position/job title) and all adult volunteers who have contact with minors and individuals at risk as part of their volunteer duties are required to complete an application prior to any volunteering as well as ongoing training and/or renewals. Please visit <https://www.gbdioc.org/protecting-our-children/background-checks> for instructions on how to complete this step. Please contact Valerie Decoster by phone at 920.788.7640 x1011 or email at decosterv@holyspirit-parish.org for more information.

How?

Sign up links will be created for each of the different grade level groups. Additional information will be communicated to families prior to the first day. As a reminder, when verifying volunteer eligibility, we assume the name listed on the sign up is the person completing the volunteer hours and responsible for fulfilling the required background check and training. If a spouse or other family member will be completing these hours on your behalf, be sure to update us with their information as well as ensure they have completed the necessary training and background check.



ABSENCE REPORTING PROCEDURE

If your child(ren) cannot attend programming for any reason, leave your message on the absentee line voicemail at (920) 788-7640, extension 7 (please do not press extension 1 first). **Do not email the Catechist, Core team, and/or Director.** Notification is also required for early dismissal. Based on program directors' discretion, a phone call or text notification may be made to homes with students who are absent.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

By enrolling in our program, you have made the formation and instruction in the Catholic Faith a priority for your family. Regular attendance is crucial for children and youth to develop a love of God and their calling. Missed programming means also missed contact with their faith formation community. Youth not only gain in knowledge, they also form bonds, develop prayer as a group, and experience God in a unique way -- together. Every grade level begins to express and explain their beliefs and appreciate other points of view during peer group discussions. Infrequent or irregular attendance hinders progress towards these goals.



For these reasons, parent/guardians are expected to commit to regular attendance for the full duration of each meeting period throughout the school year. Four (4) absences are permitted during a full faith formation year for Grades K-5th. Grades 6th-12th will only be allowed to miss two (2) class times. Leaving a Faith Formation session without prior approval by program leader(s) will be counted as an unexcused absence. Anyone that does not meet the above requirements for attendance may not be adequately prepared, and additional make up work may be assigned at the discretion of the Director.

As parents ourselves, we do sympathize with the challenges that arise when children have commitments to sports, dance, music, gymnastic lessons, etc. that may come into conflict with Faith Formation. It is important that you make decisions about what children most need in their lives at any given time. If you register your child for Faith Formation, please make sure it will fit into your family's life and activities and/or made it the priority amidst the other activities. We cannot in good conscience condone or give permission for children to be consistently absent, leave early, or arrive late because of conflicts with other activities. If you find that your child has a standing conflict that cannot be moved, please contact the program Director to discuss a possible solution.

MASS ATTENDANCE POLICY

Remember: MASS IS YOUR EXCUSE FOR MISSING EVERYTHING ELSE! Attendance at Mass is an integral part of our program. A family's commitment to Christ, especially as expressed through consistent presence at Mass, is the most vital piece needed to foster the seeds of faith in our children. Far more than an obligation, celebrating Mass provides us the graces needed to live life joyfully and authentically and lays the foundation for lifelong discipleship.

All children and youth enrolled in the Faith Formation program are expected to attend Masses scheduled on a programming night as listed in the calendar. Please review the calendar once it becomes available.

MASS REFLECTION SHEETS

Children and youth preparing for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion will be required to complete a Mass Reflection sheet AT LEAST TWICE PER MONTH. These reflections are not simply a way to track attendance—they are meant to help children feel more connected, engaged, and included in the celebration of the Eucharist.

NEW THIS YEAR

All youth in Grades 3-5 are required complete a Mass Reflection sheet at least once per month. This expectation has been added to help build upon their faith formation, support ongoing growth in liturgical understanding and personal faith development as well as preparation of future Sacramental milestones.

All completed forms should be turned into the ministry leadership via email or in person.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL POLICY

The safety of children being picked up and dropped off is of paramount concern to us. To this end families are expected to review the following rules and to observe them at all times throughout the year. Please make sure anyone else picking up or dropping off your child is aware of these procedures as well as they will be enforced by our staff and volunteers.

