

Faith Formation Handbook

St. Bernadette

2023 - 2024



The Faith Formation program's goal is to deepen the awareness of God's presence in our lives, to foster an atmosphere of love and respect for others, to serve those in need, and to encourage spiritual growth through prayer and the Sacraments.

**Faith Formation offered by the
St Bernadette Parishes**

May 2023

Welcome to an exciting year of Faith Formation! We look forward to building and growing in faith with your entire family. Allow this handbook to be a guide in regards to policies and goals for the year.

Firstly, as a reminder, **parents are the first teachers of the faith**. We, as a program, build upon and strengthen the knowledge that is first learned from parents, grandparents, and the Church community. Therefore, the primary goal of St. Bernadette is to lend support, equip, empower, and encourage **parents** in the Faith Formation of their children that has already begun at home. Secondly, our program seeks to further cultivate the faith in the children. This means that parental interest and participation in the program is essential.

Together, parents and catechists will work in tandem to build the faith of each child and help him/her to grow in a deeper relationship with Jesus. Catechists and their assistants will be helping your child(ren) throughout the year to more fully understand and appreciate our Catholic faith, and create opportunities for an encounter with our Lord. As supporting parents and the first teachers of the faith, we expect this to be a priority at home as well.

When you opt-in to enroll your child(ren) in our Faith Formation program, it is implied that you agree to comply, to the best of your ability, to attend Mass regularly, to volunteer within our program, and to adhere to the policies set forth in this handbook. Please look through this document and contact us if there are any questions.

We are ready to begin an exciting year of Faith Formation! May God continue to bless our program as we, through the intercession of Mary and the Saints, say YES when He calls our name (Matthew 4:19).

Blessings,

Claire Kalaus
Coordinator of Faith Formation
faith@saint-bernadette.org

Curriculum

Growing in our Faith does not stop with receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, or completing a particular grade - knowledge and understanding of our faith, it is ongoing and our study of it should be as well. Our Faith Formation curriculum is in compliance with the standards set forth by the Diocese of Green Bay.

This year K- 11 will have class from 6pm-7:15pm

It is essential for grade k-5 parents to participate in parent sessions as these sessions provide an overview of what your child will be learning about that month. As parents, you are receiving a refresher of content you may find was long-forgotten, and are modeling good participation for your child(ren).

The following are the texts for each grade for the 2023-2024 year:

Grades K-5

Texts: Family of Faith - Volume IV
Published by Sophia Institute

Grade 6-8

Texts: The Catholic Connections Handbook for Middle Schoolers
Published by: Saint Mary's Press

Grade 9-11

The Catholic Handbook
Published by: Saint Mary's Press

Confirmation (grade 11/12)

Text: CHOSEN and Bishops
Published by: Ascension Press



Arrival and Dismissal Guidelines

Faith Formation staff and volunteers require safe, orderly, and timely procedures for the arrival and dismissal of all students under their care.

Students should arrive on time and if a student is arriving late, he or she must check-in before reporting to the classroom.

During the winter months, please encourage your student(s) to wait inside the building to be picked up. If a student has not been picked up after 10 minutes after class has ended, a parent/guardian will be contacted.

Missing all or part of scheduled sessions does impact a student's faith formation. The Diocese of Green Bay requires a minimum of 30 hours of education each year, so absent students are greatly impacted. If a student must be absent, please call the parish office during regular (8:30 am – 4 pm) office hours prior to class or email Claire Kalas at faith@saint-bernadette.org. Notification is also required for late arrival and/or early dismissal. Phone calls will be made to homes of absent students who have given no prior notice to ensure students safety.

If Public Schools are closed on a Wednesday due to a snow day or other inclement weather conditions, Faith Formation classes will also be canceled. An announcement will be broadcast on **Channel 2 WBAY** television station. If weather gets bad during the day an announcement on television will be made by 5:00 p.m. Our parish program will also post on our Facebook group, send a text through the Remind app, and send an email home.

Similarly to our area schools, if there is a case of COVID-19 in our program, parents of close-contacts will be notified. These families will be asked to participate in their formation at home until the local health officials give the "OK" to return in-person.

Media Consent:

The Safe Environment Social Communication Policy states that minors can only be electronically contacted (email/text/etc) by parish staff/volunteers if there is a second VIRTUS trained and background checked adult included in the correspondence. Parish staff, catechists, and youth leaders may contact families and teens following these guidelines.

The Faith Formation Program and the Diocese of Green Bay may take, use, and publish media for general communication, advertising, commercial and publicity purposes. This media may include video, audio, photographic portraits, pictures, reproductions, quotations, made through any medium, including social or other electronic media, in accordance with the Safe Environment Social Communication Policy for the Diocese of Green Bay, unless otherwise stated in writing by the parent. I understand that it may not be possible to recall photos that have been published prior to a written rescission.

<https://www.gbdioc.org/protecting-our-children/safe-environment>

Liability:

As parent and/or legal guardian, I agree on behalf of myself, and my child(ren), to hold harmless and defend the Faith Formation / Youth Ministry program, its officers, directors, employees and the Diocese of Green Bay, its employees and agents, chaperones, or representatives associated with the event, from any claim arising from or in connection with my child attending, and I agree to compensate the parish/school, its officers, directors and agents, and Diocese of Green Bay its employees and agents and chaperones, or representative associated with the event for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses which may incur in any action brought against them as a result of such injury or damage, unless such claim arises from the negligence of the parish/school or the Diocese of Green Bay.