We have three designated drop off/pick up areas for grades K through 12th outlined in the table below. A staff member, Lead Catechist, Core team member, or volunteer will be at these areas at the beginning and end of programming.

GRADE	LOCATION	PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST ACCOMPANY
Kindergarten	Parish Center Parking Lot, Wilson St	Yes.
1st Grade	Parish Center Parking Lot, Wilson St	Yes.
2nd Grade	Parish Center Parking Lot, Wilson St	Yes.
3rd Grade	KASD 4K Bldg West Wall	No.
4th Grade	KASD 4K Bldg West Wall	No.
5th Grade	KASD 4K Bldg West Wall	No.
6th-12th Grade	Kimberly Street Main Church Entrance	No.

DROP OFF

Grades K through 2nd will line up outside their designated building and enter together with their Lead Catechist or other designated leader. If weather affects this policy, communication will be sent out with alternative plans. ***A parent/guardian is required to walk their child(ren) to the drop off spot and wait until with their child(ren). We recommend not arriving any earlier than 5 minutes before programming begins. We will not provide supervision prior to 4:55pm.***

Grades 3rd-12th can arrive independently outside their designated building and will be greeted by their Catechist or Core team members upon entrance.

PICK UP

Grades K through 2nd will return to the outside line up and await pick up from their parent/guardian. If weather affects this policy, communication will be sent out with alternative plans. ***To ensure their safety, children will not be allowed to leave their group without a parent/guardian personally checking in with the Lead Catechist or designated volunteer. Child(ren) are not permitted to run off to meet up with their grown up.***

Students in grades 4th-12th will be dismissed to find their ride independently. If a student has not been picked up after 10 minutes after program has ended, a parent/guardian will be contacted.

Every effort should be made so that the children arrive on time. For accurate attendance, children in grades K-5th who arrive late must be brought to the Faith Formation office in the Parish Center by a parent or guardian. Youth in grades 6th-12th should go directly the Kimberly Church. For pre-scheduled tardies or absences, please contact the Faith Formation office at least one day in advance of class.

CODE OF CONDUCT

A Code of Conduct defines the values and vision of the parish in which all relationships are conducted in a respectful and dignified manner. Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation program shares with parent/guardians the responsibility to develop a child's personal and social skills to achieve this vision. Consequently:

- Each person within a parish has the right to feel emotionally and physically safe
- Each person has the responsibility to contribute to a safe, positive learning environment
- Each parish community has the responsibility to establish a process for developing a parish code of conduct

Holy Spirit Parish has the following expectations for children/youth:

- To attend faith formation regularly and conform to the rules of the parish
- To participate willingly in their learning
- To respect others' safety, well-being, and property
- To be accountable for their behavior and responsive to reasonable, related, and respectful consequences
- To participate in creating a safe, positive environment conducive to learning
- To promote and uphold all the teachings of the Catholic Church
- To strive for virtue as part of their ongoing human formation

For Parish Staff and Volunteers:

- To participate in creating a safe, positive environment conducive to learning
- Implement parish discipline practices that utilize reasonable, related, respectful consequences, and specific rules
- To model, teach, and reinforce appropriate behavior
- To promote and uphold all the teachings of the Catholic Church
- To strive for virtue as part of their ongoing human formation

For Parents/Guardians:

- To support their child(ren) in regular and punctual attendance at Faith Formation classes
- To participate in creating a safe positive, learning environment at their parish
- To respectfully work with, communicate, and cooperate with parish staff and volunteers to uphold discipline policies for their children.
- To alert parish staff and volunteers of any special situation involving their child such as allergies, learning disability/special needs, etc.
- To promote and uphold all the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- To strive for virtue as part of their ongoing human formation.

Conclusion

This code of conduct is intended to assist children and youth, staff and parents/guardians in establishing appropriate expectations for personal and social conduct. This will happen if all individuals accept personal responsibility for their attitudes and actions. At Holy Spirit Parish our intention is to guide our children to be safe, positive and virtuous individuals.

DISCIPLINE POLICY: BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS GRADES K-12

At Holy Spirit Parish, our Faith Formation program is rooted in the values lived and taught by Jesus—love, compassion, respect, and responsibility. Discipline is not about punishment; it's a practice that helps children and youth shape their hearts and habits in the spirit of Christ. It promotes self-awareness, self-respect, and care for others, just as Jesus demonstrated through His words, actions, and example.

Our policies and behavior expectations are designed to ensure that every participant feels loved, safe, and supported as they discover and explore their faith allowing them to build a deeper relationship with Jesus. We believe that consistent, shared expectations help create a respectful and joyful learning environment where all can grow in faith and community.

In each learning space, we have posted six behavioral expectations aligned with the policies (see Page 12) and grounded in a different scripture passage, which serve as a reminder of the values we are called to live out as followers of Christ. These rules are revisited regularly by Catechists, Core team, staff, and volunteers. The table below provides examples of each rule and what it might look like in action, helping children and youth understand how to live out these values not only during our time together in Faith Formation but in their daily lives as well.

Expectation	Some Ways to Show It/See It
Watch Your Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not using profanity, put-downs, teasing Not using the Lord's name in vain
Control Your Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands kept to oneself Raise hand and wait to be called on Remain in seat unless otherwise directed Quietly walking through the hallways
Respect People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect for others and others' property at all times Hold doors for others Be courteous, kind, patient Avoid clothing with offensive language or images
Listen Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One person speaks at a time, all others listen to speaker Refraining from the use of personal electronics such as cell phones and tablets during programming as established by Catechist/Core team members.
Respect Things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tidy up area before leaving Pick up trash whenever seen No writing on parish property such as desks, chairs, walls etc.
Love God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genuflect when walking in front of the tabernacle Genuflect when entering/exiting pew Feet off pews Quiet use of kneelers Remove hats or hoods Wear modest, respectful clothing that is appropriate for a church setting and free of offensive language or images No talking in church except during group prayer or song No gum or candy at Mass or Adoration

DISCIPLINE POLICY: RESPONSE GUIDELINES GRADES K-12

When behavior does not align with these expectations, we respond with patience, understanding, and appropriate support. Our responses are tailored to the age and developmental stage of each child and youth. Listed below is an example of how a response may vary across age groups: Grades K–2, Grades 3–5, and Grades 6–12. Responses will vary with each circumstance, but may include redirection, time to reflect, or a conversation with a parent or guardian by a program leader (i.e. Catechist, Core team, Program Assistant, etc.). In some cases, contact from the program's Faith Formation Director may be necessary to help guide a way forward together.

In rare or serious cases, the Faith Formation Director(s), in consultation with parish leadership, reserves the right to determine whether a child or youth should be temporarily or permanently removed from the program. This decision is made with great care and only when it becomes clear that continued participation is not in the best interest of the child, youth, or the community. In every case, we are committed to working in partnership with families helping each student grow in understanding, self-control, and love for God and others.

Grades K-2

At this age, children are still learning self-regulation and social skills. We understand that young children are still learning how to listen, follow directions, and interact with peers, so we approach discipline with patience, consistency, and care. Gentle redirection, clear reminders, and positive reinforcement are the primary tools used.

EXAMPLE: IF A CHILD IS INTERRUPTING OR USING UNKIND WORDS, THE CATECHIST MIGHT QUIETLY REMIND THEM OF THE "WATCH YOUR WORDS" RULE AND REDIRECT WITH AN ENGAGING ACTIVITY OR A HELPER ROLE. IF THE BEHAVIOR CONTINUES, THE CHILD MAY BE OFFERED A SHORT BREAK WITH A TRUSTED ADULT IN A QUIET SPACE TO RESET.

Grades 3-5

As children mature, they are expected to take greater responsibility for their actions and behavior. Our Faith Formation program encourages students in grades 3–5 to grow in respect, attentiveness, and cooperation as they deepen their faith. Catechists will address behavior clearly and consistently, using both conversation and natural consequences.

EXAMPLE: IF A STUDENT REPEATEDLY DISRESPECTS MATERIALS OR DISTRACTS OTHERS, THE CATECHIST MAY REFERENCE THE POSTED RULES WITH A CLEAR REMINDER OF EXPECTATIONS OR HAVE A QUICK ONE-ON-ONE CHAT AFTER CLASS.