Gender Policy:

It is the policy of the Diocese of Green Bay that students and their parents are expected to live virtuous lives guided by Gospel values and the teaching of the Church. Students shall conduct themselves in accord with their biological sex at all times. Please see here for more details.

https://www.gbresources.org/uploads/8/4/5/8/8458656/policy_5045.2_gender_identity_students.pdf

It is the policy of the Diocese of Green Bay that all students, staff, and volunteers must follow the dress code expectations of their biological sex while on premises for religious education, Confirmation preparation or youth ministry and while representing the parish or program at outside functions.

St. Bernadette Dress Code – Faith Formation:

The goal of the dress code is to promote the virtues of modesty and self-respect, as well as to create an atmosphere that is appropriate to the growth in our Faith. Since styles of clothing and hair change rapidly, we reserve the right to restrict fashions that are inappropriate as well as interpret what is considered to be in poor taste or distracting to the faith learning environment.

General guidelines:

SHIRTS: The following shirts / tops are acceptable:

Any shirt, sweater, fleece, sweatshirt or jacket (see banned list).

PANTS: Flannel or pajama pants not allowed.

BANNED: Clothing with inappropriate messages that include words or symbols about alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or sex as well as any other messages that are not in agreement with Catholic teachings are not permitted at Faith Formation nights, events and/or Youth Ministry events.

Discipline Guidelines

If a child's behavior disrupts the learning process for him or herself or for others, the steps listed below will be followed to ensure that class participation may continue.

- At the first and second incident the student will be reminded of expected behavior and the consequences of misbehavior set by the catechist and students.
- After the third incident, the student will be sent to the lobby for a discussion with the staff and/or Pastor about appropriate behavior. The student will be allowed the opportunity to rejoin the class if an understanding can be reached as to how all involved may continue to learn and grow in their faith.
- After returning to class, if inappropriate behavior continues, the student will be sent to the lobby. The student's parent/guardian will be contacted to have a meeting with the Director of Catholic Formation and the Pastor, if necessary.
- Once parents are contacted alternate plans will be made if the child cannot behave in class.

Health Concerns

It is understood that from time to time children will not feel well or accidents will happen during Formation classes. While we have good first aid supplies, it is essential for us to have emergency contact information for each student if necessary. Children who are not feeling well may call a parent/guardian for early pick up. No medication will be distributed to any child without a written request from the parent. In the event that medication is necessary, arrangements must be made with the staff.

Because we have children coming from different schools, notification is essential when children are exposed to COVID-19, lice, chicken pox, or pink eye so that all impacted parents/guardians can be made aware.

Child Abuse

See the policy set forth by the Diocese of Green Bay entitled, "Safe Environment Social Communication Policy." Copies of this policy are available on the diocesan website www.gbdioc.org.

Sacraments

Reconciliation

As primary catechists, parents are encouraged to practice forgiveness in the home and to be an example to their children in both the teaching and reception of the Sacrament. **Formal preparation for reconciliation at the parish begins in the first grade with the child learning about Jesus and his role in salvation history.** Further catechesis takes place in second grade in **both** the classroom **and** the home. Parental formation is essential in this process as it is the choice of the parent as to whether or not the child is ready to receive this sacrament. Meetings for parents are held in the fall and families preparing for this sacrament are expected to attend the retreat. Students are expected to attend Faith Formation classes on a regular basis.

If your child is beyond second grade, please inform the Faith Formation office.

There will be opportunities throughout the year for students in grades 3-Confirmation to receive this Sacrament during class time.

Eucharist

Parental involvement in preparation for First Communion is essential. Children learn from hands-on experience; therefore, family meals around the table and participation in Sunday liturgy are the most important points of preparation for this sacrament. It is within the home that preparation starts for the reception of this sacrament. Catechesis in second grade focuses on receiving Jesus in the Eucharist and experiencing Eucharist within the family. Parents will attend meetings during the winter and spring to receive materials for home preparation that enhance what the children are learning in the classroom. In the spring the children and their parents will attend "Jesus Day," a fun-filled morning retreat to help us focus more intently on the First Communion day and what Eucharist means to the family.

First Communion is generally celebrated in the spring. The readiness of the child for this sacrament is the decision of the parent. Further catechesis is available for a child who might not yet be ready for First Communion in the second grade.

Contact the parish if your child has not received Communion and is beyond second grade.

Confirmation

Confirmation is the completion of baptism, with the Holy Spirit coming more fully into the lives of believers. The sacrament is celebrated at St. Bernadette with those students who are seniors/juniors 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 with the pastor at some point towards the end 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 attend an initial meeting in the fall to learn about the process; parents are to aid their son or daughter in choosing a sponsor and to fill in at events when the sponsor is not available.

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, godparents, or religion teachers. The sponsors are asked to attend occasional special classes with candidates throughout the year, and attend Confirmation rehearsal 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 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.