Grades 6-12

Middle and high school students are expected to model respectful, Christ-centered behavior. We expect students in grades 6–12 to actively participate, show respect for leaders and peers, and maintain a positive, safe atmosphere. Leaders will speak directly to students about any concerns and expect thoughtful reflection and correction.

EXAMPLE: IF A STUDENT IS WEARING INAPPROPRIATE CLOTHING OR BEING DISMISSIVE OF INSTRUCTION, THE CORE TEAM OR OTHER LEADER MAY PULL THEM ASIDE FOR A PRIVATE CONVERSATION. IF THE BEHAVIOR CONTINUES, A PARENT WILL BE CONTACTED AND A PLAN MAY BE DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABILITY AND GROWTH.

GENERAL PROGRAM POLICIES

Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco: The possession, sale or use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco or any other controlled substances on the parish grounds, property or while participating in a parish sponsored event is strictly forbidden. Parents and or guardians will be notified, and violations will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Child Abuse: See the policy set forth by the Diocese of Green Bay entitled, "Safe Environment and Social Communications Policy".

Communication Policy: Copies of this policy are available on the diocesan website www.gbdioc.org. Your phone number(s) will be added to the Flocknote app which we use as a primary source of communication to families.

Program Cancellation: Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation will cancel programming when the Kimberly Area School District cancel their classes or dismiss early due to dangerous weather conditions. All other cancellations will be solely at the discretion of the RE/YM Office pending circumstances. In case of cancellation due to inclement weather, Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation staff will notify the Catechists/Core team of cancellation. Information will be posted on the website as well as all social media sites. Emails and/or text messages will also be sent to all families from the staff. In addition, the Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation Staff will notify the following television stations: WBAY (Channel 2), WFRV (Channel 5), WLUK (Channel 11), and WGBA (Channel 26).

COVID Response: Due to the fluidity of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease, please know we will continue to evaluate, monitor and adjust our COVID response strategies based on a combination of State and local data and regional hospitalization rates balanced with offering the best possible learning environment for our students. We appreciate your patience and flexibility.

Dress Code: Students are expected to dress appropriately when attending religious education classes. Clothing that is too short or too tight and underwear that is clearly visible is considered inappropriate. Dress is casual; however, be mindful of where we are. No tank tops or half shirts, no t-shirts advertising drugs, alcohol or cigarette products, or those displaying profanity, offensive or suggestive words will not be allowed. No hats may be worn. No Heelys or sneaker skates are allowed on the premises. If your child doesn't comply with the dress code, a parent will be called.

Electronics/Cell Phones: Students are not allowed to bring radios, electronic games, or toys of any kind to class. These items will be taken from students and returned after classes have ended. Cell phones should not be brought to class. If your child must bring a phone to class, it must be turned off during class time. In grades 6-12, phones will be collected by Core Team. Air Pods and other Bluetooth earphones are not allowed. Our policy is simple: "Off and out of sight, or it's ours for the night." Emergency phone calls during class time must be made to or from the front office only.

Emergency Information: Emergency contact information must be provided to the Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation office for every registered student. There is a place on the registration form for this information. In case of fire or tornado, each class will follow the emergency procedures listed in the classroom. The Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation Staff reserve the right to perform a fire or tornado drill at any point during the school year.

Firearms, Weapons, Dangerous Objects: Any object brought to the religious education programs that would endanger the safety of any or all participants is prohibited, and the offender is subject to discipline and expulsion procedures. Parents and or guardians will be notified, and violations will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Health Concerns: It is understood that from time to time children will not feel well or accidents will happen. Children who are not feeling well may call a parent/guardian from the front office only. Notification is essential from parents/families to the HSP Faith Formation staff when children are exposed to COVID-19, lice, chicken pox, or pink eye so that all parents/guardians can be made aware.

Medication: Holy Spirit Parish Faith Formation Staff does not supervise the taking of medication nor do we administer it except in extraordinary circumstances. In order for us to administer any prescription drug we must have a written doctor's order with the student's name, dosage, date and instructions. This must also be accompanied by a parent/legal guardian's written permission.

Property Damage: School and parish property damaged or destroyed will be restored or repaired by the parents and students responsible for the damage.

Security Policy: For the safety of our program participants, all doors of the Parish Center, church and school building will lock at a time determined by the program director.

Special Needs and/or Disabilities: All persons with special needs and/or disabilities have the right to religious education, youth ministry and sacramental preparation. If our parish cannot offer an appropriate placement; we will seek to join with other parishes to create acceptable options.

THE SACRAMENTS OF FIRST RECONCILIATION and FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion typically occur during a child's second year of Faith Formation, and is broken up into two parts with Reconciliation being celebrated prior to preparations for First Holy Communion. The preparations emphasize that our lives are centered around the examples of Jesus Christ, teaching children how to live out their faith in daily life and in communion with the Church. Through Scripture, doctrine and prayer, children are guided into a deeper personal relationship with Christ.



Two separate informational meetings for parents and guardians are held during the year: one typically in mid-September to early October in anticipation of First Reconciliation and another in in late January to early February in anticipation of First Holy Communion. Please see the calendar for more information. These gatherings are geared toward the VIG's (Very Important Grown Ups) that are accompanying the children in preparation of the Sacraments. We gather during a regularly scheduled Faith Formation session on a Wednesday evening beginning at 5:15pm. Informational packets are provided outlining additional expectations and required documentation along with some spiritual reflection opportunities for the adults attending. At least one grown-up is expected to attend each meeting. On this occasion we also ask that alternative accommodations be made for any children.

Children are not given any homework; exceptions, however, to this rule might be necessary to supplement extended time away from their group. There is access provided to multiple resources intended for each child to use at home. Families are expected to make time each week to explore these resources with your child. It is as helpful for them as it is for us adults. Just like all the Sacraments, parental involvement is essential. Children learn from hands-on, everyday experiences; therefore, it is within the home that preparation continues.

There will also be virtual open houses scheduled approximately once a month beginning in October and leading up to the celebration of First Reconciliation, and again in January leading up to First Holy Communion. Parents/families should make a point to check in with Leah and/or their child's Lead Catechist occasionally. Lastly, children and their parents/families will attend two separate day retreats to help us focus more intently on the meaning of the Sacraments and provide practice time. Refer to this year's calendar for more information.

Prior to the reception of First Holy Communion, the parish must verify a child's baptism (Canon 842, 912, 894). If your child did not receive their Sacrament of Baptism at Holy Spirit Parish, you will need to provide us with the Baptismal Certificate your child received. If you can't find the original (Solidarity), a copy of your child's records can be obtained by contacting the parish where your child was Baptized to forward directly to our office. Photocopies and scanned electronic copies are also acceptable. All correspondence should be forwarded to the attention of Nancy Baldschun at baldschunn@holyspirit-parish.org. These certificates must be turned in by April 1, 2026.



THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION



Confirmation is the completion of baptism, with the Holy Spirit coming more fully into the lives of believers. The sacrament is celebrated at Holy Spirit Parish with those students who are seniors in high school. Those wishing to be confirmed must be baptized, have received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion and should show “a sincere desire to know Jesus better, a sufficient understanding of the meaning of Confirmation, a willingness to participate in the life of the Church, a desire to deepen their faith through prayer, and be studying with regular attendance at Mass.”

Candidates will be expected to have an interview at the beginning of the process. The Confirmation process, along with all previous sacraments, requires parental involvement in order for growth and development to occur for the candidate. Parents are expected to support program and retreat attendance, celebrating Mass with their families, and to aid their son or daughter in choosing a sponsor.

As in Baptism, sponsors are requested and play an active role in the Confirmation preparation. A sponsor must be a practicing Catholic of at least 18 years of age or older who has been Baptized and received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion and Confirmation. This person is one who is sufficiently mature enough to carry out the responsibilities and requirements of the sponsor. The sponsor, who must be someone other than parents, attends Mass regularly and is supportive in matters of faith. This sponsor can come from many resources including grandparents, neighbors, parishioners, older siblings, or religion teachers (however it may not be a parent). The sponsors are asked to meet with candidates throughout the year to cover the Four Pillars of the Catholic Church discussion guide and the Confirmation liturgy.

Since the earliest days of the Sacrament of Confirmation, candidates have been asked to select a patron saint's name; the saint serves as their model for life. By choosing a saint's name, they are asking not only that the particular saint to guide and direct their actions, but that the Church recognizes them through a Christian name. Research on saints is required by the students and a selection of the saint's name must be decided during the process. Baptismal names may be used for a Confirmation name as long as the candidate does research on that saint.

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THE IMPORTANT ROLE AT HOME

Parents and family are the primary religious influence on their children. Our program is intended to help families in faithfully handing down the faith to their children. We cannot do this on our own. In the Catholic church, the family is recognized as the "domestic church" for it is in the family that we first learn to recognize the love of God and to turn to Him in prayer. It is also in the family where a child's attitude toward Mass, the sacraments, prayer, service to others, and a Catholic Christian lifestyle grows out of a parent/guardian's example and attitude. However, no one is expecting perfection! Parenting is the toughest job out there. The Faith Formation team is here to support the children, teens, and their families. Here are few ways to nurture your domestic church:

BE TRANSPARENT

The truth of the matter is it's okay for children to see us struggle in our faith. Let them see how you question "where is God?" in the challenging moments, stumble through the Rosary, be nervous returning to Confession after a long time away, seek forgiveness when you lose your temper in traffic. Openness, honesty, and transparency about who you are and what you believe goes a long way toward establishing trust with your child and with your teen. Without trust, they'll doubt your motivation and wonder what's in it for them. Our call to parenthood and leading families is to show our children what it looks like to use our faith in everyday life. Show them what it's like to grow your faith...and that the work is never ending.

ALLOW QUESTIONS

Give your children a safe place to question their own faith as they grow. We need to give our children opportunities to make their faith their own. As our children grow, they're naturally going to evaluate and analyze things rather than just taking our word for it. That's okay. Our natural tendency when they begin to do so is either frustration or "freak-out" mode; neither of which are healthy for them nor fair as we have done and continue to do throughout our lives. If your kids don't ever have any questions about their faith, it's quite possible they won't have any depth about it either. Such depth requires that they be allowed and encouraged to ask the tough questions.

DON'T OVERTHINK IT

It shouldn't feel hard to live out our faith. God doesn't want that for us. Just keep trying to keep Him at the front. The rest will follow.

- Make use of the Baptismal Candle. Consider lighting the baptismal candle at your child's First Holy Communion, Confirmation and on one's anniversary of Baptism or birthday.
- Actively participate with your children at Mass. Prepare for formal "at church" worship before you leave home. Wake up earlier than your kids so you are not rushed..
- Show your excitement for them on Wednesday nights and be eager to greet them after class. Ask them what they learned, what they thought, and how they felt about the session.
- Make prayer important in your house. Thank God for your blessings and for your struggles. Memorize the Church's rote prayers together. Make a game out of it.
- Devote some quality time together as a family. Eat meals. Television, the newspaper, video games, shopping, and the telephone can interrupt or effectively eliminate opportunities to build faith. Pull the plug on these things. Show family members that you love them.
- Volunteer or serve on a community project together as a family.

PARENTAL/FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAM

Persons with concerns about a catechist or Core team member should first address the concern with Director for their child's particular grade level. If the parent continues to be dissatisfied, a meeting can be arranged with the Pastor.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Catechists and faith formation staff will keep confidential information entrusted to us as long as no one's life, health or safety is at stake. In these cases, parents will be promptly notified of teachers concerns.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS OR TELEPHONE NUMBER

It is important that our records be kept up to date. Therefore, the Faith Formation Office must be notified of any change of address, email, telephone or emergency numbers.

USE OF STUDENT INFORMATION AND PICTURES

The Faith Formation Program reserves the right to use student pictures in publications. Any parent who does not wish his/her child's picture used, must make sure that they specified that in the registration form at registration time.

CUSTODIAL RIGHTS

In the case of divorced parents, the Religious Education Program will interact with the parent who has legal custody of the child in matters of absence, lateness, dismissal, discipline, records, authorizations, etc. Full rights apply to both parents unless a court order specifically revokes these rights. It is the responsibility of the parents to provide evidence of such court order